

# Parish of St Peter & St Paul Tonbridge

## Social Media Policy

‘Let all our interactions glorify God and our church family’

### 1. Introduction

(a) This policy is intended to cover social media communication or broadcasting on the internet, such as running or taking part in:

- networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn, FB, Twitter, Instagram)
- blogs
- website forums

(b) This policy is for all using social media on the church’s behalf and all contributing to it in whatever capacity

(c) Who is using social media on the church’s behalf?

- Group leaders (e.g. Stepping Stones & Teddies FB pages; Kondo leaders on Instagram)
- Staff team (Parish FB, Twitter, Instagram, website)
- All adding comments – church family and contacts

(d) We work within the C of E Social Media guidelines: [www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines](http://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines)

### 2. Our priorities are to:

(i) Extend a welcome and give encouragement;

(ii) Protect those using social media

### 3. We need to:

(a) Be kind

Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just whether you would say it in person, but the tone.

(b) Be good ambassadors

Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post – on your own page or on the parish’s.

(c) Use no hate speech, nor bully

Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and degrading comments about things such as race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.

(d) Credit others

Acknowledge the work of others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information.

(e) Use appropriate language.

(f) Only use content that will not damage our reputation

#### **4. Subsidiary Groups**

Any page, group or account setup on a social networking platform affiliated to Tonbridge Parish must be approved by the Vicar, and monitored by the Communications officer.

#### **5. Streaming and use of video footage**

These media should only be used with permission of the vicar and not include any children or young/vulnerable people without parents' consent.

#### **6. Communication with Children, Young People and Adults when they are vulnerable**

Inside and outside a specific group setting you may find yourself in charge of, or in the same focus group as a child, young person or adult when they are vulnerable whereby communication may be required. When communicating over social media, the controls found in the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy (Procedures and Good Practice for Safeguarding Children - page 28-29)<sup>1</sup> along with any other relevant policy relating to the specific ministry should be followed to ensure the protection of all those involved.

For the above purposes children and young people includes anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **7. Compliance**

Breaching the conditions set out in this policy will result in the offending content being removed without notice from the church's social media sites. A note of the incident will be kept, and appropriate action taken including, in the case of a safeguarding issue, reporting the matter to the Diocesan Safeguarding team or the police if appropriate.

#### **8. Disclaimer**

All users are responsible for the views and opinions they publish on social media. In particular, it should be noted that comments which are made on any aspect of the work of Tonbridge Parish Church or activities carried out at its premises are not necessarily the views and opinions of Tonbridge Parish Church. It is good practice when publishing content to include a disclaimer along the lines of: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the views of Tonbridge Parish Church".

Please read the Diocese Guidelines on social media:

[www.rochester.anglican.org/communications/guidance/social-media-guidelines/social-media-guidelines.php](http://www.rochester.anglican.org/communications/guidance/social-media-guidelines/social-media-guidelines.php)

## Notes:

### <sup>1</sup> **Diocesan Policy, Procedures and Good Practice for Safeguarding Children**

#### **February 2012**

##### SAFE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

E-safety Parishes must appreciate that we live in a constantly changing world of technology which is becoming more sophisticated and we therefore have to be aware of the implications this brings. Whilst children and young people may appear technologically competent, they do not necessarily have the maturity to understand the dangers they may be exposed to. It is important that children and young people understand and stay safe and the guidance should be followed:

- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional. If using technology as a group activity, ensure that an adult worker knows and understands what is happening within the group.
- Communication between children and adults by whatever method should always take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes face to face contact, mobile phones, text messaging, emails, digital cameras, videos, webcams, websites and blogs.
- No images or video footage should ever be permitted in an area of personal privacy e.g. toilet or sleeping quarters.
- At camp or sleepovers, all mobile phones, cameras and video equipment will be collected by the group leader at a specified time prior sleep, stored in a secure place and given back to the young person in the morning. This is to prevent sleep disruption and inappropriate images being taken.
- Designated youth workers should be provided with a basic mobile phone supplied by the PCC.
- Adults should not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites.
- Do not make any relationship with a child (other than family members) through a social networking site. Only make contact with children for professional reasons, making sure that their parent/guardian has given permission.

- Maintain a log of any electronic contact with an individual regarding all matters or subjects which fall outside of the normal 'day to day' youth work contact.
- Any paid or unpaid worker will have a separate 'facebook' account for their work with young people and should not give out any personal information about themselves.
- Privacy settings and use of strong passwords should be used to keep personal data private. Ensure that all shared computers have a different password for all users so that they cannot be accessed secretly.

#### **Receipt of inappropriate material by electronic means**

Any inappropriate material received by electronic means should be downloaded and converted to hard copy if possible and any texts of such nature must not be deleted and should be shown to the leader and Incumbent. Please follow the guidance previously given under 'What to do about inappropriate advances' – see page 14-15 of the procedures.

The minimum age for social networking must be observed.