

Social Media Policy St Margarets Church

AT ST MARGARETS WE RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY AND WORSHIPPERS THROUGH THE VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, HOWEVER THIS MUST BE DONE SAFELY TO AVOID THE RISK OF:

- *Forming inappropriate relationships*
- *Saying inappropriate things, such as offensive, sexual or suggestive comments*
- *Merging the boundaries between public, ministry work and private lives*
- *Grooming*
- *Bullying and harassing*

To reduce these risks St Margarets will follow these points, with regards to social media, young people and vulnerable adults.

- There is named person to manage any church social media accounts, this person will manage any posts, and proactively monitor any communications
- All social Media accounts will be password protected and these details kept secure to avoid any impersonating St Margarets church group
- Where there is any concern that a young person or adult is at risk, to themselves or others the safeguarding procedures will be followed
- Avoid 'lone working' in the online world: Practically, this means avoiding one-to-one online chat (e.g. direct messaging) between adults and young people.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in the online world: It is important to keep a distinction between our private lives and our work within church
- Do not use personal social media accounts to contact children: The simplest way to observe the above two precautions is to avoid having leaders and young people as 'friends' on social media (e.g. Facebook).
- Conversations between leaders and young people should happen in the public section of these pages (such as the 'wall' or in comments under posts) where everyone can see them, rather than via direct messages.
- Behave in the online world as you would offline: This includes posting links to offensive or otherwise inappropriate content, making comments about someone's appearance that could be interpreted as either sexual or offensive, or 'liking' inappropriate content on social media.
- Any messages sent/used/posted by St Margarets will use clear and unambiguous language, and abbreviations will be avoided to prevent misinterpretation
- St Margarets will make parents aware of the social media that our church uses and ensure there is consent to their child's usage

Mobile Devices.

If a church employee is required to use a mobile telephone in the course of their work, then as far as is practicable they should be supplied with a phone dedicated for work purposes.

This may also be the case for certain volunteers, such as youth group leaders.

This allows for the phone to be switched off outside 'working hours', and for usage to be accountable.

This means that the church officer's personal number can remain private.

Texts or conversations that raise concerns should be saved and passed on to the local nominated safeguarding officer.

If a church employee is provided with a 'work mobile', they should be required to sign to say that they will use it only in accordance with the guidance in this document.