



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



James

and

Paul's

WEST BROMWICH

To know Jesus and make Him known

St James and St Paul's Social Media Policy

Promoting a safer church

2021

At St James and St Paul's, with Covid-19 bringing us in contact more with social media, it is prudent that we take social media more seriously, so we have put together this policy, taken and adapted from the Church of England's Social Media guidelines.

But what is Social Media?

The term is broad and vague and these notes widen it still further by including Skype, blogs, emails and mobile phoning. At heart, social media are web-based communication tools to enable people everywhere to interact with each other by sharing and taking in information. They are more conversational and open-ended than conventional means of communication and they happen, for the most part, in public, not private, space.

Most social media platforms will have features such as the following:

- User accounts – so you can log in and take part.
- Profile pages – to give information about you, the user.
- Friends, groups, followers – people who have connected with you.
- News feeds – information from people you choose to connect with.
- Posts – items you write, photograph, record or video and place on the site.
- Comment – the chance to write a response or click a 'Like' button on someone's post.

Social media is a very public way of enabling us as Christians to live out our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ. One of its many joys is that it is immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended. This opportunity comes with a number of downsides if users do not apply the same common sense, kindness and sound judgement that we would use in a face-to-face encounter.

Because these sites are closely associated with email, blogs, mobile phone use and texting these means are also included in what follows, although not strictly 'social media'.

Well-known social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, WhatsApp, Google+, YouTube, Snapchat, LinkedIn – but there are many others appealing to different markets – Wikipedia lists almost 200 of them and they are growing every year. Most teenagers will be on several of them and spend hours each day accessing them. Whether that is healthy is another matter.

Church of Englands national social media community guidelines

By engaging with the Church of England and/or St James and St Paul's social media accounts, you agree to:

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask a diocesan safeguarding adviser.

Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

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 you would use.

Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are.

Take responsibility. You are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If you're not sure, don't post it.

Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

Disagree well. Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.

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 and always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying.

Follow the rules. Abide by the terms and conditions of the various social media platforms themselves. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.

How will we respond to people who breach our social media community guidelines?

The Church's and Archbishops' Communications teams (if national) and St James and St Paul's Paid Staff may take action if they receive complaints or spot inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material posted to the national social media accounts and local Church ac.

This may include deleting comments, blocking users or reporting comments as appropriate.

At St James and St Paul's, we do not take inappropriate comments lightly. Therefore we will remove people from being able to interact with our social media posts (including Email and any other form of communication we see fit) if they continue to post or speak to anyone in a way that is deemed inappropriate, especially to paid staff.

Who do I speak to for further advice?

If you have a safeguarding concern, please follow the policies and procedures on this page or contact the safe guarding officer via www.sjpchurch.co.uk

Social Media and Paid Church Staff

- Social media that is controlled by church staff, (church accounts, not personal) will not be checked on days off and before the hours of 9:00am and after the hours of 8:00pm. This is to protect church staff, and also so that messages are not sent back in tiredness.
- Paid Church Staff are not expected to respond straight away to any social media activity as we want them to prioritise speaking to people face to face and time too prepare for the ministries they are apart of.
- It is not usual for church staff to give access to their personal social media account to church members or members of church related groups. (There maybe reasons why this guidance could be waved.)
- The Church social media accounts should be able to be accessed by more than one person. This is for the safeguarding of Paid Church Staff and any community or congregation members.

- The Church social media accounts will be held by paid church staff, in the event of a vacancy, or only one church paid staff, a church warden will be selected to be an administrator on the church social media accounts.

Church members

We ask our church members to accept this policy as good practice. We ask for the church members to remember as we send messages to anyone or any business on social media (as it has been defined by this document), that it has impact on how people see the Lord Jesus and Christians around the world.