

# St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

## Parish of St Peter's, Much Woolton.

### Social Media Policy.

#### Introduction

Today social media and the internet have become an increasing influence on many people's lives. For many younger people it may have become a primary source for gaining information about the world around them and networking with friends and acquaintances. Used responsibly social media and the internet can be of benefit to the church, providing the opportunity for networking, getting to know people, gaining and sharing information about church events, learning about the Christian Faith, and spreading the Gospel. Social media is faster, cheaper and arguably more widely available than traditional media however our understanding of confidentiality, responsibility and Christian witness must remain the same. Social media needs to be used responsibly.

Liverpool Diocese have produced social media guidance which forms the basis of our policy, and can be found here: [Social media guide - Diocese of Liverpool](#)

#### Social Media Policy

##### **Our Purpose and Values**

St Peter's Church may use social media to:

- 1) Promote different services and events we are holding, or that are important in our community
- 2) Build an online community around the church
- 3) Provide teaching
- 4) Share worship online

The vision behind all our social media usage is to promote the gospel, to welcome people into the worshipping life of the church and to encourage people to build relationship and be able to connect with one another. Social media can be a powerful tool to introduce new people to Jesus and the life of the church and to deepen discipleship, if it is used in a thoughtful and considered fashion.

The church's social media presence is not a platform for any of the following:

- Sharing controversial or extreme views including any views which can be seen as racist, sexist, homophobic or derogatory in any way
- Promoting businesses or other organisations
- Harassing or antagonising individuals or organisations
- Sharing personal or confidential information

# St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

## **The PCC's Responsibility**

The social media of the church is the responsibility of the PCC. This means that any posts, comments or content shared needs to be aligned with the views and theology of St Peter's leadership. The PCC are responsible for the reputation of the church and so must ensure that all communication, including social media, upholds our reputation. The PCC must hold a list of all login details for any social media platform in the name of the church to ensure oversight is possible.

## **Good Practice**

Any social media platform used in the name of the church, including but not limited to whatsapp, facebook, twitter and Instagram, must have more than one administrator who can access the account. Those who are responsible for the social media accounts must be made aware of the social media policy, the aims and objectives of the church's approach to social media, and agree to use social media in a responsible and accountable way, acknowledging that this is not a platform for them to share personal views or anything that may run contrary to the views of the church. This team also needs to be aware of copyright law for sharing images, video and music content, and be aware of safeguarding and GDPR regulations. This team must agree to the Church of England's digital charter, which can be found here: [Digital Charter | The Church of England](#)

Many people on social media are from younger generations and so it is essential that all who use our social media platforms are aware of good safeguarding practice and have been safer recruited. They must be aware of age limits for the different social media platforms and ensure that any communication with a young person is transparent and parents are aware. For example, this would include not private messaging a young person.

Many groups within church use whatsapp to coordinate with others and this is an excellent form of communication but can come with challenges. As far as possible please ensure that those in the group have a right to be there, for example they are a member of the group and not a stranger. You may wish to include some rules or guidance for the group which you might find helpful to guide members about appropriate conduct. Make sure you have more than one admin for your group and if you have an issue with poor behaviour please do speak to a member of leadership in the church if you need some support. You are permitted to remove anyone from the whatsapp group if their behaviour in the group is unacceptable, but please report any incidents where this happens to the church leadership.

## **Guidance for All Volunteers and Users of Social Media**

# St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

The following is guidance for all our volunteers and anyone who may interact with the church on social media. We ask that you:

- Identify yourself clearly on social media
- Recognise that you are personally responsible for any content you publish online including comments, acknowledging that anything shared can be in the public domain indefinitely so think before you type
- Respect copyright, libel and defamation laws and GDPR requirements
- Do not share photographs of others or their personal information without consent
- If you share the content of others, give them the credit
- Ensure what you share is factually correct and make an edit if something you believed to be correct has now been proven otherwise
- Do not use any Church of England, Liverpool diocese or St Peter's name, logo or information unless approved to do so
- Ensure all electronic communications are appropriate and professional. If using e-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, social media sites, and blogs.
- No images or video footage should ever be permitted in an area of personal privacy e.g. toilet or sleeping quarters.
- 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.
- 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 any inappropriate material by electronic means should be downloaded in to hard copy if possible and any texts of such nature must not be deleted and should be shown to the leader and Incumbent who will follow Diocese of Liverpool's safeguarding guidelines
- Do not use the public forum of social media to criticise St Peter's, it's leaders or members. If you have a complaint against the church, please use our complaints procedure or speak to a member of leadership.
- Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

# St Peter's Church

Growing in love for God, each other, and the world

- 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

As part of our volunteer agreements and commitment to safeguarding any volunteer who's online behaviour is deemed inappropriate or unacceptable in relation to the above guidance may be removed from their volunteering role with St Peter's and/or blocked or removed from the social media platform.