

**Use of Social Media with 11-18 year olds policy and guidelines**  
**Version 3 - 11 January 2018**

## **Introduction**

Social media is a very important part of the culture that young people grow up in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Virtually all of the young people that we work with at Christ Church use social media as one of their primary tools of communication. This is also true for many of our adult members of our congregation. Considering this, it is important and necessary that the youth work at Christ Church has a social media presence and uses it to communicate with young people.

However, we are aware that the world of social media is a relatively new phenomenon and safe practice has not always been explicitly stated. This has meant that parents and young people have rightly asked questions to us about how we should use this new media. This document is a response to these questions. In this document you will find our policy for working with social media and young people, guidelines for all employees and volunteers, and a glossary of terms to define what we mean by various concepts in our documents.

The policy and guidelines written here are to protect our employees and volunteers. It is also written to protect our young people, who will need to be informed about the policy so they have an understanding of safe use and can report any concerns.

## CHRIST CHURCH ABINGDON'S YOUTH MINISTRY (11-18s) SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The youth ministry will use social media to communicate with those aged 14-18, in school years 10-13. The youth ministry will not use social media to communicate 1:1 with those aged under 13. We recognise that any public pages (such as Instagram) can be followed by anybody who has a profile and we are not realistically able to stop this.

All interaction on social media must abide by the Child Protection and Data Protection policies and guidelines that Christ Church abides by. This document does not replace or supersede those policies and guidelines.

The PCC approve the use of the following social media by the youth ministry; Facebook, Instagram and Spotify.

Any further social media sites that the youth ministry wish to use will need to be approved by the PCC and the PCC will have opportunity to review and approve social media policy yearly. Other social media sites will not be used to communicate with the young people of Christ Church by it's employees and volunteers. The youth ministry's experience in using social media will be included in the annual safeguarding report to the PCC.

The PCC appoints Bea Ellaby, the current Youth Pastor, or her successor, to administrate the use of social media by the Youth Ministry of Christ Church.

The Parish Safeguarding Officer (Roland Knight), or an individual nominated by him, has the authority to monitor all interactions between the Youth Team and the youth on the social media platforms hereby approved.

Parents and guardians will be given the option to consent to (and express a wish to opt out of) contact by the youth ministry on social media.

Parents, guardians and young people will be informed about the policy. The policy will be available online, through the Christ Church website and be signposted to in the regular communication that takes place between Christ Church youth ministry and parents and young people e.g term cards.

All youth workers and volunteers will abide by the guidelines of good practice set out below. This policy will be considered to apply to any contact between employees and volunteers and the young people of Christ Church by social media.

We will not post photos that include young people in our groups onto public social media pages or platforms. As Space is a closed group, we approve the posting of photos from youth groups and activities that we've done together, and for young people to do the same. The users in this group are all moderated, as are the comments and photos. This is a helpful way of engaging young people who missed an activity, or chose not to come. Young people should not be tagged by an employee / volunteer in any photos posted in a group – it is the young person's choice to do this themselves.

## GUIDELINES

The lines between public and private can become blurred so assume that everything you write is permanent and can be viewed by anyone at any time. Also, assume that everything can be traced back to you personally as well as to your colleagues or the church.

Employees and volunteers must ensure that their posted content or links to other content does not contain:

- Libellous, defamatory, bullying or harassing statements
- Breaches of copyright and data protection
- Material of an illegal nature
- Offensive sexual references
- Inappropriate language

or bring the church into disrepute or compromise its reputation.

### Timing

Communication should not usually take place with young people after 10p.m, or on staff members' days off. Note this does not mean employees and volunteers have to be available to young people at all other times. Young people should also note that, whilst employees and volunteers will exercise appropriate discretion in dealing with the substance of communication, they cannot promise confidentiality.

### Facebook Guidelines

When using any form of social networking, to communicate with children, young people or adults when they are vulnerable, the following controls, based on the Diocesan Safeguarding Policies, should be followed to ensure the protection of all those involved:

- Virtual relationships should not take place in isolation but should be an extension of real life interaction
- Display only appropriate and necessary information about yourself.
- Only use instant messaging with young people to further the aims of your church role and not for personal reasons.
- In depth pastoral conversations should not take place over social media or instant messaging
- Do not delete any messages/ threads through social networking sites, so that you can provide evidence of your exchange should the necessity arise.
- Download to hard copy any inappropriate material received by electronic means and show to your group leader, line manager or the Incumbent.
- Carefully consider what apps display on your online activity.
- Be discerning about making public comments/rebuke and 'reacting' to a post.
- Do not comment on photos or posts, unless appropriate to your church role.
- Never add a young person or adult when they are vulnerable as a friend, unless they request this. It is at your discretion as to whether the request is accepted. Consider carefully the potential vulnerability of that person before accepting them as a friend, especially if the accompanied relationship is not strong or well established.
- Do not accept friend requests out of social network terms (i.e under 13 years of age for Facebook or Instagram).
- Maintain the upmost integrity – remember that your profile only supplements the real person and is not an alter-ego.
- On Facebook, amend your privacy settings so that you:
  - only allow friends to post on your timeline.
  - Review all posts and tags before being made public to friends. It may be appropriate to restrict the viewing of your tagged photos.

- Do not Facebook stalk (i.e dig through people’s Facebook pages to find out about them).
- Use passwords and log off of public devices promptly after use to ensure that nobody else can use social media pretending to be you.
- Even when using social media for personal reasons, remember that you are an ambassador for Christ.

#### Spotify Guidelines:

The youth team run a @CCAYOUTH Spotify account. This exists to arrange playlists for youth groups and set lists for the youth band, and allow for these to be played within our groups.

The young people and volunteers who have a Spotify account may choose to “Follow” the @CCAYOUTH Spotify account, and those in the band will be encouraged to do so, to help them know and learn songs. @CCAYOUTH will not follow any young people.

There are currently no methods for communicating directly with young people on Spotify. Should these features become available, they should **not** be used and this policy should be reviewed.

#### Instagram Guidelines:

The following additional guidelines are in place for the use of Instagram.

- The @YOUTHCCA Instagram account will be managed by the Youth Pastor, or another member of staff
- The Instagram account will be “Public” meaning that users request to follow the account and do not need approval by the page manager. This means the page operates like a website.
- Young people and parents may choose to “Follow” the @YOUTHCCA profile to see updates about events, groups, meetings or for spiritual encouragement.
- The @YOUTHCCA account will not “follow” anyone under 18 years old.
- On occasion, we may share photos of activities which have taken place involving young people (the same as would happen on the church website, and is common with school Instagram pages).
- Parents and young people are able to “opt out” from having their photo featured on the Instagram page via the consent forms.
- Young people will never be tagged in photos.
- We ask that employees and volunteers do not ‘follow’ young people on their personal accounts, and that they follow the same caution as Facebook in allowing young people to follow them.
- The Instagram direct message inbox may be used by young people and parents to send messages (like a website contact form). As with Facebook, these messages should avoid pastoral conversations.
- The Instagram “Stories” feature may be used to get young people’s votes for ideas, or to share what’s happening in a group or on a trip in real time. The “Stories” feature is live for 24 hours only and then it is deleted automatically by Instagram.

**If you need to report something you are concerned about, or ask for advice, these people are available,**

#### Christ Church

Parish Safeguarding Representative - Roland Knight	(01235) 412944, 07969 808776
Children’s Minister - Heather Hughes	(01235) XXXXXX,
Youth Minister – Bea Ellaby	(01235) <b>539176</b>
Anne Taylor (Long Furlong)	(01235) XXXXXX

#### Oxford Diocese

John Nixon - Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser [john.nixon@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:john.nixon@oxford.anglican.org), 01865 208290.

Out of hours (for cases involving church staff) the Bishop and Archdeacon have a contact number

Yvonne Morris - Diocesan Children's Advisor 01865 208255

Ian MacDonald - Diocesan Youth Advisor 01865 208253

**Other** (People you may need to contact for advice or to refer):

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 0507666

Children's Social Care Team (South) 01865 323041 or 0800 833408 (out of hours)

If it concerns a church worker

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01865 810603

Thames Valley Police (non urgent) 101

**These are taken from the Christ Church Child protection guidelines document May 2017**

**See following pages for GLOSSARY if needed**

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND OTHER NOTES

**Social media** are websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media activities might include:

- Maintaining a profile page on a networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn
- Writing or commenting on a blog, whether it is your own or the blog of another person
- Taking part in discussions on web forums or message boards.

**‘Communicate’** This would include posting information onto our official space Facebook group, or privately messaging a young person to, for example, remind them of an event, an appointment or a commitment, or responding to a message that a young person has sent them. It may also include a Facebook ‘status’ message, or anything that goes on your Facebook ‘wall’.

**Facebook** Social networking site found at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

**Facebook Groups** At Christ Church we use closed groups which are moderated or overseen by the youth pastor. At the moment we have Facebook groups where we give and share information for Space, Space Band, Forge (our boys group) and RAW (our girls group). Young people can be invited to join these groups by their friends, or via a link. All members have to be approved by the youth pastor.

**Facebook Events:** We also sometimes have event pages that inform the young people of an event we are running and allow them to indicate that they are attending.

**Facebook friendships** are a complicated issue. Allowing our volunteers to be ‘friends’ with young people enables this communication with a greater amount of simplicity. It is also worth reflecting that many of our young people are involved in close community networks within the church. A young person may well be ‘friends’ on Facebook with an adult who is a family friend through their parents, or because they play football at Tilsley park on a Monday night with them, or a variety of other reasons. We have no control over this and would not wish to. If this adult then is asked to join the youth ministry (perhaps because they have shown the ability to form good relationships with young people), to ask them to ‘unfriend’ these young people is not realistic. Therefore we would ask our employees and volunteers to make ‘friendships’ according to the guidelines set out above.

**‘given the option to consent’** On the consent forms that we send out at the beginning of the year, there will be a clause that will state that we work on social media. The parent or guardian signing the consent form will have the opportunity to cross out this statement if they do not wish to give consent. At which point we will either cease or not start communication with that young person on social media.

**Content** Anything that might be seen on a social media page that represents that person.

**‘not usually’** There may well be crisis moments in which it is justifiable to communicate at this time. But this should not be the norm.

**‘instant messaging’** In Facebook this is called ‘Facebook chat’ where you can send a message to another user. It operates a bit like e-mail but with the instant nature of text messaging. It operates on the Facebook site, and is only read by the two, or more people having the conversation. The site records these messages and they sit in your ‘inbox’ much like e-mail.

**'facebook friends'** To become a friend on Facebook with someone requires one person to request a 'friendship' and the other to accept their request. This means that they have access to the content on each other's 'wall' and can communicate in this way.

**'wall'** The place where your content, such as 'statuses', videos, links to web pages, photos etc is displayed for your friends to see.

**'posting'** The process of putting content on your wall.

**'status'** When you write something on your wall. Typically describing what you are up to, or how you are feeling, or latest news, hence 'status'.

**'Tag'** To link someone else's name, or your own, with content so that they, and their friends have their attention drawn to it. For example, you might tag someone onto a photo they are in, that you have posted on your wall.

**'Reacting'** Used to be called 'Liking'. Expressing a response to content by clicking on a relevant emoticon.

**Note:** Facebook is now becoming an obsolete model for today's youth, but these guidelines are retained for the benefit of continuity. The majority of our young people now use Facebook primarily for the "Messenger" instant messaging service.

### Spotify

Spotify is a music sharing website and application. Individuals can sign up to have a personal account for free, or for a subscription. Families can also register for an account with multiple users at a reduced rate. Spotify allows users to stream music and songs on their laptop or mobile devices. Paid subscribers can also download music to listen to when they are outside of WiFi /Mobile-Data range.

**Spotify Playlist** – Spotify allows users to collate lists of music into groups (e.g. "Space Band Song Lists" or "Weekend Away Songs") which users can follow and add to their own music library.

**Spotify Follow** – Users manually select to "follow" a playlist or another user's profile (to see all their public playlists). The person being followed is unable to see the followers account, except for their public profile. Public profiles are limited to the name / username of the person, and a photo if they have uploaded one.

### Instagram

Instagram is an image-sharing social media platform which acts much the same as a website. Organisations/ groups / individuals post information about upcoming events, promotions or what's happening in their life for others to see. Users have to share an image / video with every post they make. This is now the second most popular social media site after Snapchat amongst teenagers. Local school, @Fitzharrys, uses this site to communicate with young people and parents, as do local churches, @StAldatesYouth and @greyfriars\_youth.

**Instagram Private / Public Profiles** Users can choose to have a Private or Public profile. **We encourage all youth to have a private profile** where only their approved "followers" can see what they are posting. **We propose the @youthcca account is Public** – allowing us to promote what we are doing to reach potential youth group members in the same way as a website.

**Tagging:** On Instagram and Facebook users can choose to tag photos with the names of other users. This allows the photo to appear on that person's private account (depending on their privacy settings). We are not planning to use this feature for safety. Young people may choose to tag themselves – this is their choice, and they have the ability to untag themselves when they wish.

**Instagram Follows:** Individuals can ask to follow any profile on Instagram. Private profiles require followers to be approved before posts are visible. Public profiles instantly allow following and posts are visible – like a website. Account admins can manually remove a follower, block or report them if problems arise. Unlike Facebook Friendships, a Follow is not reciprocal – i.e. the person being followed does not automatically follow the people who are following them. ***We propose that young people are not followed back by the youthcca account.***

**Instagram Stories:** this is an image / video sharing feature on Instagram where users can post an image / video to their story which will only be visible for 24 hours. This feature allows followers to vote on topics and directs them to the main page or a website link. Stories can be public, or sent to individuals. @youthcca will only use public stories (like a website news feed).