



SOCIAL MEDIA

Approved by: Synod

7 October 2018

1 Policy Statement

Interactive services, which include social media facilities like Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, are a common means of communication for ministry and increasingly part of the work and private lives of church workers. Church workers are encouraged to use social media for ministry, mission and evangelism.

Social media presents opportunities for evangelism, advocacy and other forms of ministry, and should be used by church workers with creativity and enthusiasm. Church workers should not bring the faith into disrepute, compromise effectiveness in ministry, disclose sensitive or confidential information without authorisation or imply Diocesan endorsement of personal views.

2 Social Media Standards

The following three standards apply to use of interactive services by church workers, on personal, parish and Diocesan accounts:

- a) Use social media to strengthen your capacity for ministry.
- b) Preserve your own and others safety, privacy and dignity.
- c) Do not imply Diocesan endorsement of your personal views.

3 Training

The Archbishop or Diocesan Council may provide training and development to church workers, and may produce written training materials and guidelines to assist church workers to use interactive services effectively and appropriately.

4 Personal Accounts

A church worker may have one or more accounts with interactive services providers and may use these accounts for both ministry and non-ministry related purposes. Regardless of the purpose of an account and whether the account holder's identity is public, the church worker should ensure that all online activity is congruent with the social media standards.

5 Parish Accounts

A parish may have one or more accounts with interactive services providers. The Rector, in consultation with the Wardens and Council, should provide appropriate guidance and oversight to ensure the responsible management of accounts. This may include specific rules or guidelines which reflect the social media standards. The Rector has ultimate responsibility for and must be granted access to all parish accounts.

DIOCESAN COUNCIL POLICY 40.8



6 Diocesan Accounts

The Archbishop, in consultation with the Diocesan Secretary and Diocesan Council, should provide appropriate guidance and oversight to ensure the responsible management of Diocesan accounts. This may include specific rules or guidelines which reflect the social media standards. The Archbishop has ultimate responsibility for and must be granted access to all Diocesan accounts.

7 Safety and Privacy

As with all forms of communication, church workers must give due regard to the safety of participants when using interactive services. Church workers must prioritise safety in all communication with children and vulnerable people, including on social media.

People must be advised if information about them (such as images, video, sound or text) is to be shared on social media, and requests for privacy must be respected. Images of children must only be shared with signed permission from a parent or guardian, and images of a child must not be accompanied by identifying information.

Confidential and sensitive information obtained through ministry must not be disclosed via interactive services.

Any material on any site that raises suspicion that a child has been or will be abused, neglected, groomed or exploited must be immediately reported to the Police or Director of Professional Standards.

8 Conflict and Feedback

If any church worker considers that another church worker has not met the standards or wishes to provide feedback to a church worker regarding their social media usage, they should initiate a respectful conversation. If unsatisfied with the outcome, the church worker may seek to include in the conversation another relevant church worker, such as a warden, rector, archdeacon or bishop. Such conversations must seek reconciliation and mutual understanding. Where appropriate, Policy 55 *Complaints and Grievance Procedure* may be used.