# Christ Church Virginia Water
# Social Media policy

## Introduction

This policy is an extension of Christ Church Virginia Water's Safeguarding Policy, Data Protection Policy and Staff Handbook and seeks to promote safe, transparent and appropriate use of social media and digital communications. This policy should be read alongside current safeguarding guidance issued by the Church of England, the Diocese of Guildford, and relevant legislation.

## STOP. THINK. Then Think Again...

Before posting online consider the audience, accuracy, safeguarding implications, reputation of the Church, and whether content could be offensive, discriminatory or defamatory. Remember that online content may remain accessible even after deletion and may be copied, shared or archived by others.

## Governance and Oversight

The PCC will approve official church social media channels. Church-managed groups must have at least two named administrators with oversight responsibilities.

## Consent and Data Protection

Consent must be obtained before posting identifiable information, images or videos. Personal information must be handled in accordance with GDPR and parish policies.

## Communications with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

One-to-one communications are not permitted. Personal accounts must not be used for church-related communication with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

## Professional Ministry Accounts

Dedicated ministry accounts may be used where approved and must comply with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

## Content Standards

Those representing Christ Church Virginia Water online must behave in the digital environment in the same way as they would in face-to-face church activities. Communication should be respectful, appropriate and consistent with the values and mission of the Church. Users must maintain professional boundaries at all times. Content must not contain defamatory, bullying, discriminatory, illegal or offensive material, nor bring the church into disrepute.

## Approved Communication Channels

Ministry and church-related communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults should normally take place through approved church-managed accounts, groups or communication platforms. Personal accounts must not be used for pastoral care, youth work, safeguarding matters or routine church communications. Official church accounts should remain accessible to more than one authorised church officer.

## Mobile Devices and Retention of Communications

Safeguarding-related communications should be retained and reported appropriately. Relevant records should not be deleted.

## Reporting Concerns

Safeguarding concerns arising from digital communications must be reported immediately in accordance with parish procedures.

## Digital Charter / Christian Values Statement

Social media users representing Christ Church Virginia Water should communicate in a manner that reflects Christian values. Communications should be respectful, honest, kind and responsible. Users should disagree graciously, avoid inflammatory or abusive content and act as positive ambassadors for Christ and the Church.

## Copyright and Confidentiality

Copyright laws must be respected. Users should appropriately acknowledge the work of others and must not share confidential, sensitive or personal information without proper authority and consent.

**Document Owner:** Operations Manager

**Approved by:** Parochial Church Council (PCC), Christ Church Virginia Water

**Date Approved:** _____

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Review Frequency: Every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, Church of England guidance, safeguarding requirements, diocesan guidance, or parish practice.

**Next Review Date:** _____