

Immanuel Highters Heath

Online and Social Media Policy

Online communications and social media are essential tools for conveying positive messages about our mission, our aims and our events and services. Social media particularly can help reach new audiences if used regularly, creatively and with care. This policy sets out principles and rules, adherence to which will enable Immanuel to use social media to the benefit of the church and the furtherance of its aims, and to protect it against misuse or negligence.

Purpose of policy

This policy aims to:

- **give** clear directions to Immanuel Church members, PCC or anyone representing Immanuel through social media or online
- **ensure** that online communications from Immanuel are consistent and accurate
- **enable** Immanuel Church to use social media in the most effective way possible to reach out to new audiences, and to offer the opportunity to hear and understand the Good News of forgiveness that Jesus brings, through our worship and fellowship
- **ensure** compliance with GDPR regulations and to comply with the Immanuel Highters Heath Data Protection Policy

Scope of policy

The policy applies to all internet and social media representation of Immanuel Highters Heath, including but not limited to:

- the Website www.immanuelhightersheath.com
- A Church Near You Website www.achurchnearyou.com
- other Websites representing Immanuel Church in any capacity including YouTube
- social networks, such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Bluesky, Instagram, and Google+
- online discussion fora and blogs

General principles

The following principles should be followed by anyone representing Immanuel Highters Heath online and through social media channels:

- Always bear in mind Immanuel's overall vision. All communications (whether social media or traditional channels) should be directed towards this goal. Our vision is:
 - 'Our name means 'God with us'. To live this, we encourage and nurture all those who seek with us the opportunity to hear and understand the Good News of forgiveness that Jesus brings, through our worship and fellowship. Above all, Immanuel is where love for God and for our neighbour can be found.'
- Always bear in mind the Church of England's community guidelines:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/help/social-media-guidelines>
- Ensure that your comments 'add value' to the conversation, that they are meaningful, respectful and relevant to the topic in hand.
- Remember that the internet is permanent. If you are in any doubt about the factual correctness of your comments or the confidentiality of the material you are dealing with, or if you have concerns about its controversial nature, don't post.
- Avoid being argumentative; if you do wish to express disagreement with the opinions of others, be constructive and polite.
- Avoid the use of jargon and abbreviations except in specialist fora.
- Be mindful of social media etiquette: be generous in giving credit to others, offering constructive advice, providing useful information etc.
- In order to comply with new GDPR guidelines and the Immanuel Data Protection Policy only those names, contact details and photographs with explicit consent may be used in any social media or web pages.
- Immanuel Church reserves the right to block any user who is believed to misrepresent themselves or who appears to be taking abusive actions against any of our followers. The social media account managers will report those who abuse our social media platforms to the relevant platform in order to protect all genuine users.

Specific channels

Facebook

Immanuel currently has one Facebook account: @ImmanuelHightersHeath. Our aim is to use it to keep people informed of events and services at Immanuel Highters Heath and to encourage newcomers to our church.

- Permission to post on Immanuel's Facebook Account is held by Immanuel PCC
- Posts relating to public affairs, external organisations or issues with obvious potential for controversy must be approved by the PCC
- Shared Posts should be restricted to the type of news and events consistent with Immanuel's regular activities
- Before posting on a particular subject, check to see if someone has already posted on it, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication
- In order to comply with new GDPR guidelines and the Immanuel Data Protection Policy only those names, contact details and photographs with explicit consent may be used on the Immanuel Facebook Page

You Tube

- Permission to post on Immanuel's You Tube account is held by Immanuel PCC
- Posts relating to public affairs, external organisations or issues with obvious potential for controversy must be approved by the PCC
- Shared posts should be restricted to the type of news and events consistent with Immanuel's regular activities
- In order to comply with new GDPR guidelines and the Immanuel Data Protection Policy only those names, contact details and photographs with explicit consent may be used on the Immanuel You Tube Page

Other Social Media Platforms

- At the time of writing there are no plans to set up any other social media accounts for Immanuel Highters Heath. Any church member wishing to represent Immanuel through their own social media accounts must adhere to the principles above, and disclose their name and, where appropriate, the organisation to which they are affiliated. This also applies to personal blogs.

Immanuel website

- Permission to post on Immanuel's website is held by Immanuel PCC
- Day-to-day responsibility for managing the content of the website lies with Immanuel Web-keeper
- Any discussion fora or blogs which are developed as part of Immanuel's expansion of its online presence will be moderated by the Web-keeper in consultation with the PCC. There are no current plans to set up a blog or discussion forum
- Any requests for reciprocal links are at the discretion of the Web-keeper, but if there is any doubt, it should be discussed and agreed with the PCC
- In order to comply with new GDPR guidelines and the Immanuel Data Protection Policy only those names, contact details and photographs with explicit consent may be used on the Immanuel Website

A Church Near You Web Site

The 'Church Near You' website is a Church of England Website intended for the explicit purposes of helping people to find a suitable church. It offers the ability to advertise specific and regular services and relays other information including contact details.

- Permission to post on A Church Near You website is held by Immanuel PCC
- Day-to-day responsibility for managing the content of the Immanuel Highters Heath entry in 'A Church Near You' Web site lies with Immanuel Web keeper
- In order to comply with GDPR guidelines and the Immanuel Data Protection Policy only those names, contact details and photographs with explicit consent may be used on the Immanuel section of the 'Church Near You' Website

20 January 2026

Immanuel PCC