

Saint George the Martyr, New Mills

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by members of Saint George the Martyr, New Mills. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

Unless approved by the Incumbent, no-one is allowed to officially publish or comment via social media in any way that suggests they are doing so in connection with St George's. Those approved by the Incumbent are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Such people are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves with St George's (other than as an incidental mention of place of worship on personal social media pages on topics unrelated to St George's).

Before engaging in work-related social media, one must obtain the permission of the Incumbent.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that St. George's members/congregation must otherwise follow.

Setting up Social Media

Assistance in setting up social media accounts and their settings can be obtained from the Incumbent.

Your profile on social media sites must be consistent with your profile on the St George's website or other St George's publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Incumbent.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your faith and have a dialogue with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as names, addresses, phone numbers, pastoral conversations. We must respect the wishes of our faithful family regarding the confidentiality of conversations, views and experiences. We must also be mindful of the other denominations within our location.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the St John the Evangelist website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you belong to St George's. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Respect copyright laws

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including the Church of England, the Diocese of Derby and St. George's. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect your audience, St George's, and your fellow congregation and ministry leaders

The public in general, and St George's members and congregation, reflect a diverse set of values, beliefs and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the St George's website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgement and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of St George's.

Protect St George's our congregation and ministry leaders

St. George's congregation should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a member of the congregation, ministry leaders or clergy by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of any kind. It is acceptable to discuss general details about projects. A public blog (social media) is not the place to "conduct business".

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about St. George's in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad others into inflammatory debates. Make sure that what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

For example, consider what might happen if someone from St. George's is in a meeting and someone pulls out a print-out of your blog (social media comment) and says "This person at St. George's says that this service was rubbish". Such a comment is unsubtle and amateurish.

Once again, it's all about judgment: using social media to hurt or embarrass St. George's, our congregation, ministry leaders or clergy is dangerous and ill-advised.

Don't forget we are called to continue the mission of Christ

Make sure that social media does not interfere or contradict the values, beliefs or mission of the Church of England.

Social Media Tips

The following tips will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.

Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether the blog (social media) looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. W.' or similar, written on a light-colored background.

(Chair of the PCC)

Date adopted by PCC: 19th May 2024

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