



Social Media Policy

St Mary's Church, Haverhill

Policy last reviewed and adopted by PCC: Thursday 7th May 2026

Policy due for review: Annually after APCM

Social media is a means of digital communication and can be a very public way of enabling us as Christians to live out our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ. One of its many joys is that it is immediate, interactive, conversational and open-ended. The same common sense, kindness and sound judgement that we would use in a face-to-face encounter should be used with social media.

Social media platforms may be public or private, and include Facebook, X, YouTube, WhatsApp, TikTok, SnapChat, Instagram and many more. This social media policy applies to social media profiles run on behalf of the PCC and church community, and to those run by individuals which may be associated with church activity.

St Mary's PCC encourages people to:

- Be respectful. Do not post or re-share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful. Remember that re-sharing others' content is an endorsement of that content, unless explicitly critiqued.
- Be kind. Treat others how you would wish to be treated and assume the best in people. If you have a criticism or critique to make, consider not just whether you would say it in person, but the tone you would use. Remember that is often more difficult to convey tone, especially e.g. sarcasm, in written communication.
- Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are. Those running social media channels on behalf of the community should have a clear agreement on who is responsible for content published and how content will be moderated.
- Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained, especially in private groups where there should be at least two responsible adults. If you have any concerns, ask the parish or diocesan safeguarding officers. Do not share personal or private information in public.
- Take responsibility. You are accountable for the things you do, say and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. Assert your copyright on text and images that you wish to remain associated with you. Images taken in a public space can be shared without explicit consent, but you should make people aware that photographs are being taken for use on social media and

obtain written consent where an individual is the primary focus of an image or video or where children and vulnerable people are identifiable.

- Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.
- Disagree well. Robust disagreement and diversity are good and can help to express the fullness of life in the Spirit, but should not become divisive or discriminatory.
- Credit others. Acknowledge the work of others. Respect copyright and always credit where it is due. Be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information and always question the source of any content you are considering amplifying.
- Follow the rules. Abide by the terms and conditions of the social media platforms that you are using. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.
- Be aware. There is an increasing prevalence of information generated and posted by artificial intelligence, and material which is misleading or untrue. Users should exercise their own discretion when choosing to interact with online content, and seek help or clarification where necessary.

Adapted from the [social media community guidelines](#) for the Church of England and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.