

Social media policy

Social media is a very public way of enabling us as Christians to live out our calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ, and the Diocese of Chester welcomes its safe and positive use.

The Diocese of Chester has several “corporate” social media channels, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. The channels are managed by the diocesan Communications Teams and are used for promoting and sharing diocesan work and mission. As technology develops, these are subject to change.

These channels and any linked community groups and accounts are the only official social media channels of the Diocese of Chester.

This policy document sets out the expectations the diocese makes of individuals who interact and engage with diocesan social media profiles, accounts, and channels in a personal capacity or on behalf of the Diocese of Chester.

Underpinning this policy document is the Diocese of Chester’s emphasis on safeguarding and the Church of England’s Social Media Community Guidelines and Digital Charter.

Safeguarding

The Diocese of Chester takes safeguarding very seriously.

Social media is open to abuse and we must all take responsibility to do what we can to keep ourselves and each other safe online, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

If you have any concerns or would like further advice, please email the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Social Media Community Guidelines

The Social Media Community Guidelines have been created to encourage conversations that reflect our Christian values.

The Diocese of Chester has adopted these national guidelines. All working groups, committee members and members of staff must adhere to these guiding principles when using social media. We strongly encourage churches, clergy, and lay people to adopt the Social Media Community Guidelines in their own parish.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>

Digital Charter

The Diocese of Chester is a voluntary signatory of the Church of England's Digital Charter. The Digital Charter sets out six guiding principles to adopt when interacting online and is designed to help make social media and the web more widely positive places for conversations to happen.

We strongly encourage churches, clergy, and lay people to sign the Church of England's Digital Charter.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/our-digital-charter>

Employees of the Diocese of Chester

All diocesan employees, whether interacting, posting, or publishing on behalf of the diocese or engaging with diocesan social media channels in a personal capacity, must adhere to the Church of England's Social Media Community Guidelines, set out below.

Particular care must be taken when posting personal views on a personal account which could reasonably identify you as a diocesan employee. Due regard must be given to any views made in public that could be perceived as bringing the Diocese of Chester into disrepute.

Employees must not use their professional role or diocesan resources to in any way promote, advertise, or publicise a personal social media account.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, speak to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

Be respectful. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.

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.

Be honest. Don't mislead people about who you are.

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. If you're not sure, don't post it.

Be a good ambassador. Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

Disagree well. Some conversations can be places of robust disagreement and it's important we apply our values in the way we express them.

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 various social media platforms themselves. If you see a comment that you believe breaks their policies, then please report it to the respective company.

Church House working groups and committees

Where there is a strong communications case which supports the strategic priorities of the diocese, diocesan committees and working groups are encouraged to make use of discrete diocesan community groups, like Facebook Groups. These can be useful tools for building community, supporting parishes,

and sharing resources. Please contact the diocesan Communications Team to discuss the scope of any proposed group.

Please be aware of the following:

- All diocesan community groups must have a clear purpose and aim, agreed by the diocesan Communications Group.
- All diocesan community groups should be linked to a parent page or profile belonging to the Diocese of Chester.
- All community group administrators and its constituent members must agree to adhere to the Church of England's Social Media Community Guidelines.
- At least one member of the diocesan Communications Team must have administrative privileges to any diocesan community group.

Community users

The Diocese of Chester has adopted the Church of England's Social Media Community Guidelines and is a signatory of the Church of England's Digital Charter. We strongly encourage churches, clergy, and lay people to sign the Digital Charter and to adopt the Social Media Community Guidelines in their own parish.

Further support, advice and training is available from the diocesan Communications Team based at Church House.