

St Mary's Church, Highley

Social Media Policy

In line with the Church of England Social Media Policy

Purpose and Commitment

At St Mary's, Highley, we recognise that social media is a powerful means of communication, connection, and witness. It allows us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, strengthen community life, and extend hospitality and care beyond our church walls. This policy sets out clear guidance for using social media responsibly and respectfully, whether through official church channels or personal accounts associated with St Mary's. Our aim is to ensure that every post, image, or interaction reflects our Christian values of truth, kindness, integrity, and love. We are committed to creating a safe and positive online presence that upholds the reputation of the Church, protects all who engage with us digitally, and honours God in all we do and say.

Scope and Review

This policy applies to all clergy, lay leaders, staff, and volunteers involved in the life and ministry of St Mary's, Highley. It covers both official church-managed social media accounts and personal use of social media where an individual is identifiable as being connected with St Mary's. The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, in consultation with the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and relevant safeguarding officers.

Date of last review: 13 November 2025

Next review due: November 2026

1. Purpose of Social Media

Social media is a valuable tool for communication, outreach, and community engagement. It enables St Mary's to share news, events, and reflections, build and nurture relationships, and communicate the Christian message in accessible ways.

2. Guiding Principles

All use of social media connected to St Mary's, Highley should reflect truthfulness, kindness, responsibility, integrity, and safety, protecting all—especially children and vulnerable adults.

3. General Conduct

Assume all posts are public. Avoid sharing offensive or divisive content. Respect privacy, correct errors promptly, and remember that online behaviour reflects the Church.

4. Safeguarding

Never post information or images of children or vulnerable adults without written consent. Avoid private messaging with minors. Report concerns immediately to the Parish Safeguarding Officer or Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

5. Confidentiality and Privacy

Respect all confidential information and do not share details of pastoral or financial matters. Always seek consent before posting photos from church events.

6. Managing Official St Mary's Accounts

All church accounts must be approved by the PCC and managed by at least two administrators. Content should be accurate, positive, and inclusive, with safeguarding concerns referred to the Rector or Parish Safeguarding Officer.

7. Personal Use of Social Media

Those involved in ministry or leadership are encouraged to use social media responsibly, maintaining a Christian witness and avoiding criticism of individuals or the Church.

8. Responding to Conflict or Negative Comments

Respond with calm and courtesy; avoid public disputes. Escalate issues to administrators or the Rector if necessary.

9. Breaches of Policy

Breaches may lead to content removal, suspension of access, or disciplinary action where appropriate.

10. Review and Oversight

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to new diocesan guidance. Oversight lies with the Rector, the Parish Safeguarding Officer, and the PCC.

Approved by the PCC of St Mary's Church, Highley

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