

Social Media Policy

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1. Overview

The Anglican Diocese of Newcastle recognises the importance of social media as a tool for communication and collaboration. Online platforms are fundamentally changing the way clergy and paid employees work and engage with each other, with parishioners and the community.

Our electronic presence is a window into the life of the church through which many people gaze. They get an understanding of who we are and what we believe by what is included.

All Offices of the Diocese are therefore accountable to ensure the use of social media and online communication is aligned to this policy to ensure the organisation and users are protected from inappropriate use, whilst also harnessing the benefits of social media.

2. Purpose

This policy is intended to help clergy, volunteers and paid employees of the Diocese (offices of the Diocese) make appropriate decisions about the use of social media such as blogs, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards, or comments on web-articles, such as Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn.

Offices of the Diocese should be aware of and understand the potential risks and damage to the diocese or a parish that can occur, either directly or indirectly from their personal use of social media and all should comply with this policy to ensure that the risk is minimised.

Offices of the Diocese are personally responsible for content published in their personal capacity on any form of social media platform. When in doubt, employees can seek guidance from the Communications Manager on how to comply with the following obligations.

3. Definitions

3.1 Social media

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, YouTube, and blogs.

3.2 Employees

In this policy, employees include clergy, paid employees, volunteers and students on placements.

3.3 Official Use

Official use is when an employee, clergy, parishioner, volunteer or supporter is using social media as a representative of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle or a parish/church within the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle.

3.4 Personal Use

Personal use is when an employee, clergy, parishioner, volunteer or supporter is using social media as themselves, not officially representing the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle or a parish/church, but identifying themselves as affiliated officially with the Diocese in their online biographies, profiles or posts, or through other digital platforms.

4. Key Principles

Guidelines for functioning in an online/electronic world are the same as the values, ethics and confidentiality policies Officers of the Diocese are expected to live every day. Here are some key principles to guide your social media use:

- Your online actions should at all times be consistent with your work and Christian values and you take responsibility for the things you do, say, or write.
- You're an ambassador for the Diocese. If you are ordained, lead in or are employed by the Diocese, others will see you in your public role as a representative of the Diocese.
- State and Federal legislation and the child protection protocols and policy of the Diocese must always be observed.
- You should practice transparency and accountability in your interactions, while practicing courtesy and respect.

5. Standards of Use

5.1 Posting Content

DO:

- Ensure content is consistent with your work and the Christian values of love, tolerance and forgiveness.
- Respect copyright, libel and defamation laws.
- Correct your mistakes and apologise if anyone was upset or offended.
- Use your best judgement.
- Remember what you publish will be around for a long time. Consider the content carefully.
- Make sure all pages are up to date with appropriate contact details and service times.

DON'T:

- Post offensive, discriminatory, defamatory, harassing, or inconsistent content.
- Provide sensitive, private or confidential information or matters of the Diocese.
- Use Diocesan logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. If you do use them, please obtain correct permissions and follow brand guidelines.
- Forget your day job.
- Upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent.

5.2 Follow Privacy Regulations

DO:

- Ensure that people's privacy is respected such that their personal contact details, photographs of them and circumstances are not on the page without their knowledge and consent.
- Protect yourself and your privacy.

DON'T:

- Tag photos without consent
- Provide personal details

5.3 Exercise Professionalism

DO:

- Exercise appropriate care in private conversations.
- Exercise personal responsibility.
- Know and follow the existing Diocese of Newcastle Child Protection Policy.
- Include a disclaimer that the views are your own and not those of the Anglican Church or the Diocese of Newcastle.
- Consider the impact on the reputation of the Anglican Church or the Diocese of Newcastle.

DON'T:

- Air Personal Grievances. Social networks are never a good place to air personal grievances with other staff members or followers.
- Do anything that breaches your terms of employment.
- Make comments that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to or about your work or about another person or entity.

5.4 Assess Tone/Language

DO:

- Always consider the 'voice' used.
- Respect your audience – do not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in a Christian environment or Anglican Diocese of Newcastle workplace.

6. Abide by Site Policies

Each social media platform has a set of terms and policies of use. It is important to familiarise yourself with these policies when posting on/for a page.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/policies

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/tos>

LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement?trk=hb_ft_userag

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/policy.html>

7. Anglican Diocese of Newcastle Official Facebook Page

Only those officially designated by the Diocese of Newcastle or the Bishop of Newcastle have the authorisation to speak on behalf of the Diocese.

Individuals who are employees, parishioners, volunteers or supporters of the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle do not have permission to post official Diocese content. They can, however, repost, retweet etc. Diocese posts, material or comment without substantial or meaningful change as part of showing their affiliation or support for the organisation.

If you notice any content posted on social media about us (whether complimentary or critical) please report it to Communications Manager.

8. Handling Online Content

8.1 Crisis support through social media

It is recommended to not handle crisis support through social media. In the case where crisis outreach occurs through a social media platform, a message for further support should be posted to the page as quickly as possible.

8.2 Complaints through social media

Complaints or negative comments will be made through social media platforms. It is recommended not to argue or refute complaints/negative comments, as this behaviour can antagonise or fuel other attacks. Rather, it is important to address the comment as soon as possible.

8.3 Deleting Posts

Social media is a two-way platform in which information can be disseminated, but is also a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to community views. It is recommended to not delete any posts from your page except when they are defamatory or contain offensive material. Where necessary, it is advised to contact the user whose post has been removed, explain why it has been removed, and outline any necessary action(s) for it to be reposted.

8.4 Bring issues to the Diocesan office's attention

If you find information online that you think the Diocesan office should respond to, contact the Communications Manager. They will arrange a response from a relevant subject matter expert.

9. More information

If any person is in doubt and seeks further clarification on any point, they should contact the Communications Manager at the Diocesan Office.

Any member of staff who feels that they have been harassed or bullied, or are offended by material posted or uploaded by a colleague onto a social media website should inform the Communications Manager.