

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. Policy statement

This policy sets out the church's position on employees' use of social networking websites and blogs, whether conducted on church media and in work time or your own private media in your own time.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all paid employees.

3. Your Responsibilities

Social networking websites and blogs offer a useful means of keeping in touch with friends and colleagues, and they can be used to exchange views and thoughts on shared interests, both personal and work-related.

The church does not object to you setting up personal accounts on social networking websites or blogs on the internet, in your own time and using your own computer systems. However, you must not do so on church media or in work time.

You must not link your personal social networking accounts or blogs to the church's website. Any such links require the church's prior consent.

You must not disclose church confidential information, breach copyright, defame the church or its congregation, suppliers, customers or other employees, or disclose personal data or information about any individual that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998 on your blog or on your social networking website.

Social networking website posts or blogs should not be insulting or abusive to the congregation, other employees, suppliers, or church contacts.

4. References to the Church or to the Congregational Federation

If reference is made to your employment, to the church or to the Federation or its officers you should state to the reader that the views that you express are your views only and that they do not reflect the views of the church or the Federation. You should include a notice such as the following:

'The views expressed on this website/blog are mine alone and do not reflect the views of my church as my employer'

You should always be conscious of your duty as an employee to act in good faith and in the best interests of the church under UK law. The church will not

tolerate criticisms posted in messages in the public domain or on blogs about the church or any other person connected to the church or the Congregational Federation.

You must not bring the church or the Federation into disrepute through the content of your website entries or your blogs.

Any misuse of social networking websites or blogs as mentioned above may be regarded as a disciplinary offence and may result in dismissal without notice.

You should be aware that any information contained in social networking websites may be used in evidence, if relevant, to any disciplinary proceedings.

5. Third Parties

You must not disclose any information that is confidential to the church or to any third party that has disclosed information to the church. The church's Confidentiality & Data Protection Policy (detailed elsewhere) provides guidance about what constitutes confidential information.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the churches policy on IT (also detailed elsewhere).

6. Procedures

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the church's Disciplinary Procedure. You should be aware that the church regards breach of any part of this policy as gross misconduct that may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

If you become aware of information relating to the church posted on the internet, you should bring this to the attention of your manager.