

Henham, Elsenham and Ugley Benefice Social Media Policy

These guidelines apply equally to Facebook, WhatsApp and any other social media platforms used by church members, for example X, You Tube, Zoom, Teams, blogs (this is not an exhaustive list).

Accountability for the content on the site is the responsibility of the administrator for each site and any content that does not conform to this policy must be removed from the site.

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that they and others are safe online.

Please be mindful of the following: -

- Be mindful that anything you publish is instantly available, now and in the future.
- Be yourself and do not use separate identities or pseudonyms online.
- Protect your own privacy and do not disclose any personal information of yourself or others

By engaging in any social media accounts, you agree to:

Be safe. The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults must be maintained. If you have any concerns, ask the Parish Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@heuchurch.co.uk) or diocesan safeguarding adviser (safeguarding@chelmsford.anglican.org).

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. Never post material relating to others without their permission.

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.

The GDPR rules for each church must be followed when using social media and these can be found on the church website: <https://heuchurch.org/gdpr-data-privacy-notice/>

Most importantly, (i) members joining a What s App group need to be aware that their mobile number will be visible to other group members and (ii) you must not share any personal information (e.g. address, email address, phone numbers) unless specific permission has been given by the owner of the information to do so.

To consider for protecting yourself and others online

Online, including WhatsApp, are public spaces so information, such as mobile numbers can be taken and passed to others, messages will be read by multiple others and potentially can be passed to people outside the group

- Do not post personal information, such as email address, home address, in the group; if someone does require the information then send to them directly/privately.
- If linking online with video, consider what is in the background and blur the background and/or remove anything that may include personal information if a non-closed group.
- Do not pass on information to people outside the group without their permission

Guidelines For What s App groups:

Important information to consider when using What s App.

- The person with responsibility for each What' s App group is the administrator of the group.
- All What's App groups should make the purpose of the group clear – the key points can be placed in the group description under Group Info on What's App
- NB None of the groups that are used by members of HEU benefice are official church groups and it is the responsibility of the administrator of the group to monitor the activity of the group and remove any inappropriate content.
- People should only be added to the group with their permission.
- People should be able to leave the group without giving a reason
- For groups related to general church activities, (not for a specific group), then anyone should have the opportunity to join the group, if they wish.
- There should be no expectation for people to comment, (with emojis or words) to each post

Don'ts

- Don't share requests outside of the group, without permission.
- Don't pass on the personal details e.g., mobile phone number that can be obtained from the group site, without asking permission or knowing that this is freely available to church members on the church rota.
- Don't post on What's App anything you wouldn't share face-to-face.
- Don't share on behalf of others, unless they are unable to do so themselves and you have their explicit permission.
- Don't use the group for discussing controversial topics that could cause conflict and compromise our unity as a church family.

What's App provide advice on using the app safely and responsibly:

- How to use What's app responsibly
https://faq.whatsapp.com/361005896189245/?helpref=uf_share
- How to use Whats App safely
https://faq.whatsapp.com/1313491802751163/?helpref=uf_share

For Social Media and Mobile Communications with Young People

For these guidelines, Young People is anyone under the age of 18; many social media sites, including What's App, have a minimum user age of 13.

Guidance for social media with Young People can be found at the sites below, which give more detailed advice that is regularly updated:

- [Thinkuknow](#) (or directly to [CEOP Education](#))
- [Parentzone](#)
- [Parents Protect – Internet Safety](#)
- [ChildNet International](#)

Young People's rights on Whats App

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2018/03/WhatsApp-Simplified-T-Cs.pdf>

Best Practice. Sensible precautions should be taken in the use of social media within a Church context. In many ways, these precautions are simply online versions of safe practice in the offline world:

- Avoid 'lone working' in the online world: Practically, this means avoiding one-to-one online chat (e.g. direct messaging) between adults and young people. Any message that needs to be conveyed between a leader and a group member should always go via a parent.

- Maintain appropriate boundaries in the online world: Just as in the offline world, it is important to keep a distinction between our private lives and our work within church, and to pay particular attention to the dynamics of power and influence.

- Do not use personal social media accounts to contact young people: The simplest way to observe the above two precautions is to avoid having leaders and young people as friends on social media (e.g. Facebook). It is far preferable to have a specific account for the group in question (such as St Andrew s Anywhere Youth Group), and to ask young people to like that page. Any news about group events or anything else can be posted on that page. More than one leader should have access to this page, providing for accountability and transparency. Conversations between leaders and young people should happen in the public section of these pages (such as the wall or in comments under posts) where everyone can see them, rather than via direct messages.

- Behave in the online world as you would offline: Simply put, if you would not say it offline, do not say it online! This includes posting links to offensive or otherwise inappropriate content, making comments about someone s appearance that could be interpreted as either sexual or offensive, or liking inappropriate content on social media.

- Treat online consent the same as offline consent : You will need the consent of the individual and/or their parents to use and store photographs, to retain any information relating to them online, and so on. Letting their parents/guardians know or asking permission to add them to social media groups, such as What s app dependent on their age, to ensure parents are aware of any groups related to church activities that their young people are a member of is advisable/essential dependent on age.

Approved by the PCCs of Henham, Elsenham and Ugley

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