



Formed by the churches of St. Pauls' – St. James' – Holy Trinity

Social Media Safeguarding Policy

Version 1.3

18th June 2018

The following policy attains to the use of social media (I.E Facebook, twitter etc.) in the context of contacting young people that come into contact with Holy Trinity Bushey. This specifically addresses the use of the Facebook account, Holy Trinity Bushey – YouthClub, but it's guiding principles will inform any other similar work across the parish as youth ministry grows.

This policy has taken inspiration, information and details from The Diocese of Gloucester, The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and Youthworkresource.com

Initial Guidance

Holy Trinity Bushey recognises the important role that social networking websites play in the ways in which young people communicate and the effectiveness of these groups within youth ministry. However, it is also a potential safeguarding minefield. Therefore, the following rules and suggestions are to be followed to insure the safety of both staff and young people.

Account access

- The account is to be accessible by several core team members. These members will all have a DBS check and be held accountable for their actions to the church leadership and the PCC.
- This is in order to keep the team accountable to one another. Posts will be seen by multiple appropriate adults.

Adding “friends”

- Young people can only be added to be a friend of ‘Holy Trinity Bushey – YouthClub once the parents/guardian and youth have been informed of the incoming invite. To keep this simple, the invites will only be sent by the Parish Youth worker so that He can keep a log for online safety purposes.

Instant Messaging

- When talking to the young people it is important that this is only done from the account linked to the email address Youthwork@busheyparish.org. This account may be examined by any of the staff team and or PCC and should be used for Youth Club related purposes only and not in any way for a team member's personal affairs.
- **ALL** posts made should be signed off by the member of the team who has written it.

(E.g. From Joe). This is to help keep both youth and parents aware of whom their children are talking to.

- If at any point a personal message is received from a young person that makes the team feel uncomfortable, there is absolutely no need to respond. The comments should be screenshotted and kept as evidence. Appropriate action will then be discussed at a team meeting.

Posting updates

- Posts are to be factual information with no personal content. Expressions of excitement or a sense of looking forward to an event are acceptable but must remain vague as to not infer any unwanted affections or attention from the young people.
- The use of emoji's and terminology that could be misinterpreted is **banned** as this could lead to dangerous misunderstandings by parents or youth. A simple ☺ is acceptable but anything more complex is dangerous.
- Again, **ALL** posts made should be signed off by the member of the team who has written it.
(E.g. From Joe).

Accountability

- All team members with access to the account will be held accountable to both their line managers and the PCC. If at any point it is found that a member has posted something inappropriate, that member will be immediately suspended until a further review can be made.

Confidentiality & Disclosures

- It will be made perfectly clear that those messaging the account Holy Trinity Bushey – YouthClub will be contacting a group of adults. That there will be no “Private messages” as all will be seen by core members. This will be written on the Facebook profile itself as well as mentioned regularly.
- It is the duty of the youth team at Holy Trinity Bushey to safeguard and protect the young people we serve. Therefore, if a message is received that causes concern within the team (E.G. – trouble at home), the message will be noted as evidence, discussed at the next team meeting and appropriate action will

be taking according to parish child protection policies.

- if the disclosures are made that are not deemed serious however, it is the duty of the team to maintain privacy of the young people. If for example a young person tells the team they are struggling at school because they like another pupil romantically. **It is unacceptable** for any mention of this to be made on social media or in the presence of staff, parents or other youth.

Times of use

- The account should be used only between the hours of 9:00 and 20:00. This is in order to protect the team. To separate their work, social and private life.

Review and Approval Cycle

The review cycle for this policy is every 2 years.

Date of Review – 18th June 2018

Date of Approval by PCC –

Date of Next Update – June 2020