



Holy Trinity Church Online Activity and Social Media Guidance



Holy Trinity Church is aware that Churches advertising online and associated groups are becoming more common and are committed to ensure the safety of everyone who takes part. These good practice guidelines have been compiled to help Clergy, the PCC and all who worship and visit the Church access online activities safely. Essentially, people should participate online in the same way as they would in any other public forum.

For many people the internet has become a primary source for gaining information about the world around them and networking with friends and acquaintances. Used responsibly social media and the internet can be of benefit: providing the opportunity for networking; getting to know people; gaining and sharing information about Church's services and events; learning about the Christian Faith; and spreading the Gospel. Your actions should be consistent with Christian values, and you are responsible for the things you do, say or write. It's important to be aware of both the risks and opportunities that Social Media platforms provide.

The safety of all children, young people and adults must be maintained at all times. If a child, young person or adult is in immediate danger or requires medical attention call the emergency service on 999. Do not delay.

Keeping Safe Online

It is important that everyone follows these foundational rules when online. Everyone has a responsibility to themselves and other people's online safety. Below are some key rules to help protect the safety, privacy and wellbeing to all children, young people and adults whilst online.

Protect your identity

- Keep your personal information private on your profile or when talking to other people online. This includes your name, address, telephone number, mobile number, private email address and pictures, even if people ask for this. You shouldn't share this information with anyone you do not know well.
- We recommend that you don't use your full name on social media to protect yourself from unwanted attention online.
- Consider what people see when you are online. Remove anything that may disclose personal information about you such as your location or family and when using video calls blur your

background or use a plain background. Dress appropriately and consider whether you would wear certain clothes if you were meeting in person.

- You should never arrange to meet someone you have only met online. If you do you should tell a family member or friend and consider taking them with you. Meet and remain in a public place. Always have a mobile phone with you which is switched on.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Be aware not everything is as it seems

- It's important to be honest online and not mislead people about who you are. At the same time make sure you protect your personal information at all times.
- Be aware that online and over the phone, people aren't always who they claim to be. Do not give out your personal information such as bank details, names, addresses if you don't recognise the phone number, email address or profile.
- Be careful who you trust online because some people create unrealistic profiles to trick you and they are strangers or hackers.
- Think before you answer private messages. Make sure you know who the person is that has messaged you and that the wording of the message isn't an unusual link.

Report inappropriate behaviour

- Make sure that everyone including, children, young people and adults are aware of the online policies of the Church for keeping safe online.
- Act immediately if you think you or someone else is at risk online.

Avoid confrontation

- You are always allowed to log out of a chat room or activity to avoid unwelcome situations or change your screen name.
- Do not hesitate to block people you do not wish to interact with. This can be done at any time and may be done for various reasons.
- If someone breaks the rules of the Church's guidelines, online group or chat, you are to report them to the person leading immediately.

Take responsibility for your words and actions

- You are accountable to yourself for everything you do, say and write online. Text and images shared can be private, just friends or public and they remain permanent once posted online. If you're not sure, don't post it.
- Treat other people the way you would want to be treated. Do not post or share content that is sexually explicit, inflammatory, hateful, abusive, threatening or otherwise disrespectful.
- Personal and professional life can easily become blurred online so think before you post.

Respect other people

- You must always have permission from the organisation or person when taking images or information online (for example, a photo company or young people's organisation).
- Follow copyright rules when it's presented on a website or social media platform. Be careful not to share sensitive or confidential information about people or topics and consider whether you have asked permission where needed.
- Treat others how you would wish to be treated. If you disagree or feel you want to make a criticism, consider having a conversation in person about it rather than online. This is because words and phrases don't always come across in the way their intended to online.
- Disagree well through open and honest conversations and try to do it in person rather than online so others can see your facial expression and hear your tone of voice.

These are just some examples of helpful rules to follow when online for all children, young people and adults.

How will Holy Trinity Church, Seaton Carew respond to people who breach our social media community guidelines?

Holy Trinity Church may act if they receive complaints about individuals or spot inappropriate, unsuitable or offensive material posted to the website or social media account. This may include deleting comments, blocking users or reporting comments as inappropriate. Anyone acting illegally and breaking the law will be reported to the police.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Reporting a safeguarding concern

If a child, young person or adult is in immediate danger or requires medical attention call the emergency service on 999. Do not delay.

Remember

RECOGNISE: Identify any issues and keep yourself safe.

RESPOND: Remember how to keep yourself and other people safe. And follow the rules.

RECORD: If you are not happy with something or you see something that concerns you, make a note of it so you can report any relevant information.

REFER: Tell the person in charge/leadership team or the host what you are concerned about. Remember if someone is in immediate danger contact the emergencies services. Do not delay.

Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Holy Trinity Church, Seaton Carew Safeguarding Officer – Jackie Hamilton can be contacted on 07922922824 to discuss or report a safeguarding concern or incident (please note this number is not answered 24hrs a day, 7 days a week).

Further Safeguarding contact details can be found on the '*Safeguarding*' page on our website.

Last updated 19/05/24