

Bishops' Conference of Scotland
NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL

It is easy for the line between our professional and personal identities to become blurred. Even in your own free time, what you say and how you behave on your own personal social media account, can impact on the reputation of the Church.

This social media policy provides guidance about how to stay safe online; how to safeguard the Church's reputation; and when and where to seek further advice or support. *Good Practice:*

- Be safe. Check privacy settings on all social media. Think about who can access your information, contact details and who you are sharing information with. Your profile, can usually be made public, private or restricted.
- Be honest and transparent - use your own name. Do not post on any social media platform anonymously, or using a pseudonym.
- Remember you are in a public space – only publish things you are happy for others to see. Presume anyone and everyone can see what you post, and it will be around online for a long time.
- Use common sense to judge what is appropriate and inappropriate information to share, like or comment on.
- Be respectful at all times. Do not use discriminatory or abusive language.
- Do not make disparaging or defamatory statements about the Church, parishioners, volunteers, agency staff or other contacts.
- Do not share or disclose confidential information and intellectual property relating to the Church, staff or third party contacts.
- Do not post text, images, videos related to the Church, staff or other third parties without their prior permission. Images should not be obtained online and shared without full copyright.
- Do not engage in online communications with negative or argumentative users. Rather, seek advice from the Media Office to agree an appropriate response to criticism or feedback. Sometimes the best course of action is to simply **not respond** at all.
- If you receive threatening, abusive or discriminatory comments on social media sites, both personally or relating to your role – please report it to the Media Office.