

Social Media Policy for the Diocese of Norwich

A guide for staff connected to the Diocese of Norwich on using social media to promote the work of the Diocese of Norwich and in a personal capacity.

Introduction

The Diocese of Norwich recognises the value of social media as a tool for communication, engagement and outreach. This guide provides information for the responsible and effective use of social media platforms by representatives of the Diocese, its parishes and its employees.

Principles

The use of social media by the Diocese of Norwich will be guided by the following principles:

- Faithfulness to the teachings and values of the Christian faith.
- Respect and Dignity: treating all users with respect and dignity, regardless of their beliefs or opinions.
- Accuracy and Truthfulness: Sharing information that is accurate and truthful, avoiding misinformation and rumours.
- Clarity and Transparency: use clear and concise language, be transparent about who you are and what you represent.
- Safeguarding: prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all, particularly children and vulnerable adults.

General Guidelines

- When using social media in a professional capacity to promote the work of your parish, always identify yourself as a representative of the Diocese of Norwich/Church of England.
- Be respectful at all times, even when you disagree.
- Be accurate and truthful.
- Be mindful of copyright and intellectual property rights. Obtain necessary permission if required.
- Be responsible for your actions, what you post online reflects on the Diocese of Norwich and the Church of England.
- Be a good steward of your time.

Using social media platforms to share news and events linked to church/mission/Diocese

We encourage you to use social media platforms. If you need help, contact the Communications team. You can use social media for the following:

- Share news and events
- Promote the work of your parish or ministry

- Share inspiring stories of faith
- Engage in respectful dialogue about faith and current issues
- Connect with parishioners and the wider community.

Before you post, ask yourself these questions:

- Is this information accurate?
- Is this post respectful and kind?
- Does this post reflect the values of the Diocese of Norwich/Church of England
- Could this post harm anyone?

If you are unsure at all, it's always best to err on the side of caution and not post it.

Safeguarding

It is vital to be aware of safeguarding considerations when using social media. Here are some things to keep in mind.

- Do NOT share any personal information
- Be careful about what photos and videos you share.
- If you see something online that concerns you, report it.

Grievance

Any individual who believes this guidance has been violated may submit a grievance to the Communications Team at the Diocese of Norwich via news@dioceseofnorwich.org

Monitoring accounts linked to the Diocese of Norwich

The Communications Team reserve the right to monitor social media activity on official Diocese accounts, as well as those linked to the Diocese of Norwich and may moderate comments and posts to ensure compliance.

Individual Responsibility

All users of social media are ultimately responsible for their own online behaviour.

Training

If you need support with social media, the Church of England Digital Labs team run excellent webinars and blogs to help you. Furthermore, the Diocese of Norwich Communications Team can offer advice and digital training in person when required.

Additional resources:

- Digital Labs: [Church of England Digital Labs | The Church of England](#)
- Church of England social media guidelines: [Social media community guidelines | The Church of England](#)
- NSPCC online safety guide: [Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

Conclusion

We hope this guide is helpful in creating a positive online presence for the Diocese of Norwich. If you have any questions, please contact the Communications team at news@dioceseofnorwich.org

Guidelines for using Social Media

Diocese of Norwich appropriate conduct for social media channels

1. Elizabeth Humphries, Communications Manager for the Diocese of Norwich, and the Communications Team are responsible for managing the social media accounts for the Diocese of Norwich. Only those authorised to do so by the Communications Manager will have access to these accounts.
2. The content on the Diocese of Norwich social media channels is checked and responded to by the communications team Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm. On evenings and weekends, the content is checked and responded to only in an emergency or crisis situation.
3. Any staff, clergy or volunteers looking after a church social media platform within the Diocese of Norwich, should ensure they reflect the Diocese of Norwich values in what they post and respond to.
4. All social media content on official Diocese of Norwich platforms must have a purpose and a benefit for the Diocese of Norwich and accurately reflect its position and values.
5. All content will bring value to the audience.
6. The content will be presented clearly and well.
7. Staff must always check the quality of posts before sharing them. Always pause before posting.
8. Reply to comments in a timely manner when a response is appropriate.
9. If anyone wishes to contribute content for the official Diocese of Norwich social media channels, they should speak to the Communications Manager first.
10. Staff shouldn't post content about anyone without their express permission.
11. If using interviews, videos or photos that clearly identify a child or young person, staff must ensure they have the consent of a parent or guardian before using them on social media.
12. Always check facts. Staff should not automatically assume that material is accurate.
13. Be honest. If you've made a mistake, don't be afraid to admit it.
14. Staff should refrain from offering personal opinions on church accounts within the Diocese of Norwich, as well as via the official Diocese of Norwich accounts.
15. Churches may have their own social media platforms but should not set up other groups, pages or channels on behalf of the Diocese of Norwich. By having official social media

accounts in place, the Communications Team can ensure consistency of the brand and focus on building a strong following.

16. If a complaint is made on the Diocese of Norwich social media channels, staff should seek advice from the Communications Manager before responding.
17. Sometimes issues can arise on social media which can escalate into a crisis situation because they are sensitive or risk serious damage to the Diocese of Norwich's reputation. The nature of social media means that complaints are visible and can escalate quickly. Not acting on them can be detrimental to the charity. Please alert the Communications Team as soon as possible.
18. If you already have a parish church social media account, or you wish to set one up, please inform the Communications Team via news@dioceseofnorwich.org who will add the information to the social media directory. This allows the Diocese of Norwich (NDBF) to know which accounts are operating that are linked to the charity.
19. Always assume that your work related social media activity is visible to the Diocese of Norwich and all potential and current employees, senior staff, supporters and volunteers.
20. Keep your personal and company related social media accounts separate. Do not use personal social media on company equipment or in company time.

Use of personal social media accounts – appropriate conduct

This policy does not intend to inhibit personal use of social media but instead flags up those areas in which conflict may arise. Diocese of Norwich staff are expected to behave appropriately and in ways that are consistent with the Diocese of Norwich's values, both online and in real life.

1. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Diocese of Norwich.
2. Make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the Diocese of Norwich. If you are talking about the Diocese of Norwich, you must use a disclaimer such as: "The views expressed on this site are my own and don't represent the Diocese of Norwich's position, policies or opinions."
3. Staff who have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that they work at the Diocese of Norwich should discuss any potential conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Communications Team. Similarly, staff who want to start blogging and wish to say that they work for the Diocese of Norwich should discuss any potential conflicts of interest.
4. Those in specialist roles, such as senior management and clergy, must take particular care as personal views published may be misunderstood as expressing the Diocese of Norwich's view.
5. Use common sense and good judgement. Be aware of your association with the Diocese of Norwich. Ensure your profile and content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the general public, colleagues and partners.

6. If you are contacted by the press about your social media posts that relate to the Diocese of Norwich, you should talk to the Communications Team at the Diocese of Norwich immediately and do not respond directly.
7. Never use the Diocese of Norwich logo unless approved to do so. You can ask for permission from the Communications Team.
8. What you publish online is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so do consider the content carefully.
9. Think about your reputation as well as the Diocese of Norwich. Always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be polite.
10. We encourage staff to share content from the Diocese of Norwich.

Further Guidelines

Libel

Libel is when a false written statement that is damaging to a person's reputation is published online or in print. Whether staff are posting content on social media as part of their job or in a personal capacity, they should not bring the Diocese of Norwich into disrepute by making defamatory comments.

Copyright law

It is critical that all staff abide by the laws governing copyright, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Never use or adapt someone else's images or written content without permission. Failing to acknowledge the source/author, where permission has been given to reproduce content is also considered a breach of copyright.

Confidentiality

Any communications that staff make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality. For example, information meant for internal use only.

Discrimination and Harassment

Staff should not post content that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of any individual, on either an official Diocese of Norwich channel or a personal account.

Under 18s and vulnerable people

Where known, communication with young people under 18 via social media, staff should ensure the online relationship with the Diocese of Norwich follows the same rules as the offline 'real life' relationship. Staff should ensure that young people have been made aware of the risks of communication and sharing information online and given guidance on privacy and security settings.

Responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for their own compliance with this policy. Breaches of policy may incur disciplinary action.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Diocese of Norwich will amend this policy, following consultation, where appropriate.