



St. John the Baptist, Chapeltown

Supplement to Safeguarding Children Policy, September 2011

GUIDELINES FOR SAFE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

Introduction

These guidelines are meant to help youth leaders (employed and volunteers) make wise use of social networking websites (e.g. Facebook), e-mail, Twitter and texting by mobile phone, in their work with young people.

[These guidelines are provisional and are intended to affect youth leaders only until the PCC has had opportunity to seek advice from the Diocese and other churches. From the date of this document they will apply until further decision of the PCC.]

The central test

The first and most important test is this: *will this communication be for the glory of God?* (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Some detailed guidance

1. With all these media, never private message one young person, always include someone else in the message. Similarly do not reply to a private message without copying the St. John's youth leaders Facebook page (or in the case of an e-mail accountability@stjohnschap.co.uk). You could also post it publicly on their wall. Where possible, obtain parental consent to such messaging/communications.
2. Do not include young people in any instant messaging; it is really easy to draw up a list of people who you want to exclude from chat possibilities.
3. Save and never delete any online communications. Keep all texts to and from young people for at least 6 months.
4. Be careful not to show favouritism – interacting with one young person (e.g. posting on their wall, liking things etc.) more than another. It tends to be the young people we like most that we interact with the most. This can be harmful and hurtful for other young people. So, for example, if you wish one young person a happy birthday, then you must do it for everyone.

5. Generally, ensure your web profile is 100% suitable for your young people to view. Ensure pictures, updates, links, wall content are all wholesome and above-board, with no damaging content. If you want to connect with your young people with your own social networking site, ensure all future content is suitable. Ask yourself: do these words or images display the fruit of God's Holy Spirit - *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control?* (Galatians 5:22)

6. Immediately delete from your wall any inappropriate content that others may post on it (apart from any situation in which the content might raise safeguarding concerns, in which case consult the Safeguarding Officer and the Vicar without delay, before destroying the content).

As agreed by St. John's PCC 19.9.11