

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



Purpose of this policy

- *Lower Mountains Anglican Parish (LMAP)* gathers to proclaim Christ serving in mission and ministry, and as such we are committed to building a strong and vital online presence which will complement and enhance our efforts to grow and deepen our networks and reach in the local community.
- This policy provides a framework to help our Ministry Team and leaders understand their responsibilities in using social media and to confidently engage with others on social media in order to promote awareness and interest in our mission and ministry.

Application and scope

- This policy applies to all parish staff, including officeholders, employees and volunteers.
- It covers the use of social media using parish resources, and social media used in connection with parish ministry-related purposes. It also covers the personal use of social media in certain instances.
- This policy must be read together with *Faithfulness in Service: A national code for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry by clergy and church workers* (as amended from time to time).
- Please note this policy applies in addition to our safe ministry obligations, which are set out in *Faithfulness in Service* and other documents such as the *Safe Ministry Blueprint For Churches* and *Social Contact Policy* published by the Professional Standards Unit (as amended from time to time).
- This policy can be reviewed and amended by the parish at any time and does not form a part of any employee's contract of employment and imposes no contractual obligations on the parish.
- Social media sites have their own terms and conditions which apply separately to this policy.

Definitions

'Social media' refers to websites and applications that enable the creation, sharing and publication of posts or otherwise supports online social interactions, including:

- social networks like *Facebook* and *LinkedIn*
- enterprise tools like *Microsoft Teams*, *Discord* and *SharePoint*
- video and image sharing tools like *YouTube*, *Instagram* & *Tik Tok*
- messaging tools like *SnapChat*, *WhatsApp* and *Messenger*
- blogs like *Twitter*
- discussion forums like *Reddit*
- podcasts

'Post' means any content created, shared or published on a social media platform or the act of creating, sharing or publishing such content.

'Moderation' is the act of reviewing and approving a post published on a social media platform. It may be done prior to, or after, publication of a post.

Policy Statement

As a leader at LMAP, you represent the parish and are an ambassador for Christ in the online community. Therefore, you must always be mindful of how you come across on social media because nothing you post is private. Once you post something on a social media platform, the content becomes publicly viewable, searchable and is immediately and permanently online (even if you delete the original post).

In using social media (for LMAP ministry or personal reasons), you must:

- always ensure your posts are true and accurate to the best of your knowledge;
- comply at all times with your legal obligations, including in relation to intellectual property, confidentiality and privacy;
- not post anything that is obscene, threatening, derogatory, defamatory or hateful to or about another person or entity; and
- not otherwise bring the parish into disrepute.

If you are unsure about whether to post something, or are concerned about a post you've seen about the parish, speak to your Rector or another Ministry Team member as appropriate.

There are two types of social media use covered by this policy:

1. Using social media formally on behalf of the parish

Only Ministry Team members and those authorised to use social media in a formal capacity, including:

- maintaining the parish's profile pages on social media; and
- raising awareness about the parish and its activities; and
- engaging with others on social media as a representative of the parish; and
- posting on social media for and on behalf of the parish, such as promoting church events, writing articles for blogs and providing their comments on social media.

Ministry Team members may also post in their own name, and as a representative of the parish.

LMAP is required to moderate posts published on our public social media pages to ensure the posts are suitable for publication and to avoid legal claims. We reserve the right to edit, amend, delete, or otherwise respond to any posts which we consider inappropriate. When using social media in a formal capacity, you must comply with the guidelines set out below.

When using social media in a parish ministry setting, you must ensure that you comply with the guidelines set out below.

2. Using social media in a purely personal capacity

The use of social media (like *Facebook* or *Instagram* etc.) for personal purposes should be reasonable and not interfere with your ministry commitments or performance.

When you post in a purely personal capacity, on a subject or in a form that may be understood to represent the parish, it is recommended that you make it clear that you are not representing the parish in any way. We suggest inserting a disclaimer in your social media profile or in any post to the effect that the comments are your own, and are not endorsed by the parish.

Because your online persona reflects on your character and may affect the parish's reputation, you must still comply with this policy and all other parish and Diocesan policies concerning personal behaviour which may be in force from time to time when using social media.

The guidelines set out below will help you engage in social media use confidently.

Guidelines for using social media

These guidelines aim to equip you to use social media in a healthy and positive way, and contribute meaningfully to growing the parish's online presence and outreach efforts.

- 1. Be a good ambassador.** You are a representative of the parish and for Christ online at all times, even your day/s off.
- 2. Read your post again.** Step back, re-read your post and think about what it communicates to others (and if it can be misinterpreted) before pressing 'ok' or 'post'.
- 3. Avoid online controversies.** State your views politely and respectfully but avoid unhelpful online debates about controversial issues. Invite people (where appropriate) to meet with you for a chat and coffee instead.
- 4. Maintain strong privacy settings.** Follow our security protocols and ensure your social media profile settings are set on 'private'. Do not share personal information such as your home address, bank account details, or information that may aid someone in hacking your accounts.
- 5. Respect confidential information.** Do not disclose any confidential information you have obtained in the course of your work with the parish, especially personal information regarding children in our parish.
- 6. Don't break the law!** Do not post anything which is unlawfully discriminatory, defames anyone's reputation, condones unlawful activity or unlawfully infringes on the rights of others, such as privacy or intellectual property.
- 7. Ask for advice.** If you aren't sure about whether to post something, or are concerned about a post you've seen, speak to your Rector or another Ministry Team member as appropriate.
- 8. If still unsure – don't post it!**

Privacy and confidentiality

- Privacy and confidentiality are key concerns when you use social media.
- A social media platform's security settings will not necessarily protect or keep your posts private. Expect that your posts may be copied, shared and read out of context.
- Your conduct online should be above reproach at all times. Do not rely on anonymity or pseudonyms (fake names) for protection and to prevent potential breaches of this policy. It is possible to trace posts back to you.
- Do not assume that if you use social media outside of the LMAP ministry setting or when using your own resources that you are free to post whatever you want. Your personal conduct may still have a negative impact on the parish and lead to a breach of this policy.

Breach of policy

- Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, which may range from a warning or requirement to remove the post/s, up to termination of your engagement with the parish, depending on the severity of the breach. If you breach the law, you may also be held personally liable.
- If any person becomes aware of or suspects a breach of this policy, they should contact the Rector or another Ministry Team member as appropriate. Any information disclosed will be dealt with seriously and confidentially.

Signed on behalf of the Parish Council and Ministry Team.

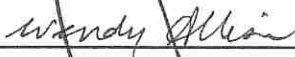
Name: **Rev. Ken D Noakes**

Signature: 

(Minister)

Date: 9 / 3 / 22

Name: **Mrs. Wendy Allison**

Signature: 

(Warden)

Date: 13 / 3 / 22

Name: **Mr. Kevin Dodds**

Signature: 

(Warden)

Date: 20 / 3 / 22

Name: **Mr. Howard Whitehouse**

Signature: 

(Warden)

Date: 13 / 3 / 2022