

# Social Media Policy

Approved by Cornerstone Trustees on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Review Due in 2025

If anything in this policy contradicts an employment contract between Cornerstone Church Grays and an employed individual, the employment contract takes precedence.

## 1. Overview

- 1.1 This policy explains your responsibilities when you use social media, on church premises, while working for or representing us in a paid, or voluntary capacity, or in your own time.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all employees and anyone else working for us. (and church family members for church business???)
- 1.3 If you are an employee, this policy does not form part of your employment contract and we may update it at any time.
- 1.4 We may monitor your use of social media, along with your wider use of church IT resources if available. It's to make sure you are complying with this policy. Whenever you use our IT resources and systems, you give us your consent to monitor your activities.
- 1.5 If you breach this policy you may face disciplinary action. We may require you to remove any social media content that breaches this policy and may invoke our Disciplinary Policy if you don't do so. You could also face legal proceedings if comments you post about the church or named individuals are found to have harmed our or their reputation.

## 2. What is social media?

- 2.1 Social media is always developing. It includes websites and applications that allow users to create and share content and/or take part in online networking. The most popular sites include the following (but this policy covers all social media, not just those listed below):
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - LinkedIn
  - YouTube
  - Instagram
  - Snapchat
  - Whatsapp
  - TikTok
  - Pinterest
  - Flickr
  - Tumblr
  - Reddit
- 2.2 This policy also covers personal blogs, any posts you might make on other people's blogs, any podcasts you create or contribute to, and all online forums and noticeboards.

## 3. Using social media at work

- 3.1 You may use church IT resources and your own equipment to access social media during working hours as long as you follow this policy and you are not involved in creating any inappropriate or unprofessional content. Your use must be reasonable and not interfere with your duties.



3.2 You must not post personal content on any church social media account you are authorised to use, or any account you set up for the purpose of helping you fulfil your employment duties. These accounts belong to us, and your access will be stopped if you abuse this policy in any way. If you leave the church your access will also be stopped and we will ask for your user names and passwords. We may also ask for them at any other time and in either case you must supply them straightaway.

#### **4. Your responsibilities when using social media**

4.1 Always identify yourself, and if the context makes it desirable, make it clear your opinions are your own and you are not speaking on the church's behalf. You might consider doing this in a disclaimer. Use a personal email address, not your church email address, and do not create a social media account that could be mistaken for a church account we have set up, or could set up.

4.2 It is your duty to protect the church's interests and you must not publish anything that could directly or indirectly damage these or compromise our reputation. You must never speak on the church's behalf on social media unless authorised to do so and you must always make sure anything you do post is accurate, appropriate and lawful. Always get your colleagues' permission before posting images of them or any of their personal details.

4.3 You must take personal responsibility for your social media content. If you can be identified as working for the church, you must make sure your profiles, and anything you post, fit with how we expect you to present yourself to others. Be mindful that even if you do not name us as your employer, people who know you and where you work may still make an association with the church. If you are in any doubt about what is and is not acceptable, please talk to your manager.

4.4 You must always show respect to others when using social media. You must never criticise the church, our congregation, suppliers, business associates, your colleagues or anybody else you come into contact with professionally. Our other policies — in particular our Harassment and Bullying Policy and Equal Opportunities Policy — give guidance on the type of behaviour we consider unacceptable in the workplace, and we expect you to maintain the same high standards when using social media. Specifically, we will not tolerate any of the following:

- Abusive or threatening language or images;
- Sexually explicit language or images;
- Unlawful or disrespectful comments;
- Trolling (starting or pursuing arguments in an online community with the intention of disrupting normal discussions within that community);
- False or misleading statements;
- Impersonating your colleagues or third parties; or
- Inciting somebody to commit a crime.

If another church employee is using social media to bully, harass or victimise you, you must follow the process in our Harassment and Bullying Policy.

4.5 You must respect church confidentiality at all times and not use social media to comment on sensitive church matters, including — but not restricted to — the following:

- Any information intended for internal use only;
- Anything to do with our congregation, clients or suppliers; or
- Anything else that is not already in the public domain.

You must never use our branding in anything you post or as part of any of your social media profiles.

4.6 Always be aware of the public nature of social media. Even content posted on a restricted forum can quickly be shared across other social media, and you must assume that anything you publish anywhere will sooner or later reach the public domain. When you share content posted by others, remember that you may be seen as giving tacit approval to opinions that could bring the church into disrepute.

4.7 You must never air on social media grievances about the church or any of our activities. You should use our internal process if you want to make a complaint, raising it first with your manager. If the issue remains unresolved, you must then follow our Grievance Policy. You may also want to consider our Whistleblowing Policy.



## **5. Other social media guidance**

- 5.1 Always respect copyright and other intellectual property rights, and always check whether or not a third party's content is protected before you reuse or re-post it.
- 5.2 You are not allowed to add the details of business contacts you make through work to any of your personal social media accounts.
- 5.3 The contact details of any business contacts you make while working for the church belong to us and must remain confidential. When you leave the church, you must give us this data and delete any copies you have, including any you have added to your social media accounts.
- 5.4 You should contact one of the Church Elders if you find anything posted to a social media site that breaches this policy or otherwise brings the church into disrepute.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this policy please contact our charity trustees at **[trustees@cornerstonegrays.org](mailto:trustees@cornerstonegrays.org)**

This policy is based on a policy provided by Ashfield HR Limited to the Anglican Mission in England.

Cornerstone Church Grays is a registered charity  
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