

St Peter, Paul & Thomas of Canterbury, Bovey Tracey

DUTY OF CARE: ORGANISATIONAL REPUTATION SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Who approves the policy?	Standing Committee
Who is responsible for updating the policy?	Church Administrator
Classification	Employment
Original Issue Date	19 August 2021
Last Revision date	
Revised By	
Next Revision Date	August 2024
Related Documents	
Location of Electronic Copy	Google Drive PPT Church Admin
Scope	This Policy applies to all the PCC of PPT Bovey employees plus those individuals identified in paragraph 2. The PCC of PPT Bovey reserves the right to amend this policy at its discretion at any time. It does not form part of any employees' contract of employment with the PCC of PPT Bovey
Extensions	Individuals identified in Paragraph 2.
Exclusions	None

Social Media Policy

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1. Policy Statement

We recognise that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis. However, your use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information, and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.

To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of productivity and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect you to adhere to this policy.

In the event that this policy and the law conflict, the law shall take precedence. If employees are in any doubt as to what their rights are, they are to discuss matters with their manager. If this policy changes as a result of amendments in the law, the changes will be notified to the employee via their manager.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

2. Who is Covered by the Policy?

This policy is intended to apply to all employees of the PCC of PPT Bovey) including full-time, part-time and fixed term employees and home workers.

In addition, it is intended that contractors, consultants, casual and agency staff and volunteers also adhere to this policy. In such cases, the individuals will be made aware of this policy by their official supervisor.

3. Scope and Purpose of the Policy

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs.

It applies to the use of social media for both business and personal purposes that may affect the PCC of PPT Bovey in any way, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to employees.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any employee suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with any investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details.

You may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

4. Personnel Responsible For Implementing the Policy

The PCC of PPT Bovey has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy. Responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks also lies with the incumbent.

All managers have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all relevant individuals understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements. Managers will be given training by the Diocesan Communications and Engagement Team in order to do this.

All employees are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content of this policy should be directed to the incumbent.

5. Compliance With Related Policies and Agreements

Social media must never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. For example, employees are prohibited from using social media to:

- Breach our obligations with respect to the rules of relevant regulatory bodies.
- Breach any obligations they may have relating to confidentiality.
- Breach our Disciplinary Rules.
- Defame or disparage the organisation or its affiliates, customers, clients, business partners, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders.
- Harass or bully other employees in any way/breach our Anti-harassment and bullying policy.
- Unlawfully discriminate against other employees or third parties/ breach our Equal opportunities policy.
- Breach our Data protection policy (for example, never disclose personal information about a colleague online).
- Breach any other laws or ethical standards (for example, never use social media in a false or misleading way, such as by claiming to be someone other than yourself or by making misleading statements).

If you breach any of the above policies you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

6. Monitoring

The contents of our IT resources and communications systems are our property. Therefore, you should have no expectation of privacy in any message, files, data, document, facsimile, telephone conversation, social media post conversation or message, or any other kind of information or communications transmitted to, received or printed from, or stored or recorded on our electronic information and communications systems.

We reserve the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, your activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your acknowledgement of this policy and your use of such resources and systems. This might include, without limitation, the monitoring, interception, accessing, recording, disclosing, inspecting, reviewing, retrieving and printing of transactions, messages, communications, postings, log-ins, recordings and other uses of the systems as well as keystroke capturing and other network monitoring technologies.

We may store copies of such data or communications for a period of time after they are created, and may delete such copies from time to time without notice.

Do not use our IT resources and communications systems for any matter that you wish to be kept private or confidential from the organisation.

7. Business Use of Social Media

If your duties require you to speak on behalf of the PCC of PPT Bovey in a social media environment, you must still seek approval for such communication from your manager, who may require you to undergo training before you do so and impose certain requirements and restrictions with regard to your activities.

Likewise, if you are contacted for comments about the organisation for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, direct the inquiry to the incumbent and do not respond without written approval.

The use of social media for business purposes is subject to the remainder of this policy.

8. Recruitment

We may use internet searches to perform due diligence on candidates in the course of recruitment. Where we do this, we will act in accordance with our data protection and equal opportunities obligations.

9. Responsible Use of Social Media

The following sections of the policy provide you with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

Protecting our Business Reputation and Maintaining Political Balance

Protecting the PCC of PPT Bovey and the Church of England's image is a core value to us and anyone who uses social media in such a way that has the potential to bring the PCC of PPT Bovey into disrepute may be subject to disciplinary proceedings/sanctions, up to and including dismissal.

You must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- Our organisation.
- Our Mission Communities, parishes, and individual churches.

- Our clergy, laity, parochial officers, and volunteers.
- Our employees.
- Other partner agencies, bodies and external stakeholders.

You are to avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly.

You are also to avoid social media communications which could imply that your views are the official views of the PCC of PPT Bovey, the Diocese of Exeter or Church of England. This is particularly important in a political context and even more so in the six week pending period before an election. You are entitled to your views but it is important for the Church of England not to be seen to be backing a particular political party or view. This is a complex area and the Diocesan Director of Communications and Engagement is happy to discuss this with anyone who has questions.

Personal Use of Social Media

We recognise that you may work long hours and occasionally may desire to use social media for personal activities at the office or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. We authorise such occasional use during lunch breaks or outside of normal working hours so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity, or the productivity of others. While using social media at work, circulating chain letters or other spam is never permitted.

Please be aware that social media activity in the workplace is not necessarily private and we can discipline you for conduct that breaches employee policies in the social media arena, just as in other arenas.

You are to make it clear in social media postings that you are speaking on your own behalf but be mindful that just having a line in your bio stating that the views expressed are your own and not those of the organisation you work for is not sufficient to protect the reputation of the PCC of PPT Bovey or your own professional reputation from the unintended harm from social media postings. You are, at all times, responsible for the content of your social media postings, for upholding the reputation of the PCC of PPT Bovey and that of your role, as well as the impact such postings may have on the ability of the PCC of PPT Bovey to conduct its business and on your ability to fulfil the requirements of your role. So we advise all employees to be circumspect in any social media posting, write in the first person and use a personal e-mail address when communicating via social media.

We ask all employees to be aware of the effect of circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promoting outside organisations unrelated to the PCC of PPT Bovey's business on the PCC of PPT Bovey's reputation and on your reputation as well as your colleagues.

Be careful what photos you post and what photos you appear in which others may post (either with your knowledge or without).

You are personally responsible for what you communicate in social media. Remember that what you publish will be available to be read by the masses (including the organisation itself, future employers and social acquaintances) for a long time.

You are to ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.

Avoid posting comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of the organisation, your comments could still damage our reputation.

If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your manager, the incumbent or Chair of the PCC.

If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on our organisation, you should contact your manager. All employees are responsible for protecting our reputation.

Respecting intellectual property and confidential information

You must not do anything to jeopardise our confidential information through the use of social media.

In addition, you must avoid misappropriating or infringing the intellectual property of other companies and individuals, which can create liability for the organisation, as well as the individual author.

Do not use our logos, slogans or other trademarks, or post any of our confidential or proprietary information without prior written permission.

Respecting colleagues, clients, and suppliers

Do not post anything that your colleagues or our, clients, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders would find offensive, including discriminatory comments, insults or obscenity.

Do not post anything related to your colleagues or our clients, suppliers, vendors or other stakeholders without their written permission.

Giving personal references on social media

When we write a personal reference on social media, that reference would be considered to be in the public domain, unlike a letter of reference which can only be seen by those to whom it is addressed. When a manager is asked to provide a personal professional reference for a colleague on a social media site such as, but not limited to, LinkedIn, which refers to their current position with the PCC of PPT Bovey, then prior approval for providing such a reference will need to be sought from your manager. This is because the employee providing the reference will be doing so on the basis of their working relationship with their colleague and therefore would be viewed by others to be indirectly representing the view of the PCC of PPT Bovey in

the reference. This is in line with the requirement that any written personal reference needs prior approval of the incumbent.

When you are asked to provide a personal reference for a colleague on social media sites, such as, but not limited to LinkedIn, for purposes not related to any the PCC of PPT Bovey employment or activity, please consider whether providing the reference on the basis of your working relationship with colleague would be viewed by others external to the organisation as indirectly or directly representing the view of the PCC of PPT Bovey in the reference. If you are in any doubt then please ask your manager, the incumbent or Chair of the PCC for advice if appropriate, and for their approval.

When asked to provide a personal reference for someone entirely unrelated to your work at the PCC of PPT Bovey and unknown to the PCC of PPT Bovey, then please again consider how your reference might be viewed by those external to the organisation and whether it could cause any difficulties for you in the course of your employment or for your colleagues in the course of their employment for the PCC of PPT Bovey. If you are in any doubt then please ask your manager, the incumbent or the Chair of the PCC for advice, and if appropriate, for their approval.