**St Michael-le-Belfrey PCC Paper**

| **Title:**  | Approval to use Social Media and Video Conferencing |
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| **Date:** | July 2023 |



**Purpose of the Paper**

*To protect people of all ages from abuse through the church’s use of Social Media and Video Conferencing.*

**Social Media**

 *The Parish Safeguarding Guidelines require the PCC to approve the use of Social Media accounts for church purposes. See Section 12* [*https://www.churchofengland.org/media/11842*](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/11842)

 *Social Media is already used extensively, both within and outside the church to update, to communicate and publicise church events as well as for giving advice, a notice board and for prayer requests. Social media is used in the youth work, student ministry, G2 and The House of Prayer as well as general church business. The Parish Safeguarding Guidelines suggest that the account details (user-names and passwords) are held by one named person.*

**Action Required**

* The PCC is asked to approve the use of Social Media networks as outlined in this paper.
* Protocol for the use of Belfrey social media accounts:
	+ All social media accounts will be operated with the rules of the provider and age limits will be respected. (The minimum age to use social media in the UK is currently 13 years old except WhatsApp which is 16.)
	+ All use of Belfrey social media accounts by staff or volunteers will require approval from the Operations Manager, who will keep a record of usernames and passwords, where appropriate. Facebook pages and groups don’t have passwords but are managed through the personal accounts of those designated as group admins. The allocation of admin status will be controlled by the Operations Manager who will be an admin in all Belfrey pages and groups.
	+ Personal social media accounts will not be used for general or one-to-one communication of church business to contact children, young people or vulnerable adults.
	+ Staff and volunteers will only use/administer church accounts in line with Section 12 of the Parish Safeguarding Handbook accessible here:- <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/11842>

**Video Conferencing**

In addition to the permission for the use of Social Media in the church, particularly with young people, the PCC is required to give its permission for the children and youth teams to use video conferencing.

The Diocese has clear guidelines about the use of video conferencing with which both teams will comply. [*Guidelines for working online with*[*young people*](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/schools-and-youth/children-young-people-churches/resources-and-information/youth-resources-and-information/)*and for*[*children*](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/schools-and-youth/children-young-people-churches/resources-and-information/children-resources-and-information/)*.*]

In brief:-

* They will always seek parental permission, and login details for the calls will only be sent to parents.
* Children will always be properly dressed (e.g. no pyjamas) and in a family room and not in a bedroom.
* Parents will always be present during the video call.
* There will always be 2 adult team members present on the call who are safeguarding-trained to at least *Foundation* level, and DBS-checked.
* The hosts will retain control to be able to mute any participant and to disconnect anyone not complying with the guidelines.
* The calls will not be recorded.
* A risk assessment will be carried out for each activity.

NB There is no lower age limit for using Zoom, unlike social media e.g. Facebook.

**Resources.**

* + **The Operations Manager**
	+ *On behalf of the PCC, The Operations Manager will keep securely the login details of any Belfrey social media and video conferencing accounts, monitor them regularly, and approve the creation of any new accounts and page/group admins. Access to accounts will be terminated as part of the exit strategy for staff leaving the organization, or no longer having responsibility for the area of ministry.*
	+ *Staff and volunteers will be made aware of the need to obtain approval to use social media networks and video conferencing for creating content on behalf of the church.*
	+ *A new paragraph will be added to the Staff Handbook about the use of Social Media and video conferencing and will form part of the induction process.*

**Disclaimer**

* + *All our social media accounts will make it clear that any comments or posts are always seen by others so confidentiality cannot be assumed.*

Ministry teams at The Belfrey are currently using the following social media networks:

* Facebook public pages
	+ St Michael le Belfrey
	+ Belfrey Students
	+ Belfrey Youth
	+ Belfrey Music
	+ NWDY York
	+ York House of Prayer
	+ Belfrey Social Justice
	+ Belfrey World Mission
* Facebook private groups for church members
	+ Belfrey Noticeboard
	+ Belfrey Students
	+ Belfrey 18-30s
	+ 11am Service @ The Belfrey
	+ Belfrey Prayer
	+ Alpha at the Belfrey 2020

*At this time there is a whole host of groups/pages which were set up by church members for things like Belfrey Groups or New Wine United – this a difficult legacy to manage but where possible these accounts will be tracked down and either brought within these guidelines or deleted. Any personal second accounts including the word Belfrey which have been used to separate church and personal business are being deleted as this is against Facebook rules and they do meet safeguarding transparency requirements. Facebook Pages or Groups will be used by our teams instead.*

* Instagram Public Accounts
	+ thebelfrey
	+ belfreyyouth
	+ belfreystudents
	+ york\_hop
	+ belfrey\_danceministry
	+ belfreymusic
	+ belfreyimpact
	+ belfreysocialjustice
	+ belfreyworldmission
	+ nwdy.york
* Twitter
	+ A central public account but we are not currently active on it
* WhatsApp
	+ In November 2022, PCC approved the use of WhatsApp within staff and church groups for people aged 16 and over only, in compliance with Church of England community guidelines for social media use, which were subsequently circulated to all leaders.
	<https://www.churchofengland.org/terms-and-conditions/our-social-media-community-guidelines>
	<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/digital-labs/blogs/creating-and-administrating-church-social-media-account#na>

G2 currently uses the following accounts:-

* Facebook
	+ G2 York page plus a private group
* Tiktok
	+ G2 York
* Instagram
	+ G2 York
	+ G2 Students
	+ Freebbqthisfriday

*There are dormant Twitter and Snapchat accounts.*

*Passwords are held in a secure system accessed by Hannah Smith, Kat Bevington, Adoniel Martinez and Jack Niles (volunteer leader of social media content)*

This policy was agreed by the PCC on 17th July 2023