

# POLICY STATEMENT FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We accept that social media is a part of most of our lives. For children, it is the norm to communicate electronically through mobile phones, email, and social networking sites.

This way of communication offers a wealth of experiences and possibilities for the church to engage with our community; however, we need to be aware that these platforms can also be used inappropriately by both adults and children.

Adults who work with children need to be aware of how to use them appropriately and responsibly, in order that children are protected, and the integrity of the workers safeguarded.

All communication relating to those under 18 should be done so via parents and carers.

## **Safeguarding Concerns:**

### **Cyber bullying**

This is where a child uses digital technologies to bully another child. If an adult bullies a child on social media, it is known as cyber stalking and is a serious safeguarding issue. Cyber bullying may involve the use of visual images, texts, phone calls and hits on social networking profiles.

### **Online Grooming**

This is where an adult contacts a child with the sole purpose of preparing them for sexual abuse either on or offline.

### **Sexting**

This is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photographs by mobile phone. Leaders should remain vigilant to this and report any instances immediately.

### **Mobile Phones**

- No communication should be made between adults and anyone under the age of 18.
- No one under the age of 18 should be connected on social media with a leader.
- Conversations causing concern should be saved and passed to a supervisor.
- Photos should be taken only in accordance with safeguarding photography guidance.

Communication and behaviour online should be no different to offline and in person. For any communication that you feel uncomfortable with contact the Safeguarding Team.