

**The Catholic Parish of St Edward the Confessor Golders Green**  
**Diocese of Westminster**  
**Social Media Policy**

As use of social media proliferates, it is appropriate to formulate a policy regarding its use by diocesan personnel. In this document, "diocesan personnel" includes diocesan employees or those who provide ministry or service for the Diocese on a voluntary basis.

1. Social media include all forms of online media that can be accessed by a wide audience from anywhere. They include but are not limited to such sites as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Issuu, Flickr, Vimeo, Youtube, and Instagram, for instance. They also include websites, messaging boards, discussion forums, and blogs. In other words, any form of online media that can be accessed by the general public is included in this definition.
2. At all times CSAS Policy and Guidelines regarding Social Networking with Children and Young People are to be observed by all.
3. Use of social media in your official role should be treated in exactly the same way as any interaction with the mass media. In other words, treat all content as you would a press release or a public statement. Anything which is broadcast in your diocesan capacity must be accessible to the Diocesan Communications Office and the individual's line manager.
4. The Diocese respects the right of diocesan personnel to express views on their personal social media sites. However, you should not (on either your open or restricted social media) publish personal (e.g. derogatory, defamatory or offensive) comments, information and/or pictures about colleagues or those whom you serve or minister to in connection with your work for the Diocese.
5. Diocesan personnel who are Catholics are reminded that their canonical responsibility 1.to recognise the integrity of the Church's teaching on faith and morals, 2.to respect the dignity of persons, 3.to acknowledge the special role of their Pastors in faith and 4. to promote the common good of the Church applies always and everywhere including on personal media sites.
6. Diocesan personnel who proffer opinions on any topics related to Church teaching on their personal media should specifically state that their views are entirely their own. Personal sites may not carry diocesan logos and diocesan job titles may not be used as primary headings on personal sites. Where, in the judgement of the Archbishop or his delegate, the content of a personal social media site is deemed to be in danger of causing reputational damage to the Church or the Diocese, the individual may be required to remove any indication of their diocesan connection on their personal social media and may be requested to remove the content
7. Content should be positive whenever possible and criticism of individuals or institutions is to be avoided.

8. Diocesan personnel are advised to reflect carefully on Pope Francis' guidance on the use of social media. In particular, the Holy Father has noted: *"The speed with which information is communicated exceeds our capacity for reflection and judgment, and this does not make for more balanced and proper forms of expression. ... We need, for example, to recover a certain sense of deliberateness and calm. This calls for time and the ability to be silent and to listen."*

**If you have any questions or would like guidance with regard to the use of social media, please contact the Diocesan Communications Officer: [communications@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:communications@rcdow.org.uk), 020 7798 9031 (internal 2031).**

17 July 2015