

# Media and Communications Policy

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## SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

‘Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.’ Philippians 1:27 (NIV)

### 1.1 PURPOSE

- This policy outlines the principles and guidelines for all communications by and on behalf of St Alfred's.
- It aims to ensure that all communications are:
  - Consistent with the church's mission and values.
  - Respectful, accurate, and timely.
  - Safe and responsible.
  - In compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

### 1.2 SCOPE

- This policy applies to all:
  - Clergy, staff, and volunteers.
  - Members of the congregation.
  - Individuals representing St Alfred's Anglican Church in any capacity.
  - All forms of communication, including:
    - Verbal communication.
    - Written communication (e.g., emails, newsletters, letters).
    - Digital communication (e.g., website, social media, text messages).
    - Printed materials (e.g., bulletins, flyers).

### 1.3 CORE PRINCIPLES

- **Respect and Integrity:** All communications will be conducted with respect for all individuals, regardless of their background or beliefs.
- **Accuracy and Transparency:** Information shared will be accurate and truthful.
- **Confidentiality:** Sensitive information will be handled with discretion and in accordance with privacy laws and in line with our Privacy Policy.
- **Safeguarding:** Communications will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults.
- **Responsible Use of Technology:** Electronic communication will be used responsibly and ethically.

## DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Brand	The beliefs and values of St Alfreds as articulated on the St Alfred's website.
Child	Anyone who is under 18 years of age.
Clergy	Ordained priests and deacons who are on staff at St Alfred's.
Communication	All the ways in which people communicate ideas with each other, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual - including video, infographics, pictures, photos</li> <li>• Aural - including sounds, music</li> <li>• Linguistic - written or spoken words (in more than one language)</li> <li>• Gestural - including facial expressions</li> <li>• Spatial - physical position, proximity.</li> </ul>
Communication Platform	Any platform of written, aural or visual communication between a sender and a recipient, including digital tools or services that enable people to connect with each other through various forms of communication. These include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and Communications Technologies (ICT): text, email, emojis, graphics, Social Media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, Wikis, Tik Tok), via phones, video messaging and collaboration platforms (e.g. MS Teams, Google docs), digital messaging including PPT slides, QR codes, our website, online sermons, podcasts, digital systems,</li> <li>• Hard copy documents, letters, brochures, flyers, billboards</li> <li>• Music - live, digital and mechanically reproduced.</li> </ul>
Confidential Information	Information that is not to be shared with the public or by general Members of St Alfred's, including personal details information that Staff and Ministry Leaders are required under law to keep confidential. Refer to existing obligations contained in other St Alfred's policies, for example Safe Ministry.
External Audience	A person who is not a member of Staff, Member or volunteer of St Alfred's. They include diocesan staff, external hirers, Visitors, community members and organisations, people who attend events of St Alfred's, other local churches and other Anglican churches.
Internal Audience	A person who is connected in an ongoing way with St Alfred's. They include Members, Staff (ministry and administration), and volunteers.
Media and Public Relations	Media and Public Relations involves working with the media and external organisations for the purpose of informing the public of St Alfred's policies and practices in a positive, consistent, and credible manner, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wikis and online collaborations, for example, Wikipedia;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forums, discussion boards and groups, for example, Google groups, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Whirlpool and other social media;</li> <li>• YouTube, Podcasting and podcasting sites, social media.</li> </ul>
Member	Anyone who regularly attends services at St Alfred's.
Ministry Leader	A person with the responsibility for leading an area of ministry in St Alfred's who has overall responsibility for selecting, managing, and supervising Volunteers who serve in relation to that area of ministry.
Ministry Volunteer	Is a Volunteer who serves in an unpaid ministry role, where having a spiritual input into the life of one or more people or the body of St Alfred's is an expectation of the role (including but not limited to public worship, mission, prayer or teaching) (e.g. growth group leader, prayer ministry team member, ministry team member for children, Play StAKs, youth).
Officer	Parish Council, Warden, Treasurer
Private Information	Information that has been disclosed to a member of Staff or a Ministry Leader of a personal nature that does not fall under mandatory reporting requirements.
Staff	A person employed by St Alfred's.
Visitor	People who are not Members or Staff of St Alfred's Including new congregation attendees, persons hiring the venue, suppliers and contractors.
Vulnerable Person	A person under 18 or another person who may be unable to take care of themselves or are unable to protect themselves.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Word/Term	Definition
ADOM	Anglican Diocese of Melbourne
St Alfred's	St Alfred's Anglican Church, Blackburn North

## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Name	Location
Privacy Policy	St Alfred's Privacy Policy
Photo, Video and Live Streaming Release Policy	St Alfred's Photo, Video and Live Streaming Release Policy
Safe Ministry Policy	St Alfred's policy
ADOM's Safe Ministry documentation	<a href="https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/safe_ministry_documents/">https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/safe_ministry_documents/</a>
The Equal Opportunity Act 2010	Victorian legislation
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005	Victorian legislation

## SECTION 2 - POLICY

Clergy, Staff, Ministry Leaders and Ministry Volunteers have a significant part to play in representing St Alfred's both to Internal Audiences and External Audiences. This policy ensures that the views expressed to both Internal Audiences and External Audiences, accurately reflect the views and values of St Alfred's.

## SECTION 3 - PROCEDURE

<b>3.</b>	<b>Procedure</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<p><b>Communication Channels:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website: The church website (stalfreds.org) will be maintained as a primary source of information.</li> <li>• Social Media: Social media platforms will be used to engage with the community and share relevant information, including by Youth leaders to undertake their role.</li> <li>• Email: Email will be used for official church communications and announcements.</li> <li>• Printed Materials: Printed materials will be used for specific events and announcements.</li> <li>• Verbal Communication: Clergy and staff will communicate effectively with Members of the congregation. Where the verbal communication is with a vulnerable person or is a formal and organised pastoral conversation, brief, factual notes will be made and stored securely and digitally.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b>	<p><b>Written communication (non-social media platforms)</b></p> <p>All Clergy, Staff, Ministry Leaders, Ministry Volunteers and Officers should be mindful that in all their Communications, undertaken as part of their role, they are representing St Alfred's. In light of this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Any person planning Communications intended for an Internal or External Audience should avoid communicating in a way that may cause disunity or pastoral hurt. If in any doubt, or if unsure, they should consult with the Senior Minister or their delegate.</li> <li>b. There is to be no written Communication between a member of Clergy, Staff Member, Ministry Leader or Ministry Volunteer and a Child or other Vulnerable Person with a carer; the written Communication is to be addressed to their parents or guardians. If the child is between 12 and 18 years, the consent of both the child and their parent/guardians is required.</li> <li>c. No Confidential Information or Private Information shall be disclosed unless authorised by law.</li> <li>d. Any photo and video releases must comply with the Photo, Video and Live Streaming Release Policy.</li> </ol>

3.	<p><b>Procedure</b></p>
3.3	<p><b>Social Media Guidelines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All social media posts will be consistent with the church's values.</li> <li>• Respectful and courteous language will be used at all times.</li> <li>• Personal opinions will be clearly distinguished from official church statements.</li> <li>• Privacy settings will be managed to protect sensitive information.</li> </ul> <p>Monitoring of social media platforms will be conducted regularly by a relevant Ministry Leader or Clergy person.</p>
3.4	<p><b>Digital Communications</b></p> <p>Clergy, Staff, Ministry Leaders and Ministry Volunteers should make every effort to ensure that all digital communications to Internal Audiences and External Audiences reflect the view of St Alfred's.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Where a member of Clergy, member of Staff, Ministry Leader, or Ministry Volunteer needs to communicate with a young person or vulnerable person, they are only to use a platform that cannot be edited by the recipient or a third party.</li> <li>b. When communicating with any Child or other Vulnerable Person; Clergy, Staff, Ministry Leaders and Ministry Volunteers should make every effort only to use official St Alfred's Social Media accounts. If a non-official St. Alfred's account is used, appropriate record keeping of the Communication is to be made and stored securely and digitally by the participating adult,</li> <li>c. Such accounts are only to be used to communicate with young people, parents, other Ministry Leaders and Ministry Volunteers and are not to be used to 'follow' other Social Media users.</li> <li>d. Clergy, Staff and Ministry Leaders who post text or images online must ensure that they cannot be misconstrued or misinterpreted. If in doubt, they are not to be posted</li> <li>e. Any photo or video releases must comply with the Photo, Video and Live Streaming Release Policy.</li> <li>f. Brief notes are to be made and kept securely of phone communications between a carer of a child or a vulnerable person.</li> </ol>

<p><b>3.5</b></p>	<p><b>Verbal and Face to face communications</b></p> <p>Any face-to-face verbal communication with material pastoral content (including formal, organised pastoral conversations) between a Ministry Leader or Staff Member and a Child or other Vulnerable Person, when other persons are not present, is to be recorded in brief form in a digital and secure manner: the persons involved in the conversation, date, place, time, main topic/s of conversation. A member of Clergy is to be notified of the conversation.</p>
<p><b>3.6</b></p>	<p><b>Responding to a media enquiry</b></p> <p>All enquiries from media personnel are to be treated as important and only the Senior Minister or their delegate is to respond to such enquiries. Clergy, Staff and Ministry Leaders must ensure that responses to External Audiences are treated in a timely manner.</p> <p>Use the sample responses as an immediate reply, then refer the enquiry to the Senior Minister.</p> <p>Sample responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “I’m not the best person to talk to, but I will organise for the right person to call you back.”</li> <li>- “I am not an expert in this area, but I can get someone to call you back.”</li> <li>- “I am in a meeting at the moment, but will call you back as soon as possible”</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.7</b></p>	<p><b>Other forms of communication</b></p> <p>As with the communications elaborated on in 3.1-3.6, all other forms of communication are to be respectful of the recipient or intended recipients and not be derogatory, defamatory or in breach of a person’s privacy. These communications are also to be in line with copyright law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Visual - including video, infographics, pictures, photos</li> <li>● Aural - including sounds, music</li> <li>● Linguistic - written or spoken words (in more than one language)</li> <li>● Gestural - including facial expressions</li> <li>● Spatial - physical coordination, position, proximity.</li> </ul>

## SECTION 4 – GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITY

<b>Policy Owner</b>	Governance Committee
<b>Responsible Person</b>	Senior Minister A review of compliance with this policy is to be undertaken at least once in every 12-month period.
<b>Policy Oversight</b>	Ministry Leaders

### VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Review Date	Amendment
1.0	May 2025	Parish Council	May 2027	

### POLICY & PROCEDURE DIRECTORY REQUIREMENTS

#### CATEGORY

Governance Committee

#### KEYWORDS

Communications, communication platforms, social and digital media

### PUBLICATION

For Group	Location
All ministry roles, offices and positions at St Alfred's	<a href="https://stalfreds.elvanto.com.au/pages/governance/">https://stalfreds.elvanto.com.au/pages/governance/</a> <a href="https://www.stalfreds.org/about/parish-council/">https://www.stalfreds.org/about/parish-council/</a>

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