



**Diocese of Salt Lake City
Office of Communications**

Guidelines for Social Networking

Websites and/or social networking sites are useful communication tools but, as with any tool, the tool needs to be used properly. These guidelines provide instructions to ensure diocesan social networking sites are established and used in a way that reflects our Catholic values. These guidelines discuss two types of social networking sites: official ministry sites that are owned and operated by a diocesan entity and personal sites of church personnel.

Official ministry sites shall conform to diocesan codes of conduct and safe environment policies as well as applicable laws and regulations.

Church personnel shall clearly differentiate between their personal social networking site and their official ministry site. Personal sites cannot use diocesan property including but not limited to logos and other diocesan or parish materials.

Guidelines for Establishing an Official Ministry Social Networking Site

1. Ministry sites shall be established as an organizational (such as Saint Sylvester) rather than a personal site (such as Joe Doe.)
2. Unless password protected, ministry sites shall allow one-way conversation only (ie. a fanpage on Facebook).
3. Passwords and names of ministry sites shall be registered in a central location. More than one adult shall have access to this information.
4. Those establishing sites shall know and abide by these key “Rules of the Road”:
 - a. Abide by diocesan and parish/school/organizational guidelines.
 - b. Reflect Church teaching in posting information.
 - c. Stick to your ministry. Do not claim to represent the official position of the Church or the teachings of the Church unless you actually have the authority to do so.
 - d. Abide by applicable copyright and fair use laws and regulations.
 - e. Do not divulge confidential information. Anything posted on the Internet is not private and has the potential to remain posted forever.
 - f. Practice Christian charity.
5. At a minimum, two adult administrators shall be assigned to actively engage in monitoring ministry sites. The administrators shall regularly report to an organizational committee established to oversee the operation of the social networking site. An existing committee, such as the parish council, may provide this oversight.

6. Ministry accounts shall be set up so as to preclude automatically accepting “friends” and, unless access to the site is password protected, the account shall be set up to “Public” to ensure transparency.

7. Ministry sites shall include a Code of Conduct for visitors to the site as well as the consequences for violating the Code. The administrator shall always block anyone who does not abide by the Code of Conduct.

Guidelines for Establishing a Personal Social Networking Site with Minors (<18 years of age)

1. Obtain written permission from the minor’s parent or guardian before contacting the minor via social media or before posting pictures, video, and other information that may identify that minor. Minors cannot be invited to be a “friend”; they must initiate the request. It is diocesan policy that the minor’s last name not be posted with any picture or video without written parental consent.

2. Parents must have access to everything provided their children. For example, parents shall be made aware of how social media are being used, be told how to access the sites.

3. Regularly promote awareness of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, the Federal legislation that oversees how websites interact with children under age 13.

4. Online chats or chat room conversations between adult leaders and children or young people are never appropriate. E-mail correspondence with children or young people shall be appropriate and professional.

Reporting and Monitoring

Church personnel shall report unofficial sites that carry the diocesan or parish logo to the Diocesan Office of Communications at 801.328.8641. The Diocesan Office of Communications will respond, as appropriate.