

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
WITH REGARD TO MINORS
DIOCESE OF COLORADO SPRINGS**

Effective August 1, 2016

This policy is to be provided to the parent and explained to the minor. As always, the safest method of communicating program information is directly to the parent rather than the minor.

1. Information distributed to more than one individual via e-mail should be sent as a blind carbon copy (Bcc) to keep the recipients' e-mail addresses private.
2. Electronic communication between adults and minors is to be conducted in public cyber forums on authorized parish/school/diocesan sites whenever possible. The authorized site(s) must be clearly identified in the domain name (for example, youthministry@holyangels.org; jane@preciousbloodparish.org; or St. Anne's Youth Ministry for social media sites). A minimum of two screened and safe-environment trained adults must have full administrative rights to these forums and monitor them daily. Use of an adult's personal e-mail, social media page, blog, etc. to communicate with minors is prohibited. No one may create an electronic communication medium in the name of the location without consent of the pastor.
3. Social media pages are to be closed sites (for instance, on Facebook, the group would be designated as 'secret') with access limited to active minors, parents, and program leaders. Parents must be included in the site's membership. Minors who are no longer participating in the program(s) and their parents are to have their access discontinued as soon as possible.
4. Any dangerous or inappropriate communication received from a minor (such as a threat of harm to themselves or others, flirtatious or sexualized language, etc.) shall be forwarded as soon as possible to the pastor as well as the minor's parents and archived at the parish for future reference.
5. Written consent is required from the parent on a Consent for Release Form for use of a minor's name and/or audio/video depiction. The use of any name or likeness is limited to announcements, acknowledgment of achievement or participation, and information about or promotion of an applicable ministry or event.
6. All electronic communication should generally be related in some way to ministerial efforts.
7. All electronic communication must reflect the values of the Roman Catholic faith.
8. Proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation should be used at all times, though abbreviations are acceptable in limited-character media such as texting and tweeting. Vulgar, profane, or offensive language is prohibited. All communication must comply with the Diocese's Sexual Misconduct Policy.

9. Any inappropriate use of electronic communication must be reported to the ministry head and pastor.

Any violation of this policy could result in immediate suspension or termination of employment or volunteer status.