

Contact with Students/Minors outside of regular School or Parish Religious Education Hours and policies related to the use of Social Media for all persons acting on behalf of the Diocese of Sioux City

It shall be the policy of the Diocese of Sioux City that, in order to safeguard both students and all persons working with our young people, and to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, all priests and any other persons who need or plan to meet with or work with students and/or young people outside of regular school or established Religious Education hours, regardless of the purpose:

- Must inform a School Administrator (SA) and the student's parents/guardians, or the parish's Director of Religious Education (DRE) and the young person's parents/guardians of the meeting. This notification must include the purpose(s), dates and times, and the number of meetings/sessions.
- If there is a valid reason for not including parents/guardians in a communication to the student, the Pastor must be included in the notification.
- Must meet and/or work with the student at the school or parish's facility and said meeting must meet all VIRTUS requirements.
- All persons working with, advising or otherwise serving minors must not use written or electronic means to communicate with them in that any manner could be considered inappropriate or illegal.
- Priests and any other ministers/employees/volunteers who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to disciplinary action which may include termination and/or civil and criminal action.
- Must report to the parents, Pastor, and institutional authorities (SA or DRE) if, outside of sacramental confession, the student/minor shares any contemplation, ideation or plans regarding suicide or other violence against themselves or others.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic communication within any Diocesan institution is intended for institutional purposes only and must comply with all established policies. This Electronic Communication Policy must be followed at all times.

1. Definition

“Electronic communication” includes, but is not limited to, electronic mail, social media sites, chat rooms, the internet, news groups, electronic bulletin boards, personal home pages, and any other type of messaging or communication apps or methods.

2. Misuse of Electronic Communication

Electronic communication systems and social media platforms must be used responsibly. All persons advising, working with, or otherwise assisting our students and young people must follow this Electronic Communication Policy and use these electronic

communication systems responsibly. Pastors, SA's, and DRE's are responsible for ensuring that all persons who work with minors follow this policy.

Any and all persons working with our young people are strictly prohibited from using electronic communication for:

- Activities for profit or the engagement of self-solicitation.
 - Actions or activities undertaken on behalf of, or acting as an agent for, a non-program-related and unapproved organization, company, agency, or individual.
 - Activities that are illegal under, or intended to circumvent, federal, state, local or foreign laws
 - Activities and content that are unethical or could result in the establishment of a hostile environment in a school or diocesan institution, including inappropriate language and jokes, chain letters, pornography, threats and harassment.
 - Activities that could damage the parish or school's professional reputation.
3. Tips for all persons who have their own personal sites or social media accounts and also work with our students/young people.

Best practices regarding social networking done on a person's own time include:

- Prohibit student/minor access to any personal site or account not maintained solely for ministerial and/or instructional purposes.
- Use discretion when allowing parents access to any personal sites or accounts.
- If using a site for instructional and/or ministerial purposes, keep SA's or DRE's, parents, and pastors informed of your use. Maintain a strictly professional relationship with students/young people on such a site. This is true when texting, using social media accounts, or other social apps. If you send the communication to the student/young person, include the parents also.
- If there is a valid reason for not including parents in a communication with a student, the SA or DRE and/or the pastor must be included.
- Never discuss students, program participants or colleagues.
- Never post pictures of students/program participants or images that include them.
- Do not ask to be a student/young person's friend on their social media site and do not accept an invitation to be his/her friend.
- Monitor your site regularly and remove postings that are inappropriate.
- Never accept, keep, or send pornographic materials on your site. Child pornography – *even images sent to you that are not immediately removed upon discovery* – can subject you to federal prosecution, prison time and registration as a sex offender.
- Electronic communications are prone to misinterpretations; there are not enough smiley face icons to soften some words or images once posted.

Internet and E-mail Use:

- E-mail services and Internet access provided by the Diocese of Sioux City and its related institutions are to be used only for institutional and ministerial purposes.

Initiating, storing, or forwarding e-mail or Internet messages that have offensive, lewd, harassing, discriminatory or illegal content will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. This includes e-mail jokes or cartoons that could be perceived as stereotypical in nature.

- Attaching games, forwarding electronic chain letters, displaying controversial symbols, or circulating sexually suggestive materials is an unacceptable use of e-mail/social media.
- Do not assume the use of e-mail, cell phone apps, social media accounts and/or the Internet will be totally private. Use of these tools can and may be monitored to protect against unauthorized or inappropriate use. If you are unsure of what is appropriate, talk to your SA, DRE, pastor or institutional administrator.
- Any person who serves, assists or otherwise works with our young people and is suspected of abusing their Internet access or e-mail privileges will be investigated and could face disciplinary action. Outside resources may be employed for assistance in obtaining records of e-mail, cell phone, and Internet use.

Monitoring of Electronic Communication

- All electronic communication can and may be monitored to protect against unauthorized or inappropriate use. All electronic mail sent, received, or deleted and all internet sites visited using parish, school or diocesan systems are retrievable.
- By accepting employment with or by acting on behalf of the Diocese, one of its parishes, schools or other institutions, and then using the institutions internet access or e-mail systems to electronically interact with any student, program participant, colleague (or any other person met through said institutions), automatically means that the user consents to this monitoring policy.
- Failure to comply with this Electronic Communication Policy can result in disciplinary action, which may include termination and/or civil and criminal action.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Diocese of Sioux City supports the use of social media in communicating, engaging, connecting and sharing information with the people and communities it serves. For that reason, the Diocese of Sioux City has developed the following guidelines to provide direction for persons working with our young people and/or acting in a ministerial or advisory capacity.

Restrictions

- All persons who work with, advise or otherwise serve our students/young people, parishioners or others via one of the institutions of the Diocese of Sioux City should be mindful of the fact that the comments, pictures and other information produced or disseminated by them while making use of the various social media outlets also reflects on our schools, parishes and the entire Diocese. Therefore, all such

communications are subject to the Electronic Communications Policies as outlined in this and previous sections.

- Priests, school chaplains, campus and youth ministers and other adults/volunteers accessing, creating, or participating in the use of social media for ministerial purposes agree to abide by these guidelines.
- All persons working with, advising or otherwise serving any persons engaged through any of the institutions of the Diocese or Sioux City are expected to follow the same behavioral standards online as mandated by the Diocese of Sioux City's Policies and Procedures.
- These same guidelines also apply to online, electronic or other social media interactions with parents, alumni, fellow staff, parishioner or other constituents of Diocesan institutions, just as they do in the workplace.

Definitions

1. "Social Media" is defined as media designed to communicate online or through other means to contact and socially interact, using highly accessible public mediums such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs, gaming and other forums, message boards and other social platforms. These websites and apps not only provide information, but allow for interaction during this informational exchange through user-generated content.
2. "Personal Site" is defined as a social media site or app that is utilized for the sole purpose of personal use. There are no identifications of the person as a member of or representative for the Diocese of Sioux City or any of its institutions, and content is restricted to personal and not work-related material.

The guidelines in this document are not intended to regulate personal sites. However, anyone acting on behalf of any institution within the Diocese of Sioux City must still abide by the Electronic Communications Policy as outlined.

3. "Public Site" is defined as a social media site or app where a person represents the Diocese of Sioux City or one of its schools or institutions as a priest, employee and/or otherwise associated adult/volunteer. This includes personal branding sites in which those who minister to or work with our students, parishioners or clients maintain an account that promotes their own person, but via a position facilitated or enhanced by their employment or in association with the Diocese of Sioux City or one of its institutions. An example of this might be a blog. Additionally, in accordance with the Electronic Communications Policy, Public Sites should not be used to participate in inappropriate activities, unauthorized activities, illegal activities, unethical activities, activities for profit, the engagement of self-solicitation, and/or to publicize personal issues.

Defined Audience and Objectives

Social Media content should appeal to a wide audience consisting of but not limited to families, students, parishioners, school alumni, colleagues and donors in the Diocese

of Sioux City. Individuals maintaining a social media account or site are responsible for the posting to and management of their account/site's content, responding to comments or feedback from followers, and monitoring activity around the account.

Guidelines

1. Authorization

Any social media account considered a public account representing the interests of the Diocese of Sioux City or one of its institutions is the property of the Diocese of Sioux City, its parish, school, or other diocesan institution. Permission to start such a site must be obtained from the appropriate Diocesan official, pastor, SA or DRE.

Representation of or school presence on any school related account, including teams, groups, clubs or other sites associated with a school must also be authorized by a SA or its schools Advancement Office. Any sites, accounts, or pages created or used without prior authorization will be subject to review, editing, and removal. For authorization to be granted the site must be managed by a Diocese of Sioux City's priest, employee, coach or designee.

2. Proprietary Information and Confidentiality

All confidential diocesan, parish, school or institutional information must be protected and may be disclosed only pursuant to diocesan, school or institutional policy or as otherwise required by law. No social media posts may communicate any confidential information.

3. Copyright and Fair Use

All photos, videos, news stories or other information not authored by an account manager should be used only in compliance with copyright laws. Sources should be cited whenever reasonably possible.

4. Institutional Ownership

All diocesan, parish, school or other diocesan institution-related social media accounts maintained for marketing and/or networking purposes remain the property of the Diocese of Sioux City or its institutions.

5. Content Monitoring

All postings and comments by users are to be monitored and responded to as necessary. Postings and comments of an unacceptable nature or containing information unrelated to official diocesan, parish, school or other diocesan institutional business should be deleted promptly. Such postings shall be reported, investigated, and authors will be disciplined if appropriate.

The Diocese of Sioux City, its parishes, schools and other institutions expressly reserves the right to exclusively make determinations of whether or not content, including but not limited to posts, articles, and comments, is appropriate and/or in accordance with diocesan or institutional policies.

The Diocese of Sioux City and its related institutions reserves the right to remove and/or delete all content, including but not limited to posts, articles, and comments that are considered:

- Inappropriate
- Spam
- In violation of any diocesan, school or institutional policies
- Infringing of copyrights or trademarks of others
- Advertising or promotion of services, products, or political organizations
- Clearly off-topic or disruptive
- Advocating illegal activity
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language against another
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Hyperlinks to material not related to the discussion or topic

6. Diocesan Coat-of-Arms and School and Institution Logo's

The Diocese of Sioux City's Coat-of-Arms and any of its parish logos, school crests and/or other institutional logos are trademarked, and their use must be approved by the Diocese of Sioux City Office of Communication, individual School Advancement Offices or other appropriate institutional administrators for use on a social media site.

A school crest or logo consists of the shield, the school's name, tagline and/or any variation of those elements. Trademark registration was granted by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

7. Parody or Imposter Sites

Specific steps must be taken when an impersonation page or unauthorized use of trademarked name(s) or logo(s) is discovered. The Diocese of Sioux City's Office of Communications and the parish, school or affected institution's administration should be informed immediately upon discovery of such page or unauthorized trademark use.

Disclaimer/Additional Inquiries

The Diocese of Sioux City acknowledges that a policy of this nature may not address every possible situation that may arise with respect to online and social media activity. As a result, the Diocese of Sioux City and its institutions reserves the right to amend this policy at any time. Any inquiries should be directed to the Diocese of Sioux City Office of Communications.

This policy was developed utilizing the "Student Contact and Internet-Use Policy" of Dowling Catholic High School, Des Moines, IA.