

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT: The Archdiocese and its Affiliates (defined as any entity that is subject to the administrative authority of the Archbishop of Cincinnati under Canon Law) recognize that in today's environment, with the increasing prevalence of the internet, employees, clerics and volunteers will use the internet to conduct ministry work and to communicate with associates and friends. The internet provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati views the internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote school and ministerial programs. The Archdiocese encourages administrators, pastors and principals to support internet use and to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. However, those using the internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, its reputation and its employees. In light of this possibility, employees, clerics and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of Personal and Ministry Websites including social networks and blogs.

DEFINITIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY:

Ministry Website: a social network page, blog or any internet website/tool created by employees, clerics and volunteers for the sole purpose of conducting Archdiocesan/Affiliate ministry.

Personal Website: a social network page, blog or any internet website/tool created by employees, clerics and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and associates.

Blog: a type of website, usually maintained by an individual, whose primary purpose is to offer commentary or news on events, or subjects, (e.g., Church teaching, theology, morals, etc.)

Supervisor: the hiring and/or supervising agent: for parish staff, the pastor; for parish volunteers, the appropriate administrator (e.g., Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry); for school personnel, the principal.

Employee: any person who is employed by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or an Affiliate. An employee may be a cleric or a lay person who may also be a member of a religious institute.

Cleric: an ordained priest or an ordained deacon who is incardinated in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, as well as a religious priest or deacon, or a priest or deacon incardinated in another diocese, who is engaged in a ministry under the control or auspices of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or an Affiliate.

Adult: an individual who is eighteen years of age or older.

Child: a person under 18 years of age or a physically or mentally disabled person under 21 years of age.

Volunteer: an adult who works without financial or material gain on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates who is not an employee or a cleric (for example, an intern, catechist, scout leader, coach, student teacher and others in similar capacities.)

PROCEDURE

Ministry Websites

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates support the creation of Ministry Websites as a means to conduct Archdiocesan/Affiliate ministry. The use of Ministry Websites is encouraged when conducting Archdiocesan/Affiliate educational and evangelizing programs. Supervisors who approve individuals to create a Ministry Website for dispersal of information are responsible for monitoring the Ministry Website.

Personal Websites

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates recognize that employees, clerics and volunteers may create Personal Websites as a medium of self-expression. Employees, clerics and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a Personal Website is no different from making such information available in any public forum. Any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates should be avoided. Note: if employees, clerics and volunteers elect to use Personal Websites to conduct Archdiocesan/Affiliate ministry, the Personal Websites must be approved, and are subject to monitoring, by their supervisor or designee.

Password-Protected Sites

Both Ministry Websites and Personal Websites may involve the use of a username/password or other such means to access all or portions of the site. In the event that a cleric, employee or volunteer, subject to approval by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliate, gives a child access to a Website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the child's parent/guardian, if the parent/guardian so desires.

Ministry Blogs

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates support the use of **blogging** as a ministry communication tool. It is an excellent platform for creating and distributing information. Although blogging is a powerful communication tool, Ministry Blogs may not be used for: 1) conducting outside business 2) defaming the character of any individual or institution 3) causing embarrassment to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates or 4) divulging any personal information about children that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way.

Personal Blogs

In the event an employee or cleric identifies himself/herself as, or is manifestly understood to be, an employee or cleric of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates on a Personal Blog (or other website with a similar purpose), to help reduce the potential for confusion, the employee is required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on the website:

"The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."

Even with this notice, any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates should be avoided.

Confidential and Proprietary Information

Employees, clerics and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing via the internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates.

Employees, clerics and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing via the internet any information that is proprietary to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

Trademarks and Logos

Employees, clerics and volunteers may use Archdiocesan or Affiliate trademarks or logos on Personal Websites only in ways that clearly promote or call positive attention to Archdiocesan events, websites or organizations associated with the trademark or logo. Employees, clerics and volunteers may not use Archdiocesan or Affiliate trademarks or logos on their Personal Websites in any way that could reasonably suggest Archdiocesan or Affiliate sponsorship or agreement with any views expressed.

Inappropriate Language and Images

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates will not tolerate employees, clerics or volunteers posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images which reflect discredit or cause embarrassment to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or its Affiliates, employees, vendors, partners, agencies, schools and others.

Right to Review

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates reserve the right to review an employee's, cleric's, and volunteer's Personal Website, if there are reasonable grounds for believing that policy is being violated.

Protection of Children

Employees, clerics and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates will comply with all aspects of the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act* (<http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm>) and the *Decree on Child Protection* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

([http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/protect-](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/protect-children/2013_AoC_Decree_on_Child_Protection_w_cover_english.pdf)

[children/2013_AoC_Decree_on_Child_Protection_w_cover_english.pdf](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/protect-children/2013_AoC_Decree_on_Child_Protection_w_cover_english.pdf)).

Employees, clerics and volunteers are forbidden to post or distribute personal identifiable information including pictures of any child under the age of eighteen without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. Personal identifiable information includes full name, photos, home address, email address, telephone number or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a child. Verifiable consent can take the form of a release/permission form that includes use of photographs, an email from a parent or guardian, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian in the presence of another adult. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates will review alleged violations of the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act*, or the *Decree on Child Protection* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, on a case-by-case basis. In the event that a provision of this Social Media Policy

cannot be reconciled with the *Decree on Child Protection* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the provisions of the *Decree on Child Protection* of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati will be in force.

Enforcement

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati, its Affiliates and their respective administrators intend to enforce the policy set forth here and expect all employees, clerics and volunteers to comply. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination, if an employee or cleric, or removal from position, if a volunteer.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati and its Affiliates reserve the right to make changes to this policy at any time and at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances and events.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in granting the use of its social networking policies and guidelines as a resource in the development of this policy.