Diocese of Green Bay

OFFICE OF SAFE ENVIRONMENT DIGITAL COMMUNICATION POLICY FOR THE DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

Digital communication offers individuals, groups and the Catholic Church an opportunity to connect in positive ways. We are able to encourage one another, strengthen community ties and boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

While communication has advanced technically, it is at its core a human interaction. This *Office of Safe Environment Digital Communication Policy* creates clear standards and expectations for digital communication to protect children, and youth in digital communications. A Diocesan location, parish or school, may adopt a stricter standard than this policy but may not adopt a practice that fails to meet the standards and expectations of this policy.

Adherence to Diocesan Codes of Conduct

Clergy, employees of the Diocese of Green Bay, and employees of parishes and schools within the Diocese of Green Bay, digitally communicating with non-related minors must conform to the "*Our Promise to Protect" - Safe Environment Policy, Diocese of Green Bay:* "Our Promise to Protect…" (gbdioc.org)

Volunteers who minister to children, digitally communicating with non-related minors must conform to the "*Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct for Volunteers":* "Diocesan Code of Pastoral Conduct for Volunteers" (gbdioc.org)

Clergy, employees, and volunteers must always remember that they are representatives of their parish, school or Catholic organization, and must conduct themselves accordingly, sharing a positive, joyful witness to the Gospel with others at all times.

A standard of transparency and accountability

Clergy, employees, and volunteers are always witnesses and disciples of Jesus Christ. Therefore, complete transparency is imperative and necessary regarding the use of digital communication with unrelated minors.

When using digital communication with the school or parish, clergy, employees, and volunteers must be identified by their common name or photo. Aliases are not to be used. It is expected of clergy, employees, and volunteers that an email account connected to the parish, school, or diocese must be used for all email communication with unrelated minors.

When using digital communication clergy, employees, and volunteers must respect boundaries and must communicate using appropriate language. The TWO PLUS ONE rule must be applied whereby there are always two background checked and safe environment trained adults included in digital communication with an unrelated minor. The adult is always responsible for maintaining clear professional boundaries.

Any parish, school or organization that creates a parish or school page, social media or other digital presence is **required** to designate at least one ***paid staff member*** to maintain administrator-level privileges to each digital communications outlet. The staff member should be able to access and retrieve a record of digital communication between staff/volunteers and minor individuals at will if requested by parents, law enforcement or other legitimate authorities.

Prohibited Digital Communication with Unrelated Minors

1. Personal Social Media (ie: Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Spotify, etc.)
2. Personal Cellphone Information (ie: text messaging, phone call, video call, etc.)
3. Personal Email Address

Mandatory reporting

Clergy, employees, and volunteers must immediately report any form of digital communication they receive which indicates existing or imminent harm or danger of sexual abuse of a minor to civil authorities. The content of the communication must also be reported to parish and/or school leadership, and the Diocesan Assistance Coordinator (920-272-8174) in collaboration for the safety of the individual.

Questions

Any questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of Safe Environment at 920-272-8174.

**The consent form for permission to use media(pictures/videos) is the Media Release Form and is different than the Digital Communications Policy*