

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Electronic communications enhance the exchange of information but also raise questions concerning responsibility and privacy. Access to diocesan electronic communications systems is provided in conjunction with the diocese's business and staff job responsibilities. Staff use of these systems, including but not limited to E-mail and the Internet is subject to these policies and procedures. Diocesan communications systems may also be made available to individuals who are not diocesan staff (e.g. consultants, vendors, committee members, volunteers, etc.) Use of these systems by such persons is also subject to these policies and procedures.

E-MAIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Diocese of Olympia is pleased to make e-mail available to authorized employees. E-mail is fast and convenient and, when properly used, supports the business and pastoral activities of the diocese. Misuse of e-mail, however, can have serious legal consequences potentially putting the diocese and/or its staff at risk. Misuse, intended or not, creates liabilities that are an area of genuine concern to those responsible for the maintenance of the diocese's legal integrity. It is, therefore, the intent of the Diocese of Olympia to minimize such liabilities by providing staff with policies and procedures for the use and retention of e-mail.

E-MAIL POLICY

- E-mail is a service provided to diocesan staff to assist them in the performance of their duties. Communications should be job-related, to the point and professional in tone. Exercise sound judgment and common sense when distributing e-mail messages. Use extreme caution to ensure that the correct e-mail address is used for the intended recipient(s). Personal use is discouraged but is allowed on an occasional and limited basis. *See Personal Use, page 26.*
- All communications and information transmitted, received, or stored in diocesan computer systems belong to the Diocese of Olympia and may be monitored. Please be aware that staff should have no expectation of privacy. Do not treat e-mail as confidential or private.
- E-mail shall **NOT** be used for transmission of information that promotes or transacts any of the following:
 1. Unauthorized use of a user ID to send, receive or read e-mail.
 2. Unauthorized use of diocesan e-mail by non-diocesan personnel.
 3. Unauthorized alteration of e-mail.
 4. Discrimination based on race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual preference.
 5. Sexual harassment.
 6. Copyright infringement.
 7. Forwarding e-mail messages without the authorization of the sender – with the following one exception: Email may be forwarded to a more appropriate recipient (i.e. diocesan staff, corporate officer or member of a governing body) with an explanation both to the new recipient and to the sender.
 8. Unauthorized access to confidential or restricted information or breaching diocesan confidentiality.
 9. Participation or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.
 10. Personal positions or agenda not associated with one's position as an employee of the Diocese.
 11. Any unlawful activity.

E-MAIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (CONT.)

- The e-mail system is the property of the Diocese of Olympia. Employees using the diocesan e-mail system must adhere to this policy and its accompanying procedures
NOTE: These policies and procedures apply to all e-mail systems made available by the Diocese of Olympia including but not limited to desktop and laptop computers and all wireless mobile devices such as cell phones, PDA devices, BlackBerries, iPads, etc.

E-MAIL PROCEDURES

- All users must be authorized to use the systems.
- The retention period for e-mail (received or sent) is no longer than **90** days.
Within 90 days a user must:
 1. permanently **DELETE*** the e-mail record; **OR**
 2. **TRANSFER** the e-mail record to an electronic file folder for temporary retention and annual review;
 3. **OR TRANSFER** the e-mail record to the Digital Archives for long term or permanent retention.
NOTE: If preferred, the email may also be printed for permanent retention.

Transitory records such as meeting notices, reminders, informal notes and messages should be read and deleted immediately. *See Appendix C.* Working documents or reference materials may be transferred to an electronic file folder for temporary retention but should be deleted as soon as their administrative use ceases. Electronic file folder titles should correspond to titles used in the paper filing system.

***Remember to delete your delete box!**

Significant records used in connection with the transaction of diocesan business should be printed out, filed and retained in accordance with approved record retention schedules. When printing an e-mail record, be sure to print all transmission information such as sender, recipient(s), date and routing data as provided in "Internet Headers." **The E-Mail record must be removed from the in-box or sent items folder within 90 days.**

- All users shall practice e-mail etiquette as noted below:
 1. Check e-mail daily.
 2. Keep messages short and to the point.
 3. Be professional and careful regarding what you say about others.
 4. Use sarcasm and humor with care. Without face to face communications such remarks can be misinterpreted.
 5. Cite all quotations, references and sources.
 6. Observe chain of command when corresponding with superiors.
 7. Include signature footer at the bottom of the message with name, affiliation and e-mail address.
 8. Include disclaimer* at bottom of e-mail message.
 9. Follow e-mail policy as stated above.
- These e-mail procedures apply to all e-mail messages transmitted or received from any diocesan e-mail system including the mobile systems outlined above.
- Remember, e-mail is neither secure nor private. **DO NOT SEND MESSAGES THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE WILLING FOR EVERYONE TO READ**

PERSONAL USE:

Though personal use of diocesan computer systems – including e-mail and the Internet – is discouraged, the diocese recognizes that an occasion might arise when it is necessary for an employee to use or access these systems for personal reasons. Therefore, such personal use will be allowed on an occasional and limited basis subject to the criteria listed below:

- Use is brief and occurs infrequently.
- Use does not interfere with the performance of the employee's official duties.
- Use does not interfere with or disrupt the work of other employees.
- Use does not compromise the security or integrity of diocesan computer systems.
- Use does not violate any of the other provisions of the diocesan email and Internet policy.

***Disclaimer:**

This message is intended for the sole use of the individual and entity to which it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended addressee, nor authorized to receive for the intended addressee, you are hereby notified that you may not use, copy, disclose or distribute to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received this message in error, please immediately advise the sender by reply email and delete the message. Thank you very much.

INTERNET

POLICIES, PROCEDURES and GUIDELINES

As with e-mail, the Diocese of Olympia is pleased to offer Internet access to its employees. Having access to the information and resources available on the Internet enhances our ability to do our jobs and provide services to our congregations and communicants. However, while most Internet use serves legitimate business and professional purposes, the potential for abuse exists. Such abuse infringes on staff productivity and may also create legal risks and liabilities. It is, therefore, the intent of the Diocese of Olympia to minimize such liabilities by providing staff with a policy governing Internet use.

INTERNET USE POLICY

Access to the Internet is a service provided to diocesan staff to assist them in the performance of their duties. Internet searches should be job-related and support business or professional activities. Staff shall not “browse the web” on diocesan time, create personal web pages, or otherwise use diocesan facilities to access the Internet for any inappropriate or illegal activity or for reasons unrelated to diocesan business and staff job responsibilities except as noted under *Personal Use*, page 26.

This Internet Use Policy applies to the use of social media web sites just as it does to all other Internet use. However, the proliferation of social media sites and their use by employees necessitates an addendum to this policy which provides specific guidelines addressing social media use for the Diocese of Olympia. This addendum can be found on page 28 and is to be considered a part of this document.

Internet use may be monitored. Please be aware that staff should have no expectation of privacy. Do not treat Internet use as confidential or private.

If you have any questions about the E-Mail and Internet policies, procedures and guidelines stated on pages 24-33, address them to the Archivist/Records Manager before signing the following agreement:

I have read the Diocese of Olympia’s E-Mail and Internet Policies and Procedures and agree to abide by them. I understand that violation of any of the above policies and procedures may result in disciplinary action, up to and including my termination.

Name (Print)

Signature

Date

INTERNET USE
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES
An Addendum
Administrative Revision, October 1, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Social media can be defined as: Tools that allow the sharing of information and creation of communities through online networks of people.¹

Among the most well-known social media applications are Facebook (social networking), Twitter (micro-blogging), YouTube (video sharing), LinkedIn (professional networking) and Flickr (image sharing). However, these are only a few of the more popular applications among a myriad of web sites, blogs, etc.

Social media presents us with a wonderful opportunity to engage with the constantly growing online community and to share our beliefs, our congregations, our communities, our programs and our story with a worldwide audience. One of the most exciting aspects of social media is the immediate interaction with our audience that it allows in a direct two-way conversation never before possible.²

In an ongoing effort to strengthen ministries and to protect those who serve as well as those who are served by these ministries, the following **guidelines** are recommended to our parishes, missions, schools, and diocesan institutions for social and electronic media usage.

Please remember this about digital communications:

- All communications sent digitally (email, social networking, notes, posts, tweets etc.) should not be assumed to be confidential and may be shared or reposted to others without an individual's permission or knowledge. *See also:* Email and Internet Use policies.
- Protect confidential and private information: Do not post any confidential, private, or restricted information.
- Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or exploitation of children, youth, elders and vulnerable adults apply in the virtual world as they do in the physical world. Suspected abuse must be reported to Child Protective Services by those who are mandated to report.
- When using social media, it is critical that personal and institutional privacy settings are applied regularly, reviewed and upgraded as needed.
- Posts on social media sites should project a positive image by being professional in tone and in good taste.
- Be respectful. Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, volunteers, and others who work on behalf of the diocese, its congregations and institutions.

- Acknowledge who you are. If you are representing the diocese, its congregations or institutions when posting on a social media platform, acknowledge this. If you are not representing the diocese, its congregations or institutions, (on your own blog, web site, etc.) acknowledge this as well and make it clear that the views being expressed are your own with a disclaimer. Sample Disclaimer: "The views expressed on this (blog, web site, etc.) are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Diocese of Olympia"
- Be proactive, not reactive
- Respect copyright and fair use: When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the diocese. **NOTE**: For copyright law go to: <http://www.lawsitesblog.com/2009/10/social-media-copyright-quiz.html>
- Terms of Service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.
- Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet retains almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched.
- If you are representing the diocese, its congregations or ministries when posting to a social media platform, social media is not to be used for transmission of information that promotes or transacts any of the following: Discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity; sexual harassment; participation or intervention in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office; personal positions or agenda not associated with one's position as an employee of the diocese; any unlawful activity.
- If posting photos of children or youth on a web page, or other Internet platform, observe the following:
 - Always obtain written permission on a release form from the parents of minors before posting pictures
 - Do not provide personal information about the persons pictured (names, addresses, contact information, other information that would identify them)

Recommended Guidelines for Digital Interactions with Children and Youth (under the age of 18):

- Adults who want to connect via social networking with children or youth to whom they minister should adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Do not submit or respond to "friend" requests from children or youth using personal profiles. No personal social media accounts, groups, pages, etc. are to be used. All social networking communication with children or youth should be conducted through a public, group networking page. Here is a recommended process: Set up a closed group account that is monitored by at least two unrelated adult administrators and two unrelated youth administrators. Children and youth requesting to "friend" an adult can be invited to join the closed group. Invitations to children or youth to join the group should be made by the youth administrators
 - All social media communication needs to take place on a group page and should not take place in the form of personal messages and chats. Social media should not be used for pastoral or confidential communication.
- Covenants for a group should be created to include the following:

- A clear statement that materials posted on the site are not confidential
 - Appropriate and inappropriate language, content and behavior
 - Who may join the group and how they leave the group
 - Requirements for posting photos and what information may be appropriately attached.
 - Requirement to inform parents of the covenant and its guidelines
 - Consequences for breaking the covenants.
- Responsibilities of Site Administrators (Adults and Youth):
 - Remove children or youth who “age out” of the program or ministry or who move away or leave the church community. Adults on the site should also be removed when they no longer work with children or youth.
 - If it is necessary to remove posts from the site or respond to other inappropriate digital communication, the adult administrators should meet with the child or youth and explain why the post was removed and remind them of the covenant guidelines.
 - Be sure that newcomers to the site have reviewed, understood and signed the Covenant.
- Video Chats, Blogs, Video Blogs:
 - Video chats with children or youth should only take place from the church office of a children or youth minister and are subject to the Safeguarding rules that define the parameters of adult-child or youth interaction.
- Appropriate Use of Email and Texting (also Twitter)
 - Reasons to text: reminders, urgent pastoral care, emergency contact/information, cancelling or being late for a meeting. Generally, texting should not be used in place of a face-to-face or telephone conversation. Large amounts of data or information are best sent via public social media pages, email, phone or in person.
 - Using email: communicate basic, factual information in a concise manner.
 - Email is not a good medium for pastorally sensitive matters, emotionally charged situations, or information that might be legally sensitive.
 - Email does not communicate tone of voice or emotion; that is inferred by the recipient and can be misinterpreted.
 - When in doubt, schedule a face to face meeting or make a phone call.

Appropriately used, social media can invite new members into the Church, encourage interactive participation, provide information and help build strong and vibrant communities.³ However, inappropriate use of social media may leave you and the diocese open to embarrassment, to issues of questionable, unethical or immoral behavior and/or to litigation.

Misuse of social media may be intentional and malicious or, as is more often the case, it may be the unintentional result of unthinking or hastily composed messages or the posting of inappropriate visual images. Additionally, when it comes to online relationships, “interactions in the virtual world need to be transparent...In the virtual world healthy boundaries and safe church practices must be adhered to as they are in the physical world.”⁴

There are many legal ramifications of social media use. The diocese, its congregations or institutions could be held liable for what its employees or volunteers post on diocesan web sites and its social media sites. What may not be as well understood is that the diocese, its congregations or institutions could also be held liable for what its employees or volunteers post on their personal sites. There are confidentiality and privacy issues, copyright issues, defamation and discrimination concerns, and concerns about unlawful activity of any kind. The bottom line is: “Regardless of whether employees (or volunteers) are posting at home or during working hours, employers may face legal liability when employees (or volunteers) misuse social media.”⁵

NOTE: Additional editorial policies and best practices will be made available through the Communications Office.

Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut: Safe Church guidelines for Social Media

https://www.ctepiscopal.org/content/safe_church_guidelines_for_social_media.asp

Episcopal Diocese of Texas: Using Social Media and Electronic Media Safely. March 2013

<http://www.epicenter.org>

Boy Scouts of America Social Media Guidelines

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx>

Praesidium. Social Media and Sexual Abuse: Establishing Healthy Boundaries. Webinar.

1 <http://www.constantcontact.com/learning-center/glossary/social-media/index.jsp>

2 Social Media and the Episcopal Church: A New Way to Tell a 2,000-year-Old Story. The Episcopal Church. 2011.

3 Ibid. pg. 28.

4 Suggested practices & guidelines for use of social networking websites & other forms of digital communications. Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut.

5 Social Media and the Workplace: Managing Risks. Jackson Lewis LLP. 2010