

Electronic Media Policy

St. Michael Church

Netcong, NJ

2015

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Church personnel – includes

- Priests and deacons
- All Seminarians of the Diocese of Paterson
- Those who are enrolled in the Diocesan Permanent Diaconate Formation Program
- All people in religious life within the Church and the Diocese of Paterson
- All paid personnel, whether employed in areas of ministry or other kinds of services by the church, school or other agencies; also those who contracted their services to the Church; and
- All volunteers

Basic Policies

- For all electronic communications regarding the church and the ministries associated with the church, the pastor shall be copied on all such communications.
- There must be **at least two adults** with administrative access for EACH social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and website that represents a church ministry. One **MUST** be the web administrator or other personnel that is designated by the pastor. Personal social media accounts must not be used for ministry communication.
- No tagging of minors is allowed on any social media, websites or emails unless parental permission has been granted previously.

Church Electronic Communications

- The pastor or web administrator must in possession of or have access to reset all passwords used to access church/ministry related social media and websites.
- Church personnel who establish social media or websites for ministries in the church will cooperate in providing all necessary information to the pastor or web administrator upon establishing a social media account or website for their ministry. Existing social media and websites should immediately provide the information named above upon the request of the pastor or web administrator or after having read this, whichever comes first.
- Permission to send emails to parishioners for ministries must be attained before emails are sent. No emails should be sent using information attained without the parishioners consent.

Websites

- Websites should reflect clear goals consistent with the church's teachings and the ministry for which the website was established.
- Privacy of all members should be a priority as well as the protection of minors must be essential. Telephone numbers, personal email addresses and/ any other identifying information of minors, **MUST NOT** be published on the websites without prior consent of the parent/guardian of a minor. A minor cannot give consent for this information to be made public.
- Care should be taken to protect the personal information of the personnel of the Church. Avoid using their home address, telephone or cell numbers and home email addresses without consent, unless that information is presently in the bulletin.

Social Media

- Parents/Guardians must be notified and join in on the communication via social media with minors used in particular ministries. The minors must be granted permission by their parent/guardian to be able to use such social media.
- Social media may not be used to communicate with minors who have not reached the 9th grade.
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) should be “closed” or “private” groups, with administrator approval required for joining.
- Online “chatting” with minors is not permitted.
- ***Refer to the Policy for Communication with Minors Via Social Media and Other Electronic Communications from the Diocese for specifics regarding minors.***

Social Networking

- All Church related sites are to be monitored by the appropriate Church personnel (pastor, priest, web administrator, or other designated personnel by pastor).
- All social networking should be done in the name of the ministry, not the individual.
- Church personnel must not advertise to or “friend” minors to their personal pages.

Blogging

- Should be used to promote ministries or the Church as an evangelization tool.

- With youth ministry, it can provide ongoing information about programs, opportunities, expectations, policies and requests for support. Parent approval is needed for communication with minors.
- Providing young people and all with information that will help them become disciples of Jesus Christ.

