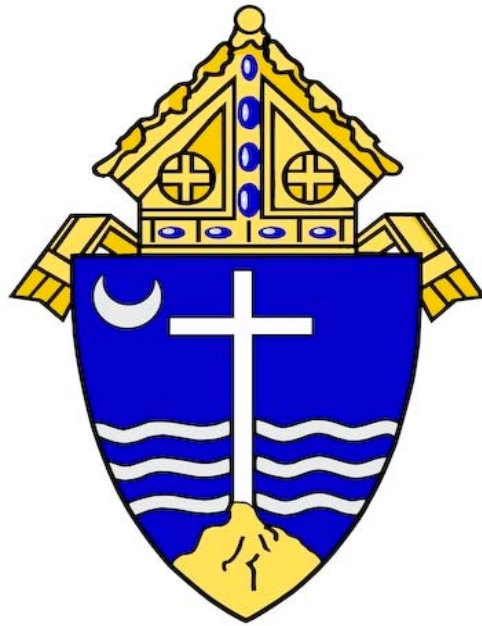


# *Diocese of Rockford*



## Diocesan Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media

October 2016

# CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKFORD

## CODE FOR THE PASTORAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

This Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media is designed to aid all employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Rockford, and all Diocesan parishes, schools, agencies and other Diocesan entities in understanding appropriate usage, boundaries and best practices in technology and social media.

### I. PROCEDURE

1. The decision to have a web presence is that of the Pastor/Administrator of the parish, school, Diocesan institution or entity.
2. The ministry/group must have approval from the Pastor/Administrator for the actual ministry/group page: i.e., for that choice of vehicle, the layout and design, and content of the page.
3. The ownership of the web page or other social media tool belongs to the parish, school, Diocesan agency or entity, and not to the ministry or group. The Pastor/Administrator has the sole discretion to modify or close the web presence.
4. The Pastor/Administrator uses the Pastor's/Administrator's personal credit card or the credit card of the parish, school, or Diocesan agency or entity in establishing the web presence, and the Pastor/Administrator is to receive the password. Only the Pastor/Administrator is to know both the password and the credit card number.
5. For those parishes, schools, Diocesan agencies or entities which already have a web presence at the time of the creation of this Code, all passwords and credit card numbers necessary to establish ownership and control of the web presence are required to be given to the Pastor/Administrator promptly.
6. Personal sites established by employees or volunteers should reflect Catholic values, and should not offend the faith and morals and/or teachings of the Catholic Church. One's personal social networking, blog, websites, and other online activities and communications are public in nature, and employees and volunteers give up any expectation of privacy when they engage in online activity and communication. Employees and volunteers are role models for the faithful and young people of the Church. The Diocese expects employees and volunteers to conduct themselves accordingly both while on-duty and off-duty from an employed or volunteer position.

## II. CONDUCT

1. Employees and volunteers of Diocesan parishes, schools, agencies and other entities are personally responsible for their posted content, and will be held personally accountable for such. Official statements of parish, school, agency, and other entities of the Diocese or of Diocesan policies may only be made by the Pastor/Administrator.

2. Identify yourself in communications. Use real identities rather than anonymous or fictitious-names, identities, posts and comments.

3. Respect the privacy of others. Do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of minors and dependent vulnerable adults, without the permission of their parents/legal guardians.

4. Respect your audience. Express your views with appropriate language, civility, and be respectful of the Church and her teachings. Communications must not offend or contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church.

5. Do not disclose confidential information. Respect the confidentiality of matters that are shared in confidence, or that are meant to be kept confidential by the nature of your employment or volunteer position. Be mindful, however, of your charge as a mandated reporter and that confidentiality cannot apply in situations that require you to report under the mandated reporter law.

6. Parents/legal guardians of minors and parents/legal guardians of dependent vulnerable adults shall have access to everything provided to their minor child/dependent vulnerable adult.

7. All technological tools used as part of one's employment or volunteering in the Diocese of Rockford, such as websites, blogs, social network sites, and the like, are the property of the Diocese of Rockford.

8. Any use of the logo of the Diocese of Rockford and its entities for branding or titling pages, blogs, or other similar elements of social media must be approved in writing by the Diocese of Rockford prior to use. Requests for consent to use such names or logos are to be made to the Communications Director in the case of the Diocese, the Pastor in the case of the parish, and the Principal in the case of the school, and the Administrator in the case of a Diocesan agency or other entity. Any uses in existence at the time of adoption of this Code are not grandfathered and are required to be authorized. Permission to use the name or logo of the Diocese, parish, school, agency or entity may be revoked at any time in the sole discretion of the Diocese, Pastor, Principal, or Administrator, respectively.

9. Where this Code does not provide a direct answer for how members of our Church faithful should conduct themselves, employees and volunteers should contact their

supervisor. Questions may also be sent to the Director of Communications for the Diocese of Rockford at [communication@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:communication@rockforddiocese.org). This document may be updated and modified at any time. This document and any future modifications will be made available at [www.rockforddiocese.org](http://www.rockforddiocese.org) and [www.ceorockford.org](http://www.ceorockford.org) where it will be available in its entirety.

10. Each parish, school, Diocesan agency or entity that has a social media vehicle must have two adult moderators. Moderators are to ensure the social media vehicle complies with this and all Diocesan policies and codes of conduct. All comment and blog response areas must be moderated. Moderators shall review and approve comments prior to posting, and should not post any comment which is uncivil, misrepresents the position of the Church, offends the faith or morals of the Church, includes inappropriate language or speech, or is anonymous.

11. Employees and volunteers must comply fully with copyright law when using social media and technology.

12. Pastors and Administrators of parishes, schools, Diocesan agencies or entities may implement more restrictive rules for the use of social media and technology if they deem it appropriate.

13. Any use of social media that violates this Code or any other Diocesan policy should be brought to the attention of the Pastor/Administrator or the Diocesan Communications Director immediately. Violators are subject to discipline.

Parts of this Code are adapted from documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Diocese of San Jose, the Diocese of Toledo, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati and Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington, D.C. We are grateful to these entities for their permission to use their documents.

**CODE FOR THE PASTORAL USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA  
RECEIPT ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge that I have received the  
(Name)  
Diocese of Rockford's Code for the Pastoral Use of Technology and Social Media. I agree that I  
have read and will abide by this Code.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish/School/Diocesan Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to the Parish/School/Diocesan entity you identified on this form.**