



INITIAL POLICY DATE	1 May 2020
REVIEWED VERSION EFFECTIVE DATE	1 January 2025
REVIEW DATE	1 July, 2027
POLICY OWNER	Chancery
APPLIES TO	This Policy applies to clergy, members of religious institutes, employees, board members, contractors (as defined and in relation to WHS legislation and a one-member corporation), volunteers, work experience students and trainees (Workers) of the Diocese.
EXCLUSIONS	Where an agency or entity of the Diocese has its own policy, the relevant agency or entity policy will apply to Workers engaged by those agencies or entities. In the event of conflict between the policies of agencies or entities and the Diocesan policy, the Diocesan policy prevails.
RELATED POLICIES, GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES	Code of Conduct Policy Acceptable Use of Electronic Communications Systems and Devices Policy Privacy (Internal) Policy Privacy (External) Policy Fact Sheet: Use of Technology and Social Media to Communicate with Children and Adults at Risk
REFERENCE	'Social Networking Policy for the Catholic Church in Australia': Australian Catholic Bishops Conference May 2015
RELATED FORMS	Consent to Film or Photograph Form Registration - Parental Consent Form
HEADINGS	Objective Definitions Policy <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approval for Work-related Use of Social Media2. Social Media and Diocesan Policy<ol style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Social Networking Conduct2.2 Usage – Public Social Media Sites<ol style="list-style-type: none">2.2.1 Moderation of Diocesan Sites2.1.2 Communicating with Youth3. Disclaimer4. Privacy Breaches of this Policy Revision/ Modification History

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OBJECTIVE

This policy contains the expectations of all Workers engaged by the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Lismore when using social media.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person who is under 18 years of age;

Contractor means contractor as referred to in WHS legislation and/or a company when one main person through the personal skills or efforts as an individual of that person is contracted to the Diocese and/or a one shareholder/member company.

Diocese means the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lismore and includes without limitation any Diocesan agencies, corporations, entities, parishes, parish corporations and parish entities where the Worker is employed or otherwise engaged.

Ministry website means a connected group of web pages on the World Wide Web regarded as a single entity, usually maintained by Workers or the Diocese and devoted to a specific topic or several closely related topics for the sole purpose of conducting Diocesan or Diocesan affiliated business.

Personal website means a connected group of web pages on the World Wide Web regarded as a single entity, usually maintained by a Worker for the purpose of conducting non-work-related business, such as personal communications with friends and or people with a general interest in the content of the personal website.

Social Media means any online publication or commentary which is used as a means of interaction among people in which those people create, share and or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

Social network means a network of social interactions and personal relationships driven by user-generated content and includes, without limitation, dedicated websites and applications which enable users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages and images. Social network applications include, without limitation, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Snap Chat, Google+ and Flickr.

Worker means clergy, religious, employees, board members, contractors, volunteers, work experience students and trainees of the Diocese.

POLICY

1. Approval for Work-related Use of Social Media

Workers are required to have the written approval of the Diocese Business Manager before engaging in online Social Media on behalf of the Diocese or establishing a work-related social media channel.

2. Social Media and Diocesan Policy

When using social media Workers are required to comply with Diocesan policy including without limitation the Code of Conduct Policy. This is regardless of whether the use is for work-related or private use. This policy applies to any online activity regardless of whether the Worker is off duty; and/ or using a Diocesan or a privately-owned electronic communication device.

2.1. 2.1 Social Networking Conduct

When using social media, Workers are expected to:

- adhere to Diocesan policy, including without limitation, the Code of Conduct Policy;
- demonstrate a Christ-centred respect for the dignity of the person that they are interacting with or to whom they are providing a commentary or referring to otherwise;
- maintain appropriate boundaries including but not limited to when interacting with children, young persons and vulnerable adults;
- demonstrate a clear distinction between professional and personal communication;
- ensure that work-related social media use and private social media use are not combined;
- only use work-related social media to establish or maintain professional or pastoral relationships;
- when identifying themselves as Diocesan Workers or if reasonably likely to be identified as a Diocesan Worker, ensure that content posted online is consistent with Diocesan policy;
- ensure that their social media conduct does not bring the reputation of the Diocese into disrepute or otherwise conflict with the interests of the Diocese;
- refrain from publishing defamatory, disparaging or discriminatory comments or material;
- comply with any Diocesan media publishing approval protocols;
- ensure that they do not breach copyright, privacy or any other laws that pertain to the publication;
- when endorsing Diocesan services and activities, disclose their relationship with the Diocese and ensure that endorsements do not contain representations that are misleading, deceptive or cannot be substantiated;
- ensure that the post is not misconstrued as being a post made on behalf of the Diocese by speaking in the first person 'I' as opposed to using the words 'we' or 'us' when communicating about content related to the activities or services of the Diocese;
- not publish or disclose information or comment on any matters that contradict or are contrary to information contained in the Diocesan website or Diocesan policy generally;
- not engage in social media anonymously, use pseudonyms or use false screen names;
- maintain the integrity of social media system passwords and not share or disclose their password or allow anyone else to use their password to access the system;
- ensure that social media activities that are work-related are never set up personally in the Workers name (e.g. Krisha Manduras, Parish Secretary);
- ensure work-related websites are categorised as 'religious organisations' when grouping and clearly identified as an official group of the Diocese;

2.2. Usage – Public Social Media Sites

The following applies to Worker use of public social media sites including without limitation Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Snap Chat, Google+ and Flickr.

2.2.1 Moderation of Diocesan Sites

Diocesan social media sites are required to have a moderator appointed by the Diocese. The Diocesan appointed moderator ("**Moderator**") filters social media activity and to remove any communications that are rude, disrespectful, aggressive or bullying in nature. The Moderator may at their absolute discretion, restrict or block a user from the Diocesan social media site should the Moderator believe it is in the best interests of the Diocese and other users of the site.

2.2.2 Communicating with Youth

Workers who use social media to communicate with children or young people on behalf of the Diocese are required to:

- have a current Working with Children Check Clearance (**WWCC**);

- refrain from engaging in any direct electronic communication using social media with children under the age of 13;
- otherwise restrict communication with young people to be between the hours of 8:00am and 8:00pm unless in an emergency or the contact is time sensitive to the ministry or an event;
- ensure that the Worker has the contact information including a phone number and email address for the parent/ legal guardian of any child or young person they are communicating with over social media;
- not solicit or otherwise initiate online personal conversations with any child;
- ensure that the parents/ guardian of the child or young person have access to the same Diocesan social media as their child or young person;
- a Worker engaged in youth ministry is required to verify and approve any youth requests for membership of youth ministry social media groups;
- refrain from posting pictures, images videos or other releases except those that are newsworthy or of general interest;
- refrain from posting any images or videos of Minors without the verifiable consent of the Minor's custodial parent/ guardian to do so;
- refrain from tagging photographs of youth activities or identify anyone by name or any other identifier which might result in them being retrievable by a search engine;
- ensure that teenage sites are monitored daily to ensure that any plea for help is identified and responded to as soon as possible after the plea for help is posted.

3. Disclaimer

Where there is a potential or actual likelihood that a personal opinion of the Worker could be taken to be the opinion of the Diocese, the Worker is required to use the following disclaimer when posting on social media:

Views expressed are those of the individual sender, and not necessarily those of the Diocese of Lismore, NSW Australia.

4. Privacy

The Worker is required to:

- a) decline friend' requests from children unless parental / carer consent is provided, exercise diligence in accepting friend requests from people within whom the Worker professional engages with, especially adults at risk;
- b) respect the privacy of other Workers associated with the Diocese by not discussing other Workers or posting photos of other Workers without their permission;
- c) ensure that the Diocese has the prior written consent of a custodial parent/ guardian to film or photograph a child or adult as well as their prior consent to post the film or photograph on social media;
- d) never post a personal telephone number, address or email address on social media without the owner's express permission;
- e) never post a Worker's personal phone number, address or email address on work-related social media.

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

Breaching this Policy may result in disciplinary action, which may include the termination of employment or engagement and, notification to external agencies including without limitation professional standards associations, regulatory agencies and police.

REVISION/ MODIFICATION HISTORY

Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
1 May 2020	1	Social Networking Policy	Initial Policy	15 June 2020	1 July 2020
16 Nov 2020	2	Social Networking Policy	Minor changes to form	16 Nov 2020	16 Nov 2020
1 June 2021	3	Social Networking Policy	'Religious' included in the definition of worker	1 June 2021	1 June 2021
29 April 2024	4	Social Networking Policy	Removal of Social Networking Guidelines in related procedures replaced with Fact Sheet: Use of Technology and Social Media to Communicate with Children and Adults at Risk. Addition of Registration - Parental Consent For. Communicating with Youth change from 9:00pm to 8:00pm.	4 June 2024	1 January 2025

APPROVAL DATE/ REVISION HISTORY

Approved by: Bishop Gregory Homeming

Date: 10 September 2024

To be revised: June 2027