



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK
YOUTH FAITH FORMATION
Catechetical

Facebook and Child Protection

Many of our parishes, schools and programs would like to have a Facebook page or some other social networking site to keep in contact with the children and to publicize their activities. However, some caution must be used, to protect both adults and minors.

Guidelines for Personal Social Networking Sites

Adults who are active in

Archdiocesan programs must understand that material on their personal Facebook page will be evaluated based on their position with the Church. They must also must make sure that they abide by Archdiocesan policies regarding contact with minors, and maintain proper professional boundaries:



- There can be no private direct communication with a minor you are working with. All communications must be through parents, on a public official Archdiocesan social networking page, or through an official email account.
- You may not "Friend" minors you are working with. This includes groups, "buddy lists", and other similar arrangements.
- Do not post any image of a minor with whom you are working.
- The posting of any indecent or inappropriate material on a personal social networking site may lead to disciplinary action by the Archdiocesan institution or program in which the adult works.

“Do’s and Don’ts” for Official Church Social Networking Sites

If a parish or other Archdiocesan institution or program sets up a Facebook page, they should follow the following guidelines:

- The administrator of the program or institution (e.g., the principal) should appoint an adult to be the moderator of the site.
- No minor may moderate an official social networking site.

- Access to the site is strictly restricted to those who are actively involved in the program. For example, in Facebook, the best approach is to set up a "Page" for the parish or school, and then make sure that only your students or their parents are permitted to be "Fans".
- Access to the site is subject to the invitation and approval of the moderator. This way, minors who are not associated with the program and random adult participants cannot get access to the site.
- Private direct communications ("chat" or private messages) may not take place between adults and minors. For example, by setting up a "Page" for "Fans", the settings can be used to ensure that all communications are public.
- To the fullest extent possible, the moderator must use the privacy settings to block private direct communications ("chat" or private messages) .
- The moderator of the program oversees the content of the site. Anything that is indecent, false, derogatory, or offensive must be removed by the moderator.
- No personal information or photographs of minors should be posted without the written permission of the minor's parent or guardian. This would include phone numbers, email addresses, physical addresses, etc.

From <http://www.archny.org/pastoral/safe-environment-program/facebook-and-child-protection/>