



# VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL

POLICIES MANUAL  
OF THE DIOCESE OF  
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND, INC.

Revised September 2014

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## **WELCOME TO THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND, INC.**

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. (the “Diocese”) is a not-for-profit religious corporation empowered under Canon Law to fulfill the spiritual, educational and charitable mission of the Catholic Church in the Northeastern portion of the State of Indiana. As a volunteer of the Diocese, your efforts play a vital role towards the successful fulfillment of the sacred mission of this local Church. This manual applies to all who volunteer service for the Diocese. It is provided to you as a guide to assist you in understanding the importance of your role and the standards of conduct and decorum that apply to your position. These materials are presented with the hope that your time of service will be pleasant, enduring and enriching for you and for the people of God whom we all serve. The Diocese reserves the right to change or discontinue any provision of this manual at any time. This manual is not intended to be nor should it be construed as a contract of employment with the Diocese or any of its agencies, or a promise of continued service as a volunteer. Either you or the Diocese may terminate your volunteer relationship for any reason at any time.

### **A WORD FROM BISHOP RHOADES**

*The work of our diocese is eminently pastoral. We work to bring the message of Christ and his healing presence to everyone. These policies are meant to make clear to all who serve our people that we are devoted to the mission of Jesus Christ and to the treatment of every single person, especially our beloved young, with dignity and in the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.*

## GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

### NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Volunteer practices are based on job-related criteria such as one's fidelity to the Catholic faith, individual merit, ability, experience, performance, education and training.

This policy of nondiscrimination extends to all aspects of volunteer service including recruitment, selection, training, and termination.

Since the distinctive and unique mission of the Diocese is primarily religious, the Diocese will, whenever possible, retain a Catholic in good standing to perform work for the Diocese.

### POLICY FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

It is the policy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend that all diocesan priests, deacons and other personnel, lay and religious, paid and volunteer, must adhere to the diocese's *Practical Guidelines for Conduct When Interacting With a Child or Young Person*. All must report any suspected incident of the physical, mental, or sexual abuse or neglect of a child or young person to appropriate civil and diocesan authorities consistent with the *Diocesan Guidelines on Reporting Incidents of Child Abuse or Neglect*. All priests, deacons and other personnel, employee and volunteer, are subject to and obligated by this policy.

## **PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT WHEN INTERACTING WITH A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON**

The Diocese's clergy, religious, employees, and volunteers working in and on behalf of its schools, parishes, Offices of Catechesis and of Youth Ministry, and other diocesan programs or agencies engage in extensive services with and counseling, educational, and spiritual ministries to children and young persons ("children"). Children are dependent on adults, particularly adults in positions of trust and leadership. It is vitally important, therefore, that reasonable prudence be exercised by all adults who perform services on behalf of the diocese which involves interaction.

The following is a set of practical guidelines for conducting yourself which must be observed by all clergy, religious, lay employees, and volunteers of the diocese when dealing with children. These guidelines are not intended to prevent you from performing your service or ministry but rather to assist you in employing good sense when interacting with children. If you find it necessary to depart from these guidelines due to some extraordinary circumstance, you should be aware of your departure and must be able to justify your actions. If one-on-one involvement with a child is unavoidable, you must use extreme discretion in your dealings with the child.

### **Definition**

*Child or Children* - Anyone who has not yet reached his or her 18th birthday. All clergy, religious, lay employees, and volunteers of the diocese will observe the following guidelines when engaging in ministry to or otherwise interacting with children:

1. Children under eighteen (18) years of age who are not relatives

may not stay overnight in a parish rectory in the diocese. No one, except priests, may live in a rectory on a long-term basis, that is, for more than a few days. Exceptions may be made for housekeepers who have worked in a rectory in the diocese for twenty (20) years or more and, of course, for members of a priest's immediate family.

2. Avoid physical contact with a child. Never engage in any corporal punishment. In situations where physical contact is necessary and proper, such as in sacramental preparation, use sound discretion and moderation. If a child initiates innocent physical contact out of acceptable affection, an appropriate response is proper if not prolonged.
3. Except in unavoidable circumstances that require otherwise, for example a pre-schooler who needs assistance in the restroom, do not be alone with a child in a residence, school, sleeping facility, locker room, rest room, dressing facility, or other closed area.
4. Any one-on-one counseling, tutoring, training, or other assistance or service with a child must be conducted in an open room setting without closed doors, except for a door with a window, and only if readily observable by others who may be in the room or in the hallway outside the room.
5. Seek responsible adults to be present at events involving children, such as games and athletic activities.
6. Youth group trips and school field trips must have enough adult chaperones, preferably of the same gender as participating children, to provide adequate supervision based upon the type of activity. Adult chaperones should supervise in opposite sex pairs whenever possible.

7. Never take an overnight trip alone with a child.
8. Topics or vocabulary that would not be discussed or used comfortably in the presence of parents should not be discussed or used with children.
9. Alcohol, in the form of wine, may be given to those under the age of 21 only in very limited quantity and only in preparation for First Communion. Otherwise, never provide alcohol to anyone under the age of 21. Alcohol should not be used by adult supervisors or chaperones if activities with or responsibilities for children are scheduled.
10. Always maintain a professional posture in dealing with children. Avoid unwarranted emotional attachment and be aware of the attraction that children may have for adults in positions of authority and trust. If you perceive emotional or physical attraction developing, refer the child to another qualified adult, particularly in counseling situations.
11. If one-on-one counseling, tutoring, or other training or care of a child requires frequent or regular appointments, parents should be notified that these appointments are occurring and provided the schedule of appointments. If you believe the subject matter properly precludes notification, you must consult with and receive the approval of your supervisor on the local or diocesan level before engaging in such appointments.
12. The Office of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend has adopted the following lodging standards which apply to hotel and dormitory room accommodations for adults and children who participate in overnight events. These standards have been followed in practice for diocesan youth ministry events and are now committed to writing to promote a uniform set of guidelines for use in the diocese. These standards



are consistent with the model proposed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry which discourages the rooming of adults with children. The Office of Youth Ministry for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend endorses this position.

#### A. Hotel Rooms

A typical hotel room is a room consisting of at least two beds with quad occupancy. No adult shall room with or occupy the same hotel room with a child except in the case of a parent and the parent's child(ren) only; in the rare case where a child may need the presence of an adult for medical reasons; or, in the event that unscheduled and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of event participants occur which necessitate at least two adults to occupy the same hotel room with at least two children.

A married couple may share the same hotel room, with or without their children, assuming appropriate facilities are available, but no other mixed gender hotel room arrangements are allowed. Adult participants should room in proximity to the rooms occupied by children, either by staggering rooms across from or next to those rooms occupied by children. Adults may conduct brief bed checks of hotel rooms occupied by children only at pre-determined times.

#### B. Dormitory-Type Accommodations

Adults and children of the same gender may occupy dormitory room type accommodations provided there is a minimum of two adults and four children per room and no separate accommodations are available for the adults. Adults must establish separation barriers or privacy zones in the dormitory room which shall include a temporary blanket or sheet wall when possible in order to keep their sleeping and dressing area separate from the child area. No mixed gender dormitory room

arrangements are allowed.

#### C. Respect of Privacy

Adult participants must respect the privacy of child participants in situations such as changing clothes, taking showers, etc. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations. Other than for pre-determined bed checks and the limited time necessary to assist children in settling into or vacating from their rooms, an adult participant should not intrude into a child's room or designated area except to the extent that health, safety or Behavior Code enforcement require.

#### D. Non-Conforming Conduct

A Behavior Code which describes expected conduct of trip participants, including disciplinary action for violations, should be developed and communicated at the local level to all participants in advance of the overnight trip. In addition, before the overnight trip occurs, all child and adult participants should be made aware of the consequences for non-compliance with these lodging standards. Such consequences shall include a requirement that individuals who violate the lodging standards may be required to return home early, if practical, and be denied the opportunity to participate in future overnight events.

13. All of us have an obligation to take appropriate steps to protect children, particularly when they are in the care of the church. If you observe another adult violating these guidelines or engaging in other conduct which causes you to have reason for concern for the well-being of a child, you should confront that adult in a forthright manner and report your concerns to your supervisor, pastor, or a Vicar General. If you have reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred or is occurring, you must follow the diocesan policy on reporting incidents of child abuse to civil authorities and report the

matter to your supervisor or Vicar General at (260) 422-4611.

## **GUIDELINES ON REPORTING INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

### **Purpose**

The Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend shares the conviction of Indiana legal authorities, all concerned adults, whether or not they are parents, and the Church that every effort should and must be made to report child abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities. Incidents of the physical, mental or sexual abuse or neglect of children, unfortunately, occur with regularity throughout our society.

Very often the victims of this abuse are too young to relate to others the fact of occurrence or are too frightened or ashamed to reveal the identities of those responsible for the abuse or neglect. Therefore, only when concerned individuals report those facts which give them reason to believe an incident of child abuse or neglect has occurred can this distressing problem be brought forward for legal redress, as well as psychological assistance and spiritual rehabilitation. This diocesan policy on reporting child abuse or neglect is intended to promote awareness of the laws of the State of Indiana already in effect for all and thus enhance our pastoral awareness of, and response to, this grave problem.

### **Definitions**

1. *“Diocese”* means the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. As used in these Guidelines, the Diocese includes all Diocesan offices, parishes, schools, agencies, programs, and departments.
2. *“DCS”* means the Indiana Department of Child Services, the

agency to which child abuse or neglect may be reported.

3. For purposes of this policy, “*local law enforcement agency*” means a local town or city police department, county sheriff’s department or Indiana State Police post. A list of county sheriff’s department offices located within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend to which reports of child abuse or neglect may be made is provided at the end of this Policy. Local town or city police departments and Indiana State Police posts are not listed, but may be contacted in order to make a required report.

4. “*Employee*” as used in these Guidelines means any Diocesan clergy or religious, any person employed by the Diocese, and any person acting as a volunteer, in any capacity, for the Diocese.

5. For purposes of this policy, “*child abuse or neglect*” refers to any physical, mental or sexual abuse or neglect of a child less than 18 years of age. This includes children who suffer physical and/or mental abuse by the acts or omissions of their parents, guardians, custodians or others. It also refers to children who are victims of certain sex offenses perpetrated by anyone.

6. For purposes of this policy, “*reason to believe*” means information which, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child may have been abused or neglected.

7. For purposes of this policy, “*direct supervisor*” means:

- for parish school employees and volunteers, their school principal;
- for non-school employees and volunteers in a parish, their parish pastor, DRE, or Youth Ministry leader, as applicable;
- for all high school employees and volunteers, their school

principal;

- for Diocesan agency or department employees, their agency or department administrator; and
- for chancery employees and volunteers, the Chief Financial Officer for those in the finance office and a Vicar General for all others.

## Policy

### 1. Reporting Incidents

Indiana law requires that all persons, without exception, make an immediate oral report to a local law enforcement agency or DCS if that person has “reason to believe” that a child may be a victim of child abuse or neglect (unless that person knows a report of the incident has already been made). The obligation to report exists regardless of who the accused may be. [This duty applies to all diocesan personnel:

- All priests, deacons and other religious personnel,
- All school and parish personnel, paid and volunteer (including counselors); and
- All other employees and volunteers of the diocese or any of its affiliated organizations.

The diocese expects and requires that all of its priests, deacons, employees and volunteers, especially those who work in diocesan programs that are directly and immediately involved with children, recognize and report child abuse and neglect in accordance with Indiana law. The diocese expects and requires that the report be made regardless of when the suspected abuse or neglect is claimed to have occurred.

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Where a person suspects that a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect, but is unsure whether he or she has sufficient “reason to believe” to make a report, that person should always err on the side of caution and report. The key is to report rather than not report.

Any persons required to make a report to the DCS or law enforcement agency in their capacity as diocesan employees or volunteers are also required to notify immediately their direct supervisor concerning their report to the DCS or law enforcement agency. The direct supervisor then also becomes personally responsible to report, or to cause a report to be made, to the DCS or law enforcement.

If the direct supervisor of the individual making the initial report is unavailable or if the individual feels the direct supervisor is not the appropriate party to contact, the employee/volunteer should immediately notify a Vicar General of the report. The phone number at the Fort Wayne Chancery is (260) 422-4611.

## 2. Possible Indicators of Child Abuse or Neglect

Many children who are not abused or neglected may exhibit one or more of these indicators from time to time. Children who have many of these signs or symptoms, however, may have a problem that should be reported.

In viewing possible indicators of child abuse, it is always important to distinguish between physical contact and emotional attachment which is nurturing and supportive and that which exploits a child.

**Emotional Abuse**

Be alert for a child who:

- has a poor self-image
- has slow physical, mental or emotional growth
- is extremely passive or aggressive
- is terrified or extremely nervous if parents are contacted
- is afraid of going home
- has a speech problem
- has a habit of biting or rocking
- attempts suicide

**Physical Abuse**

Be alert for a child who:

- has unexplained injuries or burns
- does not want to tell you how an injury occurred
- explains an injury differently than do other members of family
- has serious injuries that are left untreated
- fears going home
- has bald spots (a sign of hair pulling)
- wears clothing that covers arms and legs, even in warm weather
- refuses to undress for gym class
- is overly aggressive or withdrawn

**Sexual Abuse**

Be alert for a child who:

- has difficulty walking or sitting
- has pain or itching around genitals
- has unusual knowledge of or interest in sex
- is extremely moody
- has poor peer relationships, especially with opposite sex
- has a sudden onset of behavior problems
- is unwilling to change or participate in physical education class
- fears going home

**Physical Neglect**

Be alert for a child who:

- wears clothes that are unusually dirty, the wrong size or torn
- has poor hygiene
- seems to be underfed and is always hungry
- has unattended medical needs
- begs or steals food
- is often absent or late
- consistently lacks supervision, especially for dangerous activities or for long periods of time
- has drug or alcohol problems



### 3. Report Confidentiality

The identities of persons making child abuse or neglect reports to the DCS or local law enforcement are confidential and only made available to individuals legally authorized to obtain such information. Persons making reports may be required to testify at judicial proceedings if court action becomes necessary.

### 4. Privileged Communications Waived

Indiana law provides that what is generally considered as “privileged communication” between a husband and a wife, a health care provider and patient, or a school guidance counselor and student, is not grounds for failing to make the required reports concerning child abuse or neglect. Priests must also make reports unless the information formulating the reason to believe was gained within the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In such cases, priests may urge the individual providing the information to make a report or to provide the information to another person who may then make the report.

### 5. Reporting Immunities

Any person who has reason to believe a child is a victim of abuse or neglect and reports to DCS or law enforcement, or a person who cooperates in a judicial proceeding resulting from such a report, is presumed to have acted in good faith and, therefore, is immune from civil or criminal liability. Such liability will only become a factor if it can be shown the person acted maliciously or in bad faith.

One must remember, however, this immunity is only available to those making the statutorily required reports to a DCS or law enforcement agency and/or their direct supervisor. Legal actions for damages may still be available if a person disseminates

information to other, additional parties. Therefore, a person should only make the report to the statutorily designated parties to insure retention of the statutory immunity protection.

Another important point a person reporting child abuse or neglect must remember is that his or her duty is a duty to report only. Once someone reports to DCS or local law enforcement and, if applicable, a direct supervisor or Vicar General, his or her duty under the statute ends. Although the person reporting may have to cooperate in a DCS or other public authority's investigation, or may have to testify at judicial proceedings, he or she should not conduct a personal investigation. Investigating is the responsibility of DCS or law enforcement authorities. In fact, an unauthorized person who conducts his or her own investigation risks civil liability for invasion of privacy or defamation.

#### 6. Purpose of Reporting

Protective service agencies are charged with the responsibility of protecting children and preserving family life. Their goal is to help families cope with the problems that cause child abuse, not to separate children from their parents.

#### 7. Penalty for Not Reporting

Persons who knowingly fail to make a required report of child abuse or neglect commit a Class B misdemeanor. (I.C. 31-33-22-1) Therefore, a person should always err on the side of reporting, as opposed to not reporting. A person having "reason to believe" a child is a victim of child abuse or neglect must make the immediate oral report to shield himself or herself from civil or criminal liability, and must inform his or her direct supervisor or a Vicar General, if applicable.

## DIOCESAN COOPERATION WITH CIVIL AUTHORITIES

Any civil investigations of suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will be accorded the complete and willing assistance of the appropriate Diocesan personnel. All necessary action will be taken to ensure the fair treatment of any Diocesan employee accused of child abuse or neglect. As a precautionary measure, an accused employee may be placed on administrative leave pending the investigation of the claim or the completion of any civil process. ¶ Pastoral counseling and guidance will be made available to any accused individual in an effort to support them through any investigatory period. Additional pastoral counseling will continue at the individual's request regardless of the outcome of the civil investigation. Everything will also be done to see that any child who is abused or neglected receives appropriate assistance and counseling.

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The following is a list of DCS and sheriff's department offices located within the Diocese to which child abuse or neglect may be reported. Local town or city police departments or Indiana State Police Posts are not listed, but may be contacted in order to make a required report.

### **The Indiana Department of Child Services has a Child Abuse Hotline**

To report child abuse or neglect to DCS, call 1 (800) 800-5556. The hotline serves as the central reporting center for all allegations of child abuse or neglect in the State of Indiana. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

**County Sheriff's Offices within the Diocese**

- Adams County Adams County Sheriff's Department  
313 South 1st Street, P.O. Box 608  
Decatur, Indiana 46733  
(260) 724-5345
- Allen County Allen County Sheriff's Department  
101 Courthouse, 715 South Calhoun Street  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802  
(260) 449-3000
- DeKalb County DeKalb County Sheriff's Department  
215 East 8th Street  
Auburn, Indiana 46706  
(260) 925-3365
- Elkhart County Elkhart County Sheriff's Department  
111 North 3rd Street  
Goshen, Indiana 46526  
(574) 533-4151
- Huntington County Huntington County Sheriff's Department  
332 East State Street  
Huntington, Indiana 46750  
(260) 356-8316
- Kosciusko County Kosciusko County Sheriff's Department  
221 West Main Street  
Warsaw, Indiana 46580  
(574) 267-5667
- LaGrange County LaGrange County Sheriff's Department  
0875 South State Road 9  
LaGrange, Indiana 46761  
(260) 463-7491

Marshall County Marshall County Sheriff's Department  
210 West Madison Street  
Plymouth, Indiana 46563  
(574) 936-3187

Noble County Noble County Sheriff's Department  
210 South 7th Street, P.O. Box 22  
Albion, Indiana 46701  
(260) 636-2182

St. Joseph County St. Joseph County Sheriff's Department  
401 West Sample Street  
South Bend, Indiana 46601  
(574) 235-9611

Steuben County Steuben County Sheriff's Department  
206 West Martha Street  
Angola, Indiana 46703  
(260) 668-1000 Ext. 4000

Wabash County Wabash County Sheriff's Department  
79 West Main Street  
Wabash, Indiana 46992  
(260) 563-8891

Wells County Wells County Sheriff's Department  
1615 West Western Avenue  
Bluffton, Indiana 46714  
(260) 824-3426

Whitley County Whitley County Sheriff's Department  
101 West Market Street  
Columbia City, Indiana 46725  
(260) 244-6410

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

As a diocesan volunteer, you may become privy to personal, privileged and/or confidential information. Security of information is of utmost importance. Such information must be treated in a confidential manner, except for disclosure required by law. Care should always be taken regarding all information gained by virtue of service with the Diocese, whether related to diocesan matters, students in any of its schools, or to any other individuals served by or having dealings with the Diocese or its staff members.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

All diocesan volunteers must exercise good faith in the performance of their duties. You have the obligation to avoid any personal interest or relationship, financial or other, which might adversely affect or influence your judgment in the performance of your duties, or which might even create the appearance of same. If you have any concern on an issue in this area, contact your immediate supervisor or the pastor of the parish in which you perform duties so that the situation may be reviewed in detail.

## **HARASSMENT**

All diocesan volunteers and those with whom they interact, especially children, are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. Supervisors, department heads and pastors are charged with the responsibility to see to it that all over whom they have supervision are treated in a manner consistent with the religious and moral standards espoused by the Church and the Diocese. All diocesan facilities and programs should be free from verbal or

physical harassment (whether on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or other civilly-protected status) and from any actual or implied threat that such harassment must be tolerated in connection with diocesan service, or the receipt of services.

For purposes of this policy, harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual advances; unwelcome and/or unwanted touching; the use of obscene or objectionable language, or name calling; and any action reasonably considered offensive, based on race, religion, national origin, disability, or sex. This includes jokes, comments, insults, cartoons, innuendoes, personal conduct or mannerisms that could be reasonably construed as offensive.

If you believe that you, a diocesan employee or another volunteer, or anyone with whom you or they interact, are or have been subjected to such treatment, you must immediately report the incidents to your supervisor or supervising pastor. There will be no recriminations against any person making such a report in good faith. All pertinent information shall be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the prompt investigation of any such complaints, and with the taking of appropriate corrective actions, if necessary, based upon the outcome of such investigations. If for any reason you feel that your supervisor or pastor is an inappropriate person to whom the report should be made or if they are unavailable, such reports should be made directly to a Vicar General in person or by telephone at (260) 422-4611.

## **SAFETY**

You must immediately report to your supervisor or pastor any accident occurring on diocesan property or involving diocesan employees or volunteers which involves property damage or

personal injury. You must immediately report any situation, hazard, or practice which you believe is unsafe. We want to take all reasonable steps to maintain a safe environment for all who serve and are served by the Diocese.

#### **NOTIFICATION TO SUPERVISOR FOLLOWING ARREST**

Volunteers of the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend are required to notify their supervisor if arrested of any crime during the period of their volunteer service. Notification should be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the arrest if at all possible, or as soon thereafter as possible. The volunteer must provide the supervisor with enough detail of the charge(s) to enable the supervisor to make a decision as to whether the volunteer can continue to offer service until the resolution of the issue.

The volunteer's supervisor must alert the diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator of the arrest.

For purposes of this policy, "supervisor" means:

- for grade school employees and volunteers, the school's principal;
- for non-school employees and volunteers in a parish, the parish's pastor, DRE, or Youth Ministry leader, as applicable;
- for all high school employees and volunteers, the school's principal;
- for Diocesan agency or department employees, the agency or department administrator; and
- for any others, the Vicar General.



## REQUIRED DECORUM AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

We expect that all volunteers will exhibit common sense, a high level of Christian decency and courtesy, and diligence in all they do for and on behalf of the diocese. When possible, reasonable efforts shall be made to correct any performance or conduct issues that arises, rather than to simply terminate the volunteer relationship. However, there are certain circumstances where the need to terminate the relationship may be immediate. These circumstances are considered gross transgressions and include, but are not necessarily limited to:

1. Immoral conduct or other conduct inconsistent with the principles or teachings of the Catholic Church.
2. Violation of any guidelines or requirement established by the diocese for the protection of children or young people.
3. The acquisition, possession or distribution of child or adult pornography, by whatever means or using whatever technology.
4. Behavior which is devious or harmful to the mission of the Church in the diocese.
5. Personal conduct which brings discredit to the diocese or anyone else.
6. Dishonesty, stealing, falsification or destruction of records.
7. Causing personal injury to another.

8. Willful destruction or gross negligence resulting in damage to property.
9. Insubordination or refusal to accept a lawful assignment.
10. Being to any degree under the influence of or in possession of alcohol, marijuana or other illegal or unprescribed controlled substances.
11. Drinking or maintaining intoxicating beverages on diocesan premises or at the site of a diocesan function without appropriate authorization.
12. Failure to report for assigned duties.

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

For purposes of this policy, “church personnel” is defined as anyone – priest, deacon, other religious, lay employee or volunteer – who provides ministry or service for, or is employed by the Diocese of Fort Wayne- South Bend. For brevity’s sake, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, may be referred to as ‘FWSB’ within this document.

Diocesan school teachers should also refer to Policy P3645, as found in the Educational Policies of FWSB.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*The world of digital communication, with its almost limitless expressive capacity, makes us appreciate all the more Saint Paul’s exclamation: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16)*

– Pope Benedict XVI, 2010 World Communication Day message

Social Media is the fastest growing form of communication in the United States, especially among youth and young adults. Our Church cannot ignore it, but at the same time we must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible and civil.

As Pope Benedict XVI noted in his message for the 44<sup>th</sup> World Day of Communication, this new form of media “can offer priests and all pastoral workers a wealth of information and content that was difficult to access before, and facilitate forms of

collaboration and greater communion in ways that were unthinkable in the past.”

The Church can use social media to encourage respect, dialogue and honest relationships – in other words, “true friendship” (43<sup>rd</sup> World Communication Day Message). To do so requires us to approach social media as a powerful means of evangelization and to consider the Church’s role in providing a Christian perspective to digital literacy.

You may want to read both the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> World Day of Communication messages. These are available at

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20090124\\_43rd-world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20090124_43rd-world-communications-day_en.html)

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20100124\\_44th-world-communications-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20100124_44th-world-communications-day_en.html)

## **THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL MEDIA: AN OVERVIEW**

The online encyclopedia Wikipedia defines social media as “...media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media monologues into social media dialogues”<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media)

A longer and perhaps more philosophical definition is offered by Jon Lebkowsky, a longtime social media specialist, on his site, [weblogsky.com](http://weblogsky.com):

Social Media is a fundamental transformation in the way(s) people find and use information and content, from hard news to light entertainment. It's an evolution from broadcast delivery of content – content created by a few and distributed to many – to network delivery, where content can be created by anyone and published to everyone, in a context that is “many to many.” Said another way, publication and delivery by professionals to mass audiences has changed – now publication and delivery can be by anyone, professional or not, to niche audiences through networks of many channels. This is because the means of production are broadly accessible and inexpensive.

As a result of all this, attention and mindshare are fragmented, there's emphasis on relationship, new forms of media are conversational, and transaction costs for communication approach zero.

Social media offers both opportunities and challenges to Catholic organizations. These can be grouped into three primary categories:

- Visibility
- Community
- Accountability

## Visibility

Online social media communities are vast and growing at a rapid pace<sup>2</sup>. Given the size and scope of these communities, they offer excellent forums for the Church's visibility and evangelization.

The key question that faces each Church organization that decides to engage social media is: "How will we engage?" Careful consideration should be made to determine the particular strengths of each form of social media (blogs, social networks, text messaging, etc.) and the needs of a ministry, parish or organization. The strengths should match the needs. For instance, a blog post may not be the most effective way of reminding students of an event. However, a mass text message to all students and their parents telling them that the retreat begins at 9 a.m. may be very effective.

Social media also requires constant input and monitoring to maintain visibility and awareness of the Church's presence through that particular social media. To keep members, a social networking site needs to have new content on a regular basis. In the case of social media, the axiom "build it and they will come" is not applicable. It would be important to set internal expectations regarding how often posts will be made, so that your "followers" can become accustomed to your schedule.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the number of active users on Facebook is greater than the population of the United States.

(<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>).

## **Community**

Social media can be a powerful tool for strengthening community, although social media interaction should not be viewed as a substitute for face-to-face gatherings. Social media can support communities in a myriad of ways: connecting people with similar interests, sharing information about in-person events, providing ways for people to dialogue, etc.

A well-considered use of social media has the ultimate goal of encouraging “true friendship” (43<sup>rd</sup> World Communication Day Message) and of understanding the human longing for meaningful community.

## **Accountability**

Social media provides a tool for building community. Membership in communities also requires accountability and responsibility. Users of social media expect site administrators to allow dialogue, to provide information and acknowledge mistakes. The explosion of information available to social media consumers has meant that they often only use information from trusted sites or sites recommended by those whom they trust.

While not every demand or inquiry can be met, it is important that creators and site administrators of social media understand how different social media is from mass media and the expectations of its consumers. Many communication experts are describing the adaption of social media as a paradigm shift in how humans communicate, as important a development as that of the printing press and the discovery of electronic communication.

## DEFINITIONS

Definitions provide clarity and a common language.

- *Web 2.0*: The term “Web 2.0” is commonly associated with Web applications which facilitate interactive information sharing. A Web 2.0 site allows its users to interact with other users, to change Website content, to provide reaction to content, to share the site’s content with others, or to filter content being provided by the site creator. This is in contrast to non-interactive websites where users are limited to the passive viewing of information that is provided to them.  
\*Example: Amazon.com’s inclusion of users’ reviews and offering recommendations based on past use of the site by the consumer makes it a Web 2.0 site.
- *Blog*: A blog (a contraction of the term “web log”) is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.  
\*Examples: There are many types of blogs on sites throughout the Internet. They are common for celebrities, writers, journalists, etc.
- *Micro-blog*: A form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micro media such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means,



including text messaging, instant messaging, E-mail, digital audio or the web. The content of a micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that it is typically smaller in actual size and aggregate file size. A single entry could consist of a single sentence or fragment or an image or a brief, ten second video.

\*Example: Twitter – A form of micro-blogging, entries are limited to 140 characters.

- *Social Media/Network*: A Web 2.0 site that is entirely driven by content of its members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members.

\*Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr are often also included in lists of social networking sites, although sometimes YouTube and Flickr are designated as multimedia sharing sites, while Twitter is currently more often designated as a micro-blogging application.

- *Ministry Website*<sup>3</sup>: An Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics and volunteers for the sole purpose of conducting diocesan/affiliate business.
- *Personal website*: A social network page, blog or any Internet website/tool created by employees, clerics, and volunteers primarily to share personal communication with friends and family.

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<sup>3</sup> Definitions for ministry website and personal website are from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Social Media Policy

- *Other Electronic Communication:* Electronic communication technologies that are not defined as Social media/Network (e.g., cell phone, email, texting, etc.)
- *Supervisor:* The hiring and/or supervising agent: for parish staff, the pastor; for parish volunteers, the appropriate administrator (e.g., Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry); for school personnel, the principal / pastor.
- *Employee:* Any person who is employed by FWSB.
- *Cleric:* An ordained priest or deacon who is incardinated in the Diocese of FWSB, as well as the following if engaged in a ministry in the diocese at the direction of the Bishop of FWSB: a priest or deacon who is a member of a religious institute or society of apostolic life, or a priest or deacon incardinated in another diocese.
- *Adult:* An individual who is eighteen years of age or older.
- *Child:* A person under 18 years of age. A person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor. (ref. Essential Norms for Diocesan / Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons)
- *Volunteer:* An adult who works without financial or material gain on behalf of FWSB, who is not an employee or a cleric (for example, an intern, catechist, scout leader, coach, student teacher and others in similar capacities).

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY STATEMENT**

FWSB recognizes that in today's environment, with the increasing prevalence of the Internet, employees, clerics and volunteers will use the Internet to conduct ministry work and to communicate with associates and friends. The Internet provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. FWSB views the Internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote school and ministerial programs. The diocese encourages administrators, pastors and principals to support Internet use and to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. However, those using the Internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on FWSB, its reputation, its employees, and those whom we serve. In light of this possibility, employees, clerics and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of personal and ministry websites including social networks and blogs.

## **PROCEDURE**

### *Password-Protected Sites:*

Ministry websites may involve the use of a username/password or other such means to access all or portions of the site. In the event that a cleric, employee or volunteer, subject to approval by FWSB, gives a child access to a website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the child's parent/guardian. Initiation of such sites must have prior approval of the proper supervisor before beginning such work.

*Ministry Websites:*

FWSB supports the creation of ministry websites as a means to conduct diocesan ministry. The use of ministry websites is encouraged when conducting diocesan/affiliate educational and evangelizing programs. Supervisors who approve individuals to create a ministry website for dispersal of information are responsible for monitoring the ministry website. Initiation of such sites must have prior approval of the proper supervisor before beginning such work.

*Personal Websites:*

FWSB recognizes that church personnel, clerics and volunteers may create personal websites as a medium of self-expression. Employees, clerics and volunteers must recognize that anything published on a personal website is no different from making such information available in any public forum. Any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to FWSB must be avoided. Note: The use of personal websites for ministry or ministerial communications is a practice that must be avoided.

*Ministry Blogs:*

FWSB supports the use of blogging as a ministry communication tool. It is an excellent platform for creating and distributing information. Although blogging is a powerful communication tool, ministry blogs may not be used for: 1) conducting or promoting outside business; 2) defaming the character of any individual or institution; 3) causing embarrassment to FWSB; or 4) divulging any personal information about children that would jeopardize their safety or well-being in any way.

*Personal Blogs:*

In the event an employee or cleric identifies himself/herself as, or is manifestly understood to be, an employee or cleric of FWSB on

a personal blog (or other website with a similar purpose), to help reduce the potential for confusion, the employee is required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on the website:

“The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.”

*Confidential and Proprietary Information:*

Church personnel are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by FWSB. Employees, clerics and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet any information that is proprietary to FWSB, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

*Trademarks and Logos:*

Church personnel may use diocesan or affiliate trademarks or logos on personal or ministerial websites only in ways that clearly promote or call positive attention to diocesan events, websites or organizations associated with the trademark or logo. Church personnel may not use diocesan or affiliate trademarks or logos on their personal websites in any way that could reasonably suggest diocesan or affiliate sponsorship or agreement with any views expressed.

*Inappropriate Language and Images:*

The Diocese of FWSB will not tolerate employees, clerics or volunteers posting obscene, pornographic (child or adult), harassing, offensive, derogatory or defamatory content or any potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images which reflect discredit or cause embarrassment to FWSB, employees, vendors, partners, agencies, schools or others. Any activity via Social Media or other

Electronic Communication that contains any of the above and/or reflects negatively on FWSB, employees, vendors, partners, agencies, schools, or others is prohibited.

*Right to Review:*

FWSB reserves the right to review the social media communications of any church personnel that is generated by diocesan accounts, or by the use of diocesan equipment. Diocesan employees, clerics, and volunteers should conduct themselves as moral exemplars in their communications whether social, electronic, or other.

*Protection of Children:*

Church personnel of FWSB must comply with all aspects of the <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/Policies-and-Procedures>

In addition, employees, clerics and volunteers are forbidden to post or distribute personal identifiable information of any child under the age of eighteen without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian. For purposes of this policy, personal identifiable information includes the child's home address, email address, telephone number or other information that would allow someone to contact the child. Personal identifiable information pursuant to this policy also includes any photo and/or video of a child that is published or posted along with the child's name or the name of any family member of the child, or the child's age or grade level. Verifiable consent can take the form of a release/permission form, an email from a parent or guardian, a parent/guardian request, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian in the presence of another adult. FWSB will review alleged violations of the *Children's Online Privacy Protection Act*, and the *Safe Environment Policy* of the Diocese of FWSB, on a case-by-case basis. See also Policy 4170 of the Educational

Policies of the FWSB concerning disclosure of student education records.

*When Communicating With Children Using Social Media Or Other Electronic Communication:*

- There must be at least two adults with administrative rights for each Social Media account used for ministry communication. Personal Social Media accounts must not be used for ministry communication. However, if modality of the original format is prohibitive (*i.e.* non Web 2.0), upon approval from a supervisor a personal account could be used in a singular or rare instance and never thought to be a regular means or alternative form of communication.
- The primary purpose of such communication shall be for providing information related to a ministry or event and not for socialization or other personal interaction. Prolonged conversations/ interactions of a personal nature with children through such communication methods are not permitted.
- Parents must be notified of the methods of communication which are used in each particular ministry and must be granted access in such communications. Written verification of understanding from parents/guardians is strongly encouraged.
- Social Media/Network or other electronic communication may not be used to communicate with children who have not reached the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but instead should be directed to their parents. Educational or curriculum based electronic communications are acceptable if and when it is approved

by the pastor/principal/supervisor and parents/guardians via signature(s). These programs must always be transparent in nature, freely accessible by parents/guardians, and must not allow for individual communications with students. In the case of children that have attained the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above, and the child is below the age of 18, the parents must be copied on all electronic communications.

- When using a ministry Social Media account, adults must not initiate “friend” requests with children, but may accept “friend” requests from children who are involved in the particular ministry.
- When children form their own Social Media groups, adults should not join these groups.
- As a general rule, neither personal nor ministry Social Media accounts should be used to contact children individually. If children contact particular adults engaged in ministry (other than a “friend” request), the ministry account should be used to reply by sending a group message (i.e., when the personal contact was for information relevant to all in the group). When the contact is such that a group response is not appropriate, the adult is to avoid using a personal Social Media account to respond. In those unusual cases where ministerial Social Media is used to respond individually, adults should maintain copies of all such messages.
- Acceptable hours for communication with grade school children via other electronic communications shall be between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Communication outside of the acceptable hours may be used only in emergency



situations or to communicate time sensitive information related to the ministry or a ministry related event.

- On line “chatting” with children is not permitted.

#### **ENFORCEMENT**

FWSB intends to enforce the policy set forth here and expect all personnel to comply. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination, if an employee, or removal from position, if a volunteer.

FWSB reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time and at its sole discretion, and interpret and administer the policy in light of circumstances and events.

FWSB gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in granting the use of its social networking policies and guidelines as a resource in the development of this policy.

As with other Diocesan policies, violations of this policy may be considered in performance evaluations and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including terminations.

The Diocese of FWSB reserves the right to suspend, modify or withdraw this policy at any time and shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for any errors, omissions, loss or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your online activities.

Revised: November 14, 2013

# INTERNET POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

Policy and Standards — Use of computers, internet and electronic communication including faxing by all employees, volunteers and students

The Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend may supply computers, internet access, and other electronic communication devices to its employees, volunteers, or students in order for them to complete the responsibilities assigned by their positions. The diocese believes these resources are an important educational and evangelizing tool to further the mission of the Church. Therefore, use of these resources must always be consistent with the mission of the Catholic Church. Employees, volunteers, and students must take care to use these tools for their intended purposes. The diocese may monitor user accounts, internet activity, email communications, or any other related use of computers and its networks at any time, with or without notice to users.

## COMPUTER USE

In using a computer supplied by the Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend or one of its entities, all employees, volunteers, and students must:

1. Respect the privacy of other users.
2. Respect and honor copyright and license agreements.

3. Safeguard their user identification (user ID) and private passwords.
4. Protect information from unauthorized use or disclosure.
5. Never use the computer for illegal purposes or in any way that violates any international, federal, state or local laws.
6. Never use the computer to harass, threaten, or transmit inappropriate material.
7. Use diocesan computers for personal communication or work in very limited instances. Brief and occasional use is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs only on personal time, and does not interfere with a person's work. Incidental and occasional personal use of electronic mail is permitted. Such messages should comply with this Policy and Standards and may be monitored.
8. Never use diocesan computers for personal purchases.
9. Never send, trade or store personal photos, videos, music or other items on the network as this greatly impedes system back-up.
10. Use computers and the networks to which they are linked conscientiously so as not to drain or monopolize the system such that the work of others is impeded. If a person is unsure about the impact of their use, they should contact the Diocesan Business Office.
11. Never delete any computer files or download diocesan information without appropriate authorization when separating from employment or volunteer service with the diocese.
12. Run frequent scans of computers for viruses and other malware. Any problems should be reported to the Diocesan Business Office. The use of USB Devices and Portable Storage Media has become more widespread. These devices present a security risk because they might carry viruses or

expose sensitive data if they are lost or stolen. All USB devices and portable storage media including cell phones, IPOD's, memory sticks, and CD's may not be connected to any Diocesan laptop, desktop or any other computer without the express written approval of the employee's supervisor.

13. Not use programs obtained from bulletin boards, home, friends, or other unauthorized sources on any diocesan equipment.

#### **WEBSITES/INTERNET ACCESS**

In accessing and using the internet, all employees, volunteers, and students must adhere to the above mentioned items. Also they must:

1. Never access, post or send immoral, obscene, illegal, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or profane material or pornography (adult or child) of any kind.
2. Never attempt to block, bypass or remove filtering software.
3. Use the internet for personal communication or work only in very limited instances. Brief and occasional use is acceptable as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs only on personal time, and does not interfere with a person's work.
4. Never use the internet for personal purchases.
5. Use great care when downloading files from the internet to the diocesan system. Files must be scanned for viruses. Compressed files should be scanned before and after decompression.

## ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

In using electronic devices to communicate, including but not limited to email messages, text messages, tweets, websites, blogs, and social networking sites, employees, volunteers, and students will:

1. Always use respectful language.
2. Maintain appropriate relational boundaries in all forms of communication.
3. Never access, post or send immoral, obscene, illegal, threatening, abusive, defamatory, or profane material or pornography (adult or child) of any kind to any person.
4. Never send anonymous messages.
5. Send personal communication only in very limited instances. Remember, all communications may be monitored. Brief and occasional messages may be sent as long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs only on personal time or in emergencies, and does not interfere with a person's work. Neither should an employee use his or her own personal communication device during work time.
6. Treat all communication as if it were public. Communication via these forms of technology does not always remain private. It is like sending a postcard. Many people can and will read it. Some might even change it. Always use language and communicate as if you were face to face with the person.

For adults, when communicating with children or young people

1. Remember you are an adult professional who is rendering service to a child/young person. You are not a friend or buddy.

2. Seek permission from parents before using email, text messages, or any other kind of electronic means to communicate with youth.
3. Always copy parents on messages sent to youth.
4. Never befriend children or youth when using social networking sites.
5. Never use a personal site on social networks to communicate about diocesan or parish events. Instead create and use a parish site or use the diocesan site for these purposes. Be sure you have your supervisor's permission before creating and using a parish or diocesan site, especially if children/young people will access it. If creating a special site, monitor it frequently for appropriate material and use.  
*Note: School personnel must abide also by all school policy on this issue.*
6. Never post photographs, personal information, or other identifying material about children/youth without the permission of their parents. Use great care before posting any information once permission is received.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES (AS PART OF A PARISH OR DIOCESAN SITE)**

1. Site must adhere to the parish and diocesan policy on consent to use of pictures.
2. Site must be set to PRIVATE such that only authorized members can gain admittance and the public does not have access to the content.
3. A Youth Minister or Volunteer must not 'seek' friends but allow teens to request him or her first.

4. A Youth Minister must approve each request for membership after verification of current participation or leadership in the youth program.
5. Password must be difficult and frequently changed to avoid unauthorized access.
6. Application/features and all communications must reflect Catholic values.
7. Absolutely no tagging pictures with the youth names or other identifiers which could show up in search engines can be used.
8. On the request of a parent or legal guardian, the site must be made temporarily accessible for review of content.
9. Post rules of conduct on the site.

As with other Diocesan policies, violations of this policy may be considered in performance evaluations and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including terminations.

The Diocese of FWSB reserves the right to suspend, modify or withdraw this policy at any time and shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for any errors, omissions, loss or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your online activities.

**VERIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL  
POLICIES MANUAL OF THE DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-  
SOUTH BEND, INC.**

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of, understand and agree to abide by the Volunteer Personnel Policies Manual including the Social Media and Internet Policies of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. I understand that I have been given this Manual for information purposes only and that the Manual does not create an express or implied contract of any kind. I understand that the policies and other information referenced in the Manual are subject to change or deletion at the Diocese's discretion. I also understand that I am not required to volunteer for the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc. for any set period of time and that the Diocese is not required to allow me to volunteer for any set period of time. I or the Diocese may terminate the relationship for any reason at any time.

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Volunteer Signature

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Date





**Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend**

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