

Technology Policy for Work with Young People and Vulnerable Adults

February 2022



Introduction

The use of technology is valued in our ministry in the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Adherence to the Technology Policy for Work with Young People and Vulnerable Adults is necessary as we strive to model Gospel values and educate our community through use of technology. We are called to treat all human beings with dignity and respect both in person and through the use of electronic communication.

Adherence to the Technology Policy rests with the individual. Church personnel shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the moral teachings and norms of the Catholic Church. Any violation of this Technology Policy will require corrective action depending on the specific circumstance. This may include, but is not limited to, a written report and termination of employment or volunteer work.

Technology is ever changing. This policy does not only apply to current modes of technology, but also to those that may arise in the future.

Definitions

“Adult” (major) means any individual eighteen (18) years of age or older, this does not include vulnerable adults as defined in this policy. “Archdiocese of New Orleans” and

“Archdiocese” includes the Archdiocesan departments and administrative offices, all parishes, missions, schools, institutions, agencies, and other offices under the supervision of the Archbishop.

“Church Personnel” is any priest or deacon (cleric), seminarian, aspirant, deacon candidate, religious in formation, or lay faithful who serve the Archdiocese or its related entities in ministry to minors or vulnerable adults as either clergy, employees or volunteers.

“Cleric” is a priest or deacon. “Vulnerable Adult” is an individual 18 or older who is dependent on the care of others and who is ministered to by church personnel.

“Vulnerable Adult Abuse” is an intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to a vulnerable adult which happens at the hands of church personnel assigned to their care. Forms of abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, financial or neglect.

“Mandated Reporter” is a church personnel who works with minors in a voluntary or professional capacity. A mandated reporter who has cause to believe that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare is endangered is required to report any abuse or neglect of a minor to law enforcement and/or the Department of Children and Family Services immediately (Summary LA Children’s Code 603).

“Ministry” is any activity held under the auspices of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

“Minor” is any individual under the age of eighteen (18). Students in high school over the age of 18 enrolled in youth programs of the archdiocese, including schools, are covered under the policies of the archdiocese as a minor.

“Related Entity” includes parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions with direct accountability to the Archbishop of New Orleans.

“Supervisor” is a pastor of a parish, principal of a school, or the director of an archdiocesan office or related entity or their delegate responsible for the oversight of those who serve the Archdiocese.

“Victims’ Assistance Coordinator” is a person appointed by the Archbishop within the archdiocese to receive an allegation of abuse and to provide for the pastoral care of the complainant.

“Vulnerable Adult” is an individual 18 or older who is dependent on the care of others and who is ministered to by church personnel.

Expectations of Compliance

As stated in [Principles of Ethics and Integrity in Ministry: Code of Ethics](#), in spiritual, ministerial, business, professional, or social relationships, church personnel shall establish clear, appropriate interests. Even the appearance of a conflict of interest can call into question integrity and professional conduct.

Parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions with direct accountability to the Archbishop of New Orleans (“related entities”) shall make every effort to have online presence and to regularly update its content.

Online content shall be monitored by two unrelated adults who are in compliance with Safe Environment for the Archdiocese.

Adult monitors will assure:

- The content is following the teachings and views of the Catholic Church.
- Sites do not contain personal and contact information about minors or vulnerable adults.
- Written permission is obtained from the parent/guardian of a minor or from a vulnerable adult or their responsible representative before posting a photograph or other identifying information online.
- When posting photographs of minors or vulnerable adults, monitors shall use only first names.
- The official parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions logo will be used on all online presence. Written permission must be obtained from a supervisor.
- Communication with visitors to the site will be done through official parish, school, agency, and institution email.
- Parishes, schools, agencies, and institutions shall have applicable security updates installed, anti-malware software up-to-date, authentication via sign-in or login by users and ability to disable a site or device.
- Passwords and security information shall not be shared without authorization from the supervisor.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of music, photographs, books, articles and other copyrighted sources, and installation of copyrighted software for which the archdiocese or the end user does not have an active license is strictly prohibited.
- Church personnel shall not share their own personal online information with minors or vulnerable adults to whom they minister.
- Church personnel shall not “friend”, “follow”, or connect with minors or vulnerable adults to whom they minister on any social media site.

- In use of electronic communication with minors or vulnerable adults church personnel shall use group texts which include a supervisor (and parents if it is a minor); use methods to keep the contact information of individuals private (i.e. texting apps that do not reveal phone numbers); shall use an email which is on the parish, school, organization network.
- One-on-one texting is not permitted between church personnel and minors or vulnerable adults in ministry. If a minor reaches out to church personnel through text messaging the response shall be made in a group message that includes a parent or guardian.
- All communication shall be focused on events and activities of the parish, school or organization.
- Related entities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans using electronic communication shall provide training for minors and vulnerable adults on human trafficking, cyberbullying, general internet safety and respect.
- Church personnel working with minors or vulnerable adults are mandated reporters. They shall follow the Mandated Reporter laws for the State of Louisiana and the [Policy Concerning Abuse and Neglect of Minors and Vulnerable Adults](#).
- Acquisition, possession, or distribution of any form of pornography which includes, but is not limited to inappropriate printed and electronic materials, magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, electronic media, etc. is unacceptable.
- Acquisition, possession, or distribution of any form of child pornography is illegal and is to be reported to the police and the Department of Child and Family Services immediately. It must also be reported to a supervisor.
- If there is cause to believe a cleric is involved in acquisition, possession, or distribution of any form of child pornography, contact the police and call: (504) 861 - 6253. Your call will be returned within 24 hours if you leave a message. Send email: VAC@archdiocese-no.org.
- If there is cause to believe an employee or volunteer is involved in acquisition, possession, or distribution of any form of child pornography, contact the police and call your immediate supervisor. You may also call: (504) 861 - 6278 or send an email to SEC@archdiocese-no.org.

Video Conferencing

- Hosting video conferencing is the responsibility of the church personnel working with minors or vulnerable adults. A host must be in compliance with all Safe Environment policies and procedures of the archdiocese. All virtual presence shall demonstrate respect for each person participating in the conference.
- Church personnel using video conferencing shall conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the moral teachings and norms of the Catholic Church.

- Written permission is obtained from the parent/guardian of a minor or from a vulnerable adult or their responsible representative prior to participation in video conferencing with minors or vulnerable adults.
- We strongly recommend that minors attend live video conference sessions in an area where their guardian can see and hear the conference in session.
- The video conference with minors or vulnerable adults shall be recorded and stored on the parish, school, or organization network or a second, unrelated adult must be present. All adults participating in video conferencing shall be in compliance with Safe Environment policies of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Any exception must be approved, in writing, by a supervisor.
- Church personnel and all participants shall wear appropriate attire and join the conference from a parish, school, home office, or other common space (i.e. not in a private sleeping area, etc.).
- Cameras must be turned on and remain on for all church personnel and participants.
- Church personnel shall set up video conferencing which only enables participants to join once the host has joined.
- Church personnel shall only allow participants in from the “waiting room” if they are sure of their identity. If an unfamiliar user joins your conference, remove the participant immediately.
- Church personnel hosting a video conference shall “end the meeting for all” before leaving or should be the last person to leave the meeting.
- If capability exists, private chat between participants shall be disabled. Private chat between church personnel and minors or vulnerable adults is always prohibited. All participants must be able to view all messaging during any live sessions.
- Breakout rooms are permitted. Church personnel must circulate between breakout rooms to moderate discussion.

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