

Guidance document - Use of technology and social media to communicate with children

Be respectful, transparent and responsible when using technology to communicate with children, young people and vulnerable adults. All communication between children and Parish workers, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries and be open to scrutiny.

Do:

- Where possible, ensure communications with children are via face to face discussions, group communications and other means which are open and transparent;
- Be respectful, polite and considerate;
- Communicate in a way that is consistent with your role at the Parish or agency;
- Identify yourself in your communication and use your own name;
- Respect the privacy of others and ensure that no information is communicated or published that should not be made public.

Notify inappropriate behaviour

You should immediately contact your Parish Priest (or Administrator), agency head or Safeguarding Office if:

- Any inappropriate comments or images are directed to you by a child;
- You become aware of inappropriate comments or images being exchanged between children;
- You become aware that another employee, volunteer, or religious appointee has broken a rule contained in this document; or
- You become aware of any conduct via technology or social media that is reportable to NSW Police or the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).

Don't:

- Communicate on an individual (one on one) basis via technology or social media (including mobile phone, text messages or email) with any child **unless** you have obtained the **written consent** of that child's parent or guardian;
- Invite or accept invitation to connect from children you have met through the Diocese on your personal social media site, e.g. your personal Facebook page;
- Interact with children on your personal social media site in any way;
- Use derogatory terms or offensive language;
- Communicate in a way that undermines your role at the Parish or agency;
- Hide your identity or use a false identity in communications with children;
- Use inappropriate languages and images, e.g. material that is harassing, defamatory, bullying, threatening, sexually explicit, obscene, profane, illegal or otherwise offensive;
- Send and receive images of a particular child or children in individual (one on one) communications with a child **even if** there is written consent from that child's parent or guardian to communicate with them.