

Internet and Computer Policy

Introduction:

The use of the internet can be a helpful tool in the performance of one's ministry or personal growth. Any computer or internet usage can become addictive. It is recognized that there is also a dark side to the internet which is in contradiction to our commitment to live chaste lives in the bond of charity. These policies are offered to provide some parameters to safeguard the appropriate usage of the internet.

A. Prohibited Activities.

Material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, pornographic/sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate is not to be sent by text message, e-mail, social media or any other forms of electronic communication.

B. Internet Use.

Members should endeavor to make each electronic communication truthful and accurate. They should use the same care in drafting e-mail and other electronic communications as they would for any other written communication. Members should never consider electronic communications to be either private or secure. Members should not have an expectation of privacy in anything they send or receive on their computer.

Material that is fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, pornographic/sexually explicit, profane, obscene, or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate is not/are not in keeping with our commitment to living chaste lives and are not to be intentionally accessed, viewed or stored on a computer.

In all electronic communication, great care must be taken not to make statements that would be misunderstood to be the position of the congregation or statements that would cause scandal because of the public nature of the member's commitment as a priest or brother.

C. Disclaimer of liability for use of Internet.

The Society of the Precious Blood is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by Members from the Internet on their computer, or other electronic devices. The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Members are cautioned that many of these pages included offensive, sexually explicit and inappropriate material- Members accessing the Internet do so at their own risk.

D. Illegal Copying.

Members are warned not to copy illegally material protected under copyright law or make that material available to others for copying. Each person is responsible for complying with copyright law and applicable licenses that include but is not exclusive

to software, files, photographs, graphics, documents, music, messages, and other material you wish to download or copy.

E. Altering of Documents

Members are not to alter anything for intentionally fraudulent purposes. Anonymous or pseudonymous electronic communications are to be avoided. Members are to identify themselves honestly and accurately when sending e-mail, interacting on social media, or otherwise communicating online.

In fraternal charity all members of the CPPS Unit have an obligation in conscience to help those who are suspected of using the computer inappropriately or having an addiction to the internet. This includes personal intervention or reporting such behavior to community leadership or some other competent source. In the case of child pornography, suspicions should be immediately reported to law enforcement.

Members who feel they are dealing with addictive or compulsive behavior are encouraged to seek help from community leadership or other competent sources.

Members who fail to comply with these policies may be subject to disciplinary action, including revocation of e-mail, internet or computer privileges. A request may be made for them to participate in psychological counseling.

Social Media Guidelines for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood

I. MINISTRY WEBSITES

1. Establishing a Social Media Presence

a. Approval: Policy—

Members may not establish a website account which implies official representation of any Missionary of the Precious Blood entity without such permission.

b. Website Account Administrator/Moderators: Policy—

At least two Members should have full administrative access to ministry website accounts, known as website account administrator/moderators. Website account administrator/moderators must be approved to work with children in accordance with CPPS Unit policy.

c. Terms of Use: Policy—

Website account administrator/moderators and ministry personnel should be familiar with the terms of use, age restrictions, privacy settings and controls of any site being used for ministry purposes.

2. Separation of Personal and Ministry Websites

a. Personal and Ministry Profiles: Policy—

Whenever possible, Members should separate their personal social media profiles from any profiles they use for ministry. (In Facebook, for example, you can use pages or groups for professional use, which are connected to, but separate from your personal profile).

b. Communicating on Ministry Websites: Policy—

Members should not use an official CPPS Unit or affiliate email address or profile to communicate on public or ministry website accounts unless they are approved to officially speak in the position they represent.

c. Work-related Email Addresses: Recommendation—

If website account administrator/moderators are Members of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, they should be registered to these website accounts primarily through their work-related email addresses.

3. Content on Ministry Websites

a. Content Reflecting Church Teaching: Policy—

Content on ministry website accounts should consistently represent the views and teachings of the Catholic Church. Any postings that would reflect poorly upon the Church or ministry personnel and/or could cause scandal should be avoided. This activity includes not only the advocacy of opinions contrary to Church teaching and doctrine, but also things such as: inappropriate images or dress; advocacy of inappropriate music, movies or entertainment; obscene, profane or vulgar language; communication or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory; encouragement of illegal or immoral activity; advocacy of inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs.

b. Posting Photos: Policy—

Written consent must be obtained prior to posting personally identifying photos, videos or other information on a ministry website account. If the subject is a child, permission must be obtained from the parent or legal guardian. Such permission is included in the standard permission/release form used in activities with children.

c. Confidential and Proprietary Information: Policy—

Members are prohibited from disclosing via the internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood or its Affiliates. They are prohibited from disclosing via the internet any information that is proprietary to the CPPS Unit or its Affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate authority.

d. Crisis and Emergency Situations: Policy—

Members should treat any crisis or emergency situation (e.g., signs of suicidal thoughts or other intent to harm oneself or others, chemical abuse, criminal behavior, etc.) as they would with any other mode of communication. There is a

duty to report such communications and website account administrators/moderators should be advised of this responsibility for both adults and minors.

e. Rules of Conduct Posting: Recommendation—

On any ministry website account that accepts comments from users, the following rules of conduct should be posted in a place deemed reasonably visible for the kind of technology being used: “All posts and comments should be marked by Christian charity and respect for truth. They should presume the good will of other posters. No Ads please. Inappropriate comments may be deleted.”

II. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES WITH CHILDREN

1. Transparency

a. Two Website Account Administrators/Moderators: Policy—

It is important that technology be used in a responsible and ethical way and that Members and volunteers be transparent in all forms of communication, particularly when ministering to children. Two adults, approved to work with children according to the policies of the CPPS Unit, must have full administrative access to any ministry website accounts.

b. Group Texting: Policy—

Similarly, when using group messaging services, group texting services or similar programs with children, at least one other adult approved to work with children should be included in messages.

c. Individual Texting: Policy—

Members should limit texting/messaging to informational purposes related to ministry. When responding to an individual text/message from a child that is personal or conversational, Members must use prudence in steering that conversation away from continued electronic communication and towards any necessary in-person follow-up.

d. Saving/Archiving of texts/messages

Members must use prudence in determining how long texts, emails or other electronic communication should be saved. Texting that is purely informational (i.e., “The meeting starts at 7PM”) may have no need of being saved or archived. Texting that responds to a personal request (i.e., “Let’s meet during office hours at 3:30 to discuss that”) should remain accessible until prudence dictates that the issue has been resolved and the time for any likely questions about the appropriateness of the communication has passed.

e. Secretive Technology: Policy—

In order to maintain transparency, any type of technology whose design is inherently to be secretive (applications whose messages that are sent or received are automatically deleted after a short period of time) or deceptive (applications designed to appear to be something other than they are) are not to be used.

2. Parental Consent

a. Communicating through Social Networking: Policy—

General written permission to communicate with children or to post photographs through social networking methods should be given by parents. Since utilizing social media is part of the standard permission form, parents should also be made aware that they can opt out of allowing their children to be contacted through social media. If desired, parents also have the right to be copied in all communication coming to their children (e.g., by being added to any texting list or social media group).

b. Informing Parents: Policy—

Because of the policy above, ministry leaders must make reasonable efforts to inform parents more specifically of the typical ways their children will be communicated with as a standard part of youth ministry, including through social networking.

c. Posting Images: Policy

Members may not post identifiable images of children on any social media network without written parental consent, except for images taken in the public arena, such as at sporting events or fine arts public performances.

d. Images and Personal Information: Policy—

Even with permission to utilize an identifiable image of a child, on public ministry website accounts, youth should not be identified by anything more than a first name. Youth also should not be tagged on public ministry website accounts.

e. Tagging: Recommendation—

On public ministry website accounts that include children, the “no tagging” (or other similar option that avoids direct connection with a child’s personal social networking page) should be set whenever possible.

3. Appropriate Relationships

a. Online Behavior of Youth: Policy—

Members have responsibility for maintaining appropriate adult to children relationships at all times. Members should continue to take responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity on social media, in the same way they would be expected to do with in-person interaction.

b. Initial Online Contact: Policy—

Members should not initiate first contact with a potential follower online. Online “friend”, “follower” or other similar requests for inclusion with social media networks should be made by the child and then approved by the website administrator/moderator.

c. Other Documents: Policy—

Members who interact with children should be aware of and comply with all aspects of the Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Sample Release Form

**Missionaries of the Precious Blood
Release Form**

1. I, the lawful parent or guardian of _____ (the child), hereby grant to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, both individually and as trustee for the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, and their officers, agents, representatives, volunteers, and employees, permission to directly communicate with my child using social media technology.
2. I also agree to instruct my child that her/she does have permission to participate in any social media interaction with the Missionaries of the Precious Blood or its agents.
3. I, the lawful parent or guardian of _____ do not grant the Missionaries of the Precious Blood permission to communicate directly with my child using social media technology.

I have read and understand the above:

Signature _____

Printed name _____ Date ____ / ____ / ____

Home Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone (mobile) _____ (home) _____

III. PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

1. Online Behavior

a. Online Behavior of Adults: Policy—

Because social media is a public medium, ministry personnel using social media should be aware that they represent the Catholic Church on both ministry and personal websites/applications. Members should not engage in online activity that would cause scandal or express a disregard for trying to faithfully live as a disciple of Christ. This activity includes not only the advocacy of opinions contrary to Church teaching and doctrine, but also things such as: inappropriate images or dress; advocacy of inappropriate music, movies or entertainment; obscene, profane or vulgar language; communication or conduct that is harassing, threatening, bullying, libelous, or defamatory; encouragement of illegal or immoral activity; advocacy of inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs.

b. Online Behavior with Youth: Policy—

The line between professional and personal relationships is blurred within a social media context. When Members choose to utilize social media outside those approved by the Missionaries of the Precious Blood to engage with youth who are associated with them primarily through a ministry context, they are to maintain their professionalism as ministry personnel.

Ministry personnel have the responsibility for addressing inappropriate behavior or activity online as they would be expected to with in-person interaction, including requirements for mandated reporting.

2. Discipline: Policy—

Be mindful that any information posted on your personal social networking site could potentially be grounds for discipline.

3. Miscellaneous

a. Disclaimers: Recommendation—

If Members identify themselves (i.e., in the biography section or profile information) as a Member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood on a personal website account/application, the site should include the following disclaimer: “The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood.” This disclaimer should be reasonably visible in accordance with the type of media platform it is. For example, on a Facebook profile, this statement can be posted in the “About” section.

b. Copyright: Policy—

Members using social media, personally or professionally, must abide by all copyright and intellectual property rights laws. Ministry personnel are prohibited from disclosing information that is understood to be held in confidence by or

