

The Salesians of Don Bosco - Province of St. Andrew
Electronic Communications, Internet and Social Media Policy
Approved July 7, 2016

"Communication is a means of expressing the missionary vocation of the entire Church; today the social networks are one way to experience this call to discover the beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ. In the area of communications too, we need a Church capable of bringing warmth and of stirring hearts" (Pope Francis' Message for the 48th World Communications Day [WCD], 2014)

Digital communications have become integral to the work of the Church. The resources of the internet such as e-mail, websites, social networking sites, etc., are now widely used in religious organization, parishes and schools to communicate with colleagues, parishioners, parents and students. Technology includes desktop computers, digital phones/smart phones, tablets, laptop computers all of which are able to access the internet (web site, emails, texting, social media, etc.).

The Salesians of Don Bosco Province of St. Andrew encourages use of today's technology and digital resources. The purpose of the policies and guidelines presented here are to ensure safe and effective ways of using these resources in the work of the Church. The Salesians of Don Bosco Province of St. Andrew website is for purposes of evangelization, education and information related to the Catholic Church in general and the Western Province specifically, and must be consistent with the teachings and values of the Salesian Order and the Catholic Church.

Social media practices, in general, should be consistent with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops "***Social Media Guidelines***" (<http://www.usccb.org/about/communications/social-media-guidelines.cfm>). When using social media and all forms of electronic communications, Salesian members respect and maintain healthy boundaries with minors, parents and adult parishioners. Contact with students, parents and parishioners should generally be for professional purposes. When using social media or electronic communication with children or adults, Salesian members should always respect the privacy of others.

The following policies apply to all use of electronic communications, the internet and social media by all members of the Salesians of Don Bosco St. Andrew Province. *No policies can include all the possible situations that may arise in the course of ministry. If a situation arises that is not included in these policies, the member or employee should seek consultation and advice from superiors.* Province members who are on restriction, may have additional limitations placed on their use of electronic communications.

I. Website Administration

1. The province website should generally be reviewed by the Provincial or his designee(s) prior to "going live" or after major revisions.
2. At least two adults (province member or staff) should be delegated as authorized administrators of the province website, and have full administrative access to the site. This allows for speedy response in case of problems.
3. The Province's official logo or standard image(s) should appear on all province websites.
4. Communication with visitors to the site should be done through the Province's official e-mail whenever possible.

II. Electronic Communications: E-mail, Texting, Instant Messaging, Video Chat, Blogging and Social Networking (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, other List-serves, etc.)

1. Province members shall restrict their communication with minors (other than relatives) using electronic communications except as a part of their professional/ministerial responsibilities.
2. Members communicating through email with minors with whom they associate through their work for the Province should make sure they either use 1) professional e-mail accounts (eg, example@donboscowest.org), 2) an email account that uses a username that clearly identifies their religious affiliation (eg, example@gmail.com) or 3) include a signature with their full religious affiliation (Fr. John, SDB, Salesian High School).
3. Province members shall maintain healthy boundaries with minors in their electronic communications.
4. Members utilizing social networking sites must be vigilant in representing themselves as members of the Salesians of Don Bosco St. Andrew Province in all interactions that can be viewed publicly.
5. Province members shall inform their superior if they receive any sexually inappropriate electronic communications from a minor, parent or a parishioner.
6. Salesian members shall not make comments or send images/videos (or links) through any means, electronic or otherwise, which a reasonable person, according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, would consider to be defamatory, offensive, harassing, disruptive, derogatory or bullying. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial or ethnic slurs, or other comments or images that would offend someone on the basis of race, creed, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, political beliefs, mental or physical disability, or veteran status.
7. The Province-related blogging sites are for purposes of evangelization, education and information related to the Salesian Order and the Catholic Church, and must be consistent with the teaching and values of the Salesian Order and the Catholic Church.
8. Blogs may be an efficient method for disseminating fliers for upcoming activities, permission/consent forms, calendars and ministerial updates. Other possible uses of blogs include: posting links and references for faith formation; communicating sacramental preparation information or parent resources; communicating daily Scripture passages, prayers or spiritual links/resources.

III. Best Practices for Social Media and Electronic Communications

1. In schools and youth ministry, it is generally a good practice to inform parents at the beginning of the school year of the social media activities that their children may participate in.
2. Salesian members should be familiar with and abide by school and archdiocese electronic communications policies.
3. Good judgment should always be used with electronic-based communication. In general, phone calls and in-person communication will result in less misunderstanding than electronic communication.
4. In all social media activity, it is recommended that province members maintain good boundaries in their interactions with minors and parishioners. Good boundaries include:
 - A. Limited and appropriate self-disclosure
 - B. Not coercing others to disclose more than they are comfortable
 - C. Keeping information confidential (except when mandated or permitted by law)
 - D. Not being overly negative or critical
 - E. Not sending/posting comments or images that contain sexual overtones
 - F. Not disclosing your personal emotional problems
 - G. Not seeking personal care, comfort or problem-solving from people entrusted in your care
 - H. Being compassionate, respectful and courteous to others

5. Clear guidelines or parameters should be established with regard to times of communication between province members and minors (as well as adults). While minors may be e-mailing or texting in the late evening hours, province members should generally communicate/respond during regular work hours, except in the case of serious urgency.
6. It is generally a good policy to write/post communications as though it may be read or seen by someone other than for whom it was intended. Most social networking sites and electronic communications (email, texting, instant messaging, etc.) are not necessarily private. All such communications may be potentially viewed by others including, parents, spouses, family members, legal guardians, organizations or law enforcement authorities.
7. It is generally good practice to review writings (email, text, postings, etc) before they are sent to determine if they could be misinterpreted. If you have any doubt about the appropriateness of a message, seek consultation from a superior.
8. Because of its less-formal nature (as opposed to professional meetings or teaching), engaging in social networking or electronic communication may result in an individual being more prone to divulge personal information about themselves or others. Province members should maintain the same level of confidentiality and professionalism as they do in their in-person interactions on the job.
9. It is generally a good idea to Cc or Bcc an appropriate adult with emailing minors.

Definitions

Adult: a person who is 18 years of age or older.

Authorized administrator: an individual delegated by the Provincial as the manager of the organizations network operations and/or an internet application such as a website, social networking site, blog site, etc.

Best practices: recommended procedures or methods that help ensure effective and safe use of social media.

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. WordPress is one of the more popular tools used to create blogs.

Instant messaging (IM):** is a type of online chat which offers real-time text transmission over the Internet. A local area network (LAN) messenger operates in a similar way over a local area network. Short messages are typically transmitted bi-directionally between two parties, when each user chooses to complete a thought and select “send”. Transmission of files, images and links to web sites can also occur through this method of communication.

Internet presence: refers to the combination of pictures, text, and videos that form the online reputation of an individual or organization. The channels of creating an internet presence, also known as “internet publishing” or “content creation” can be divided into several categories:

Minor: a person who is under 18 years of age.

Online friend request: an intentional action of establishing an association with another person through an online social network. Generally, one person submits a “friend request” to another via the online service. The person receiving the “friend request” may accept, reject, or ignore the request. Once “friended,” the two people can adjust their privacy settings to control how much information the other is allowed to access.

Personal: not related to an individual's work or other activities on behalf of the Province. Personal information includes, but is not limited to, family pictures, personal social events, home phone number, mobile phone number, home address, or personal e-mail accounts.

Personnel: all priests, brothers, novices and employees working on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Province of St. Andrew, San Francisco, California.

Policies: procedures that must be followed by personnel of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Province of St. Andrew, San Francisco, California.

Professional: related to an individual's work or activities on behalf of the Salesians of Don Bosco, Province of St. Andrew, San Francisco, California.

Province: the Salesians of Don Bosco, Province of St. Andrew, San Francisco, California.

Sexual suggestiveness:** is visual, verbal, or written material or behavior construed as having a sexual undertone or which is interpreted as intending to provoke sexual arousal or a sexual response. Sexually suggestive behavior or clothing may be regarded as risqué, or immodest or indecent. In entertainment, sexually suggestive humor may be referred to as bawdy or ribaldry. People may differ widely on what they consider to be sexually suggestive, and what is or is not acceptable depends largely on a community's social mores. Women in swimsuit advertisements, sexually-themed music or music with a strong beat meant for dancing, sexting erotic lingerie or “wolf-whistling” can all be thought to be sexually suggestive. Sexual suggestiveness can also involve nudity, or the exposure of the nipples, genitals, buttocks or other areas of the body considered to be taboo. A brand name or phrase can be considered to be sexually suggestive if it has strong sexual connotations.

Social 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.

Tagging: is an online social media action done with photos uploaded to the network site. A particular person in a specific photograph is “tagged” by either themselves or another person so that whenever that photo appears on the online social network, that person's name will appear whenever a mouse pointer hovers over their image in the photo. This function can be turned off or limited and any person who is tagged in a photo can “remove” the tag.

Texting:** is the act of composing and sending brief, electronic messages between two or more mobile phones, or fixed or portable devices over a phone network. The term originally referred to messages sent using the Short Message Service (*SMS*). It has grown to include messages containing image, video, and sound content (known as *MMS* messages). The sender of a text message is known as a *texter*, while the

service itself has different terms depending on the region. It may simply be referred to as a *text* in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, an *SMS* in most of mainland Europe, and an *MMS* or *SMS* in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Text messages may include, text, images, videos or web site links.

Video Chatting or Video-telephony:** comprises the technologies for the reception and transmission of audio-video signals by users at different locations, for communication between people in real-time. This can be commonly accomplished with Apple FaceTime, Skype or Google Hangouts.

** From Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>)