

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

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Archidiocèse de
Saint-Boniface
Archdiocese

“The great digital continent does not only involve technology, but is made up of real men and women who bring with them what they carry inside, their hopes, their suffering, their concerns, their pursuit of truth, beauty, and good. We need to show and bring Christ to others, sharing these joys and hopes, like Mary, who brought Christ to the hearts of men and women...”

– Pope Francis’ address to Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Sept. 21, 2013

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1.0

Definitions

- **Church Personnel:** Any member working within the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, one of its parishes or missions, or any other subsidiary, whether clergy or lay, paid or unpaid.
- **Official Archdiocesan Social Media:** This is the one Page that is created to represent the entirety of the Archdiocese, and is administered centrally within the Communications Office of the Archdiocese.
- **Official Social Media:** Social Media Pages which represent another official office of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, one of its parishes, missions, or a subsidiary.
- **Personal Social Media:** Social Media Pages which are owned and operated by Church Personnel on their personal capacity, rather than as a representative of the Archdiocese.

2.0

Overview

2.1 - Introduction

“Social Media” refers to forms of electronic communication, like websites for social networking and micro blogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content (like photos and videos)¹. Its popularity has grown rapidly within the past few years and continues to expand. **Today, nearly four in five active Internet users visit social networks and blogs.**² For example, there are now more active Facebook accounts than there are Catholics, worldwide. Given the size and scope of these communities, they offer excellent forums for the Church’s visibility and evangelization.

The Church can use Social Media to **encourage respect, dialogue and honest relationships – in other words, “true friendship”** (Pope Benedict XVI, 43rd World Communication Day Message). To do so requires the Church to approach Social Media as a powerful means of evangelization and to consider our role in providing a Christian perspective in the digital forum.

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface recognizes the increasing influence and relevance of Social Media in our society. **We will embrace digital dialogue through Social Media and other online tools and forums. Using these tools, we will lift up the Gospel through these powerful instruments of evangelization throughout our Archdiocese.**

Church personnel will be encouraged to use Social Media to conduct work and to communicate with professional and personal associates. It is our goal for Church personnel to use Social Media responsibly, and to recognize that **it is both a powerful educational and evangelization tool that can support the Archdiocese of St. Boniface’s mission and vision, proclaiming the Good News to the world.**

When using these modern instruments of evangelization, it is important to recognize:

- 1) Social Media **does not replace meaningful and engaging dialogue** that is best encountered through face-to-face communication.
- 2) Anything published on Social Media should be considered as public as a homily from the pulpit, press release issued by the Archdiocese, notice in the parish bulletin or interview with a radio, television or newspaper reporter. What is published on Social Media or on any other online forum is permanent. Although it may be deleted, it cannot be permanently erased.

2.2 - Why Social Media?

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface will utilize Social Media to accomplish the following three objectives (*Note: the order of these does not imply importance or preference of one objective over the other*):

1. To reach the faithful from all corners of our Archdiocese with **testimonials, spiritual reflection and call to prayer**, in an effort to increase a sense of unity through online communication;
2. To **reach lapsed Catholics and non-Catholics** with the Gospel message;
3. To reach the faithful of our Archdiocese with Archdiocesan **news, events, and activities.**

¹ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media>

² <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/social/>

2.3 - Application

For the purposes of this policy, the term ‘Social Media’ includes, without limitation:

- Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content;
- The collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration, including, without limitation, internet surfing and websites, emails, texts, blogs, forums, and wiki pages;
- All social media sites, networks, pages, accounts and applications including, without limitation, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Google Plus and LinkedIn (collectively, “Social Media”).

This policy applies to all offices, ministries, and to any other subsidiary of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface (hereinafter, the Social Media Policy), including all parishes and missions within its boundaries. Violation of this policy can result in discipline up to and including termination, or a request to cease volunteer activities

The Social Media Policy applies to all individuals (lay or ordained, paid or unpaid) including employees, staff, or volunteers of the Archdiocese, and of all parishes and missions within the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

This Social Media Policy does not replace, but supplements, any internal policies that the Archdiocese may issue or revise.

3.0

General Guidelines

THE GENERAL GUIDELINES SECTION OF THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL ARCHDIOCESAN SOCIAL MEDIA, INCLUDING ALL SOCIAL MEDIA OF ITS PARISHES, MISSIONS OR OTHER SUBSIDIARIES.

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface **strongly encourages individual parishes, ministries and offices to create and utilize Social Media to its fullest potential as a tool for education, communication and evangelization.**

Parish/ministry/archdiocesan office web pages, blogs or social networking pages or accounts must not be used for:

1. **conducting** outside/personal business;
2. **defaming** the character of any individual or institution, or violating the right of every person to protect her or his privacy (Canon 220);
3. **discrediting** the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, the Catholic Church, or our partners;
4. promoting a specific **political** agenda;
5. **disclosing any confidential information** related to the Archdiocese of Saint-Boniface or any other individual without explicit consent (e.g. financial information, salary, health information, or any other information of a personal nature which may have been shared in confidence).

3.1 – Administrating an Official Social Media Page

Any Official Social Media Page, which represents the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, one of its offices or ministries, parishes, missions, associates or any other subsidiary, **must be administered by at least two (2) adults.** The Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator, in consultation with the parish's Pastoral Council (or highest ranking Officer of an organization), will name official administrators of an Official Social Media Page. One of these delegates with administrative rights must be a supervisor. Username, password, and full administrative privileges must be granted to these delegates (when applicable). Delegates may include: parish priest, parish life coordinator, secretary, youth ministry coordinator, catechism coordinator, member of a parish council, a trusted volunteer etc. More than two delegates may be named.

3.2 – Prohibited Content and Right to Review

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface will not tolerate Church personnel posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially harmful content, including sexually explicit and any other material deemed inappropriate.

Other prohibited content includes but is not limited to: messages that are not in line with the Official Teaching of the Catholic Church, personal opinions that are not in line with the direction of the local or Universal Church, or any content which may in any way go against any other policy of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

The Archbishop of St. Boniface or his delegate will have final authority over any content posted onto any Official Social Media Page within the Archdiocese or a subsidiary. Non-compliance will result in a formal request from the Communications Office to remove inappropriate comments, or to remove completely the Social Media account or Page in question. In any such case, the Church personnel in question could face disciplinary action, upon final authority of the Archbishop of St. Boniface.

3.3 – Use of Logos or Trademarks

Church personnel may use Archdiocesan or related logos and official photographs on websites/blogs/Social Media tools that have an official affiliation with the Archdiocese of St. Boniface and are subject to review by a supervisor. **Church personnel may not use Archdiocesan or affiliate trademarks or logos on their Personal Social Media (as defined in “5.0 - Use of Personal Social Media”) in any way that suggests or implies approval, endorsement or oversight by the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.**

3.4 - Protection of Children

Church personnel of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface and its partners will comply with all aspects of our *Diocesan Protocol for the Protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults*, accessible at <http://www.archsaintboniface.ca/main.php?p=533>. This policy also outlines the archdiocesan procedure to report/investigate incidents of abuse or misconduct.

It is generally accepted that attendance at publicly held Church events (Mass, other parish celebrations) may result in photographs/video recorded that may be broadcast or shared in any number of media, including local parish websites or other communications tools. Wherever possible, Church personnel should make every attempt to obtain verifiable consent from participants.

Church personnel are forbidden to post or to distribute any personal identifiable information, including photos and/or videos which could be used to identify, of any child (under 16) or youth (under 18), without verifiable consent of a parent or legal guardian. Personal identifiable information includes name, photos, home address, telephone number, email address or any detail that would allow someone to identify or contact a child or youth. Verifiable consent can be a release/permission form, an email from a parent or guardian, or spoken permission by a parent or guardian with another adult present which is later reduced to writing.

It is recommended that, for any event/ministry requiring a registration/permission form, **a clause seeking permission to post photos/videos from such activities on a parish website or social media channels be included.** (A statement with a simple check box should suffice.) The Archdiocese of St. Boniface will review any alleged violations on a case-by-case basis.

3.5 - The Use of Social Media and of other Online Media to Communicate with Children and Youth

- The **primary purpose of electronic communication with a child or youth shall be for providing information related to a ministry or event** and not for socialization or other personal interaction. Counseling of children through electronic methods, such as social media, is not permitted.
- **Adults must not be in electronic communication with children or youth unless their parent/guardian is sent a Carbon Copy, or their parent/guardian has authorized such communication (see below).** Parents must be notified of the methods of communication that are used in each particular ministry and must be granted access to such communication if requested at any time. Parent authorization must identify the type of communication (e.g., email, Facebook, Twitter etc.), the youth’s specific contact information and contact information for parents/guardians.

Below is the example of a waiver that may be provided for parents to sign at the start of a ministry year.

Over the course of the year, we will be communicating with our young people using a variety of methods including social media, email and hard copy communication. We ask for your permission to communicate with them using the following channels. Please also be aware that we will gladly provide you with any communication we have had with your child upon your request. Please indicate your consent by checking the boxes below:

___ **Facebook** (My child's Facebook name: _____))
___ **Twitter** (My child's Twitter handle: @ _____))
___ **Instagram** (My child's Instagram handle: @ _____))
___ **Email** (my child's email address: _____))

I consent for _____ (name of child) to receive communication by the youth ministry team at _____ (name of parish or organization) using the communication tools outlined above.

We would also like to have a parent/guardian point of contact for your child. Please provide us with your contact information so that we can stay connected as appropriate.

- Henceforth, any and all official Facebook accounts representing the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, one of its offices, parishes or subsidiaries should be a 'Page', and should not take the form of a personal account (as per the Facebook User Policy, available at www.facebook.com/policies). A Facebook personal account is stand-alone, whereas a Page is created from within a personal account. Parishes or organizations currently using a personal account as an official ministry page are now strongly encouraged to delete said account in favor of an official 'Page'. In cases where this is not possible or where it would greatly harm the organization's ability to communicate with the people it serves, **adults must not initiate "friend" requests with children or youth**, but may accept "friend" requests from children or youth who are involved in the particular ministry the adult in question is leading.
- When children or youth form their own Social Media groups, **adults should not join these groups from their Personal Social Media.**
- **Personal Social Media accounts should never be used to contact children or youth.** If children or youth contact particular adults engaged in ministry directly through their personal Social Media account, the adult in question should immediately move the conversation to an Official Social Media account. To do so in Facebook, the child or youth will need to initiate the conversation through the official Page (the adult may respond with a quick prompting to continue the conversation through the Official Page's messaging), as Facebook forbids starting a conversation through a Page as per their spam policy. The reply and all further communication should take place from this Official ministry account. Any communications with children or youth should be saved indefinitely. These should never be deleted.
- **Acceptable hours for communication with children or youth via other electronic communications shall be between 8 a.m. and 9 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 ministry-related event.
- Online "**chatting**" with children or youth is not permitted, unless it is through an Official Social Media account, and that it pertains strictly to communicating ministry information. Online "chatting" must never be used to discuss items of a personal nature.
- It is strongly recommended that **minors not be "tagged"** in photos posted to Social Media accounts.

3.6 – Moderating user-generated content, such as posts on an official page, or comments

Social Media’s strength is that it welcomes two-way *dialogue*. This dialogue is particularly effective in the New Evangelization, allowing bridges to be built with many people of different backgrounds and religious confessions. As a Church that uses Social Media, we welcome dialogue with society and remain open to receive honest feedback. **However, we must be prudent and strike a good balance between encouraging honest dialogue while also maintaining a positive, uplifting and respectful tone.** Although decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis, the following guidelines seek to provide general suggestions as to what user-generated content may be, and may not be appropriate on an Official Social Media Page. This includes content posted onto Official Social Media and any comments left by users. Although openness to dialogue necessarily includes the possibility of being confronted with opposing views, there will be occasions where it is justifiable to remove inappropriate user-generated content.

When is user-generated content deemed inappropriate?

- When it contains obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially harmful content, including sexually explicit and any other material deemed inappropriate;
- When it causes, or has potential to cause scandal;
- When it is considered spam;
- When it reveals confidential or private personal information;
- When it violently or excessively undermines the Church in a way that is not conducive to dialogue;
- Any other occasion where right judgment and prudence demand that user-generated content is not appropriate.

If user-generated content comes from an opposing view, and it does not significantly disrupt the positive environment promoted by the official page, it is encouraged that page administrators reply to such comments in view of building an open and honest dialogue with God’s people. Administrators must remember that replies to comments are public. Only Private Messages remain private.

When it is decided that user-generated content must be removed, page administrators may choose to send a private message to the user stating that the content in question was removed, and also explaining the rationale behind the decision. These private messages should take place **only** through the Official Page, and should never take place from a personal account.

When the same user repeatedly posts inappropriate content to an official page, and when attempts to contact the said user do not bear fruit, page administrators may chose to ban the user in question until some agreement is reached. Banning a user prevents them from posting any further content onto the page.

3.7 - Other Important Guidelines Regarding Use of Online Media within the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, its Parishes, Missions, or Subsidiaries

- Authorized individuals publishing on Official Social Media pages will comply with all internal policies of the Archdiocese.
- No association, private or public (as defined in canon law), is to assume the name Catholic in its public or private communications, without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority in accordance with Canon 300. The competent ecclesiastical authority to grant consent is determined by Canon 312.
- All applicable criminal and civil laws must be observed at all times.

4.0

Official Archdiocesan Social Media

THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THIS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY PERTAINS TO OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES WITHIN THE ARCHDIOCESE AND ITS OFFICES. THESE ARE TO BE USED IN THE COURSE OF WORK OR MINISTRY RELATED ACTIVITIES, AND REPRESENT AN INTERNAL OFFICE OR MINISTRY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. BONIFACE.

4.1 - The Role of Social and Online Media Within the Archdiocese

Official Social Media Pages representing offices or ministries of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface will be used to accomplish three main objectives, as outlined in Section 2.2 – *Why Social Media?*.

Official Archdiocesan Social Media is a single, unified voice for the Archdiocese, which will serve as a communication tool for its offices, ministries, and will also serve as a tool for teaching and evangelization.

4.2 - Framework for the Use of Social Media within the Offices of the Archdiocese

4.2.1 Pages Representing the Archdiocese or its Offices

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface will have only ***one* Official Archdiocesan Social Media Page**, which will be used to represent all of its offices, ministries, parishes, missions and other subsidiaries. Should a need arise for an office or ministry of the Archdiocese to have its own Social Media Page, a request outlining this need and detailing the rationale will be presented to the Social Media Coordinator for approval. Final Approval is reserved to the Archbishop or to his delegate.

Requests for an internal office or ministry of the Archdiocese to have its own Social Media Page will only be taken into consideration if the office or ministry leader makes a strong argument that an independent account or page will significantly improve their ability to reach their target audience. Currently, only two offices of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface will retain their own independent Official Social Media Page: the Offices of *Youth and Young Adults*, and of *Marriage, Family and Life*.

4.2.2 Social Media Coordinator

The **Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator (operating on behalf of the Communications Office) is the first point of contact for all Official Archdiocesan Social Media**, and will administer the Official Archdiocesan Social Media Pages. Their responsibilities will include:

- 1- **Collecting all content** (i.e. stories, photos & images, videos, announcements...) from archdiocesan offices, ministries, parishes, missions or other subsidiaries;
- 2- **Approving all proposed content**, and ensuring that any content posted onto Official Archdiocesan Social Media is in line with the Archdiocesan Social Media Policy, that it measure up to the highest level of quality, and that the Archdiocese maintain a consistent and clear message;
- 3- **Translating** all content to ensure that our Social Media presence respects the Archdiocese's English-French Bilingual identity (refer to section 4.5 - *Use of Both Official Languages* policy);
- 4- **Creating quality content** that will help fulfill the three objectives listed in section 2.2 – *Why Social Media?*;
- 5- In order to create and maintain a positive Social Media presence, the Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator is available as a **resource** for limited guidance or consultation to any Church Personnel who have been given privileges to post or administer any Social Media account tied to the Archdiocese of St. Boniface or a subsidiary. This being said, it is the full responsibility of Church Personnel to create, and manage their own Social Media Page.

4.3 - How to Contribute Content to be Posted onto Official Archdiocesan Social Media

All Church personnel of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, of its parishes, missions or subsidiaries, including clergy and lay, paid and volunteer, **are strongly encouraged to create content to be featured on Official Archdiocesan Social Media.** We will aim to represent all offices, parishes, missions, communities, and organizations within the Archdiocese and to give a voice to all.

What content will be considered for posting onto Archdiocesan Social Media?

- 1- Photos & Images;
- 2- Videos;
- 3- Testimonials;
- 4- News;
- 5- Announcements;
- 6- Event information and promotion;
- 7- Job postings, paid or volunteer;
- 8- Any message that is important to communicate to the Church of St. Boniface be it because of its informational, inspirational, teaching, or evangelizing value.

What steps should you take to have your content posted?

- 1- **Create** your content (gather pictures, video or any other pertinent files). Ensure that all submitted content respects the Social Media Policy, and that they are of good quality. Every picture or video contributed should be accompanied by a brief and poignant description that will be posted with the content in question (should remain between 50 and 100 words in length);
- 2- **Email** your content to the Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator (socialmedia@archsaintboniface.ca);
- 3- The Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator will **review** your content. They may make suggestions or changes. Once approved, your content will be posted.

4.4 - Oversight of Official Social Media Pages

The Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator may **periodically review Official Social Media pages, as well as pages owned and operated by Archdiocesan offices, parishes or other subsidiaries.** The Communications Office will respond to inquiries or complaints within a reasonable amount of time.

The Archdiocesan Communications Office reserves the right to advise and inform Parishes and Administrative Authorities regarding Social Media accounts which do not reflect basic Catholic teaching and which are not in compliance with this Social Media Policy or other archdiocesan policies.

4.5 - Use of Both Official Languages

4.5.1 – Pertaining to all Social Media Pages representing the Archdiocese or its internal Offices

Given the Archdiocese of St. Boniface's English-French Bilingual identity, **all content posted to Official Archdiocesan Social Media will be posted in both official languages.** The Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator will be responsible for translating all content into the other official language.

Videos will not be translated, however the text accompanying the video will be translated and will be available in both official languages.

When an **outside article or content that has been generated by another trusted organization is being shared**, it is not necessary that this content be translated. However, the text accompanying this content will be translated and will be available in both official languages.

To represent the Archdiocese's rich cultural diversity, **content may also be posted in any other language represented in one of the Archdiocese's various parishes or communities.** If content is submitted in a language other than French or English, please follow the following steps:

- 1- All content must be **proofread by the parish's or the community's Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator;**
- 2- All content must be submitted to the Archdiocesan Social Media Coordinator with a **translation in English or in French;**
- 3- Once approved, this **content will be posted in the original language, and also in at least one of the Archdiocese's official languages.**

4.5.2 – Pertaining to all Social Media Pages representing parishes, missions, organizations or any other subsidiary of the Archdiocese of St. Boniface

Any parish, mission, organization or subsidiary of the Archdiocese will **not be required to post content in both official languages of the Archdiocese. They will post content in the official language(s) of their parish or organization.** For example, a French-speaking community is only required to post content in French, whereas an English-speaking community is only required to post content in English. However, **a parish that is officially designated as bilingual will be required to post content in both their official languages.**

For instances where the official language of a parish or organization is not English or French, this parish or organization is only required to post content in their official language. However, it is **strongly recommended that an English translation be included** to ensure that parishioners or members of the general public who do not speak the parish's official language may also be able to access the content being posted. For example, a parish whose official language is Vietnamese is only required to publish content in Vietnamese. However they are strongly encouraged to include a translation into English.

5.0

Use of Personal Social Media

THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THIS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY APPLIES TO CHURCH PERSONNEL'S PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES OR ACCOUNTS WHICH ARE OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE INDIVIDUAL ON THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITY, RATHER THAN AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE.

The Archdiocese of St. Boniface recognizes that Church personnel will create and utilize Personal Social Media to be used mainly for communicating personal information with friends and associates, unrelated to the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. **Church personnel must recognize that anything published on a personal website, blog or Social Media Page or account is visible to the general public.** Owners of Personal Social Media Pages or accounts are to provide truthful information and will be held accountable for what they publish or post.

Archdiocese of St. Boniface Church personnel must not share information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Archdiocese of St. Boniface or harm its reputation. **Church personnel must be aware that they are ambassadors of the Catholic Church, even during their personal use of Social Media. They must therefore exercise good judgment, as posting inappropriate content, even if it is only on Personal Social Media, reflects on the Catholic Church as a whole.**

Personal Social Media owned and operated by Church Personnel should never be used for:

1. **defaming** the character of any individual or institution;
2. **discrediting** the Archdiocese of St. Boniface or its partners; or
3. **disclosing any confidential information** related to the Archdiocese of St. Boniface or any other individual without explicit consent.
4. **official ministry communication**, or any communication on behalf of the Archdiocese, parish or other Archdiocesan subsidiary. Only official Social Media Pages should be used for official communications.

Common sense and prudence should always be exercised when posting onto Social Media, whether it be on a Personal or Official basis. Although content may be deleted, nothing posted onto social or other online media can ever be erased or taken back. It is permanent.

Violation of this policy can result in discipline up to and including termination, or a request to cease volunteer activities.