This fact sheet is for Parish Priests and Parish workers regarding the use of technology and social media with children.

FACT SHEET: USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA 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:

- Be respectful, polite, and considerate in all digital communications with children.
- Communicate in a manner that is consistent with your role and responsibility within or in relation to the parish or agency.
- Be transparent and identify yourself in all communications using your own name.
- Avoid individual (one on one) digital communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults in your Church ministry e.g. using private email, private messaging, private mobile phones or other forms of closed technology.
- Contact children, young people and vulnerable adults wherever possible through the Church organisation's formal agreed channels of communication.
- Ensure communication channels are transparent e.g. are able to be supervised by parents.
- Respect the privacy of others and ensure that information is not transmitted or published that should not be made public.
- Maintain professional boundaries and only make contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults for reasons related to the work of the Church.

Don't:

- Do not invite or accept 'friend' invitations on your personal social media sites e.g. Facebook, Instagram from children you have met through the Archdiocese.
- Do not interact with children you have met through the Archdiocese through personal social media sites.
- Do not communicate with a child on a one-to-one basis by phone (including mobile phone and text messages) or email, unless the relevant Parish Priest has obtained the express, written consent of the child's parent or guardian and there is a distinct professional need for the communication.
- Do not use inappropriate language or images e.g. material that is harassing, defamatory, bullying, threatening, sexually explicit, obscene, profane, illegal or otherwise offensive.
- Do not hide your identity or use a false identity in communications with children.
- Do not send and/or 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.