

## **POLICY 7.6      Policy for Websites and Other Internet-based Media**

### **SUMMARY**

1. Parishes are responsible for ensuring the content of websites and Facebook accounts are kept up to date and meet minimum standards. Parishes are authorized to remove content that offends these standards, including comments on social media accounts.
2. Notification of the taking and use of photographs, digital images, and similar collection of personal information must be clearly stated in promotional materials for archdiocesan and parish events. Posters with the same notification must be prominently displayed at archdiocesan and parish events.
3. The Archdiocese encourages parishes to use open-source website platforms and pay minimal fees to create and host a website. The parish priest is responsible for ensuring the maintenance of and access to the parish website and social media accounts.
4. Account names and passwords are to be secured and be known by the parish priest, his authorized parish delegates, and the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese.

### **FORMS**

Sample Consent and Permission Forms

### **RELATED POLICIES**

N/A

The Archdiocese has developed this policy to assist parishes, quasi-parishes and missions (hereinafter “parishes”) with effective management of internet-based media.

#### **1. Responsibility for websites and social media**

The parish priest is responsible for ensuring that the parish website, social media accounts, as well as other parish publications, are established and managed in compliance with this policy.

The Communications Officer of the Archdiocese is responsible for ensuring the Archdiocese’s website, social media accounts and all other archdiocesan publications, are managed in compliance with this policy. The Communications Officer is responsible for monitoring parish websites, social media accounts and publications and reporting any concerns directly to the parish priest.

#### **2. Content of websites and social media**

The Archdiocese posts all types of information on its website, <https://archgm.ca>, including the Archbishop’s monthly pastoral letter, policies and procedures, parish contact information, pastoral initiatives, and more. It is also available for promoting parish and other Catholic events.

The rule of thumb for websites and social media is not to post anything that would not be published in

the parish Sunday bulletin or the Archdiocesan newsletter, *the Northern Light*. All items posted on the archdiocesan website have been approved by the Vicar General. All items posted on parish websites and social media accounts must be approved by the parish priest (this includes missions.)

**a. Responsibility for content**

The parish priest is responsible for ensuring that the content of the parish website and social media accounts are kept up-to-date.

The Communications Officer of the Archdiocese is responsible for ensuring that the content of the archdiocesan website and social media account are kept up-to-date.

**b. Minimum standards for social media**

It is understood that the principal purpose of social media like Facebook is to encourage conversations. People often “like”, “share” and comment on posts. Therefore, employees of the Archdiocese, in the chancery and in parishes, must be responsible and charitable in their use of official social media. (They should also be charitable in their use of personal social media.)

The parish priest is responsible for ensuring that persons with direct responsibility for parish social media accounts regularly monitor the accounts and ensure content meets minimum standards. These standards include but are not limited to ensuring that content:

- does not contain offensive language (e.g. profanities, demeaning or derogatory words, personal insults)
- does not become an argument between individuals
- is not blasphemous or derogatory towards our Lord and/or the Church
- does not contain confidential or proprietary information
- is not in contravention of copyright laws

Comments and posts that the responsible person determines to be offensive are to be removed immediately. If the person is not sure whether to remove or amend content, she or he should consult the parish priest and/or the Communications Officer.

**c. Taking and using photographs**

*This policy on photographs applies to use of images in digital and hard copy media produced by the Archdiocese and parishes.*

The personal privacy of individuals is to be respected when photographs are taken at archdiocesan and parish events, such as Mass, the annual Pilgrimage, and parish picnics.

At all archdiocesan and parish-organized celebrations, liturgical and social, and public events under the auspices or promoted by the Archdiocese and parishes, there must be written notification that photographs will be taken which may later be used in various media at the discretion of the Archdiocese and its parishes.

Announcements, posters, invitations and other promotional materials for archdiocesan and parish events shall include statements about the taking and use of photographs. There must also be posters, prominently displayed in one or more locations within the venue of the celebration or event, that notify participants and guests of the taking of photographs.

Sample wording for event promotional materials and venue posters: *“Personal information, including but not limited to photographs and digital images, and video and audio recordings, may be collected at this event and then later used and disclosed at the discretion of the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan and its parishes.”*

For images that prominently feature one or more individuals, express verbal consent from the individual(s) shall be obtained by the person capturing the image. The express verbal consent of one parent or guardian must be obtained for such images of individuals under the age of 12 years.

Written permission for use is required when the Archdiocese or a parish uses images in its social media and any other publications that come from an external source. [See Appendix A for a template form.]

### **3. Management of websites and social media accounts**

It is important that parish websites and social media accounts not be attached to a person. Parishes that have or propose to have a website or social media accounts must have a dedicated parish email account that gives priests and their delegates access to them. The email account and password will be known by the parish priest and his delegates, and the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese.

#### **a. Websites**

Parishes are encouraged to use open-source platforms for websites.

Parishes that use or plan to use websites shall ensure that the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese has the site URL and the name and contact information of the person responsible for its operation.

#### **b. Social media accounts**

The Archdiocese requires that all parishes who make use of social media accounts ensure that:

- the parish priest has given permission to set up the account in the name of the parish and has the necessary sign-in information for the account.
- the parish priest has authorized people to post to the account in the name of the parish. The parish priest may authorize as many people as he deems necessary for the maintenance of the account.
- the user name and password for the account are provided to the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese and that the Archdiocese is one of the Administrators named on the account
- minimum standards for acceptable use are provided to the person or people responsible for the posted content and to the Archdiocese
- the person or people responsible for the account monitor it on a regular (at least weekly) basis, to ensure the content meets minimum standards.

### **4. Safekeeping of account names and passwords**

The account names and passwords for parish email, websites and social media accounts are confidential and limited to the parish priest, the people he delegates to maintain the website and social media accounts, and the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese.

Every parish should have a hard copy of the account names and passwords which is stored in an accessible but private place in the parish office. The parish priest will choose the location and inform his delegates and the Communications Officer of the Archdiocese of it.

Accepted by the College of Consultors on 13 November 2012

Amended by the Curia on 07 January 2016

Amended by the College of Consultors on 25 October 2016

Amended by the College of Consultors on 23 January 2018

Amended by the College of Consultors on 15 June 2021

**PERMISSION TO USE PHOTOGRAPHS FORM**

Name			
Address			
Phone		email	

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant permission to

\_\_\_\_\_ [Name of Parish]

of \_\_\_\_\_ [Address of Parish]

to publish, copy, and reproduce all images from parish events and activities of which I am the legal copyright owner.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_