

St. Mary Parish, Delaware, OH Social Media Policy



Our parish, in coordination with the Catholic Diocese of Columbus, is committed to the protection and safety of all children. Our increased awareness and a willingness to take action are steps for each of us to be involved in our society, in the community, in the neighborhood, and in the family.

General Parish & Diocesan Guidelines:

When posting, commenting, or replying to internet sites, it is prohibited to use obscene, harassing, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links, and/or images which reflect, discredit, or cause embarrassment to the Catholic Church, Diocese of Columbus, or any person or group of individuals.

Posts, comments, and/or replies must never contradict the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is prohibited to divulge, without verifiable consent of a parent or guardian, any information that would jeopardize the safety or well-being of any person or group of individuals. This includes, but is not limited to, pictures of any person younger than the age of 18. Also prohibited is the posting of full names, home address, email address, telephone numbers or any information that would allow someone to identify or contact a person younger than the age of 18. Verifiable consent may take the form of a written permission from the parent or guardian. Record of consent must be retained on file until the person turns 18 years of age or the consent is revoked by the parent or guardian.

It is prohibited to disclose in, post, comment, or reply to information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Diocese of Columbus or St. Mary Parish. Recognition and respect of intellectual property should be maintained at all times. Care must be taken as to not infringe upon the exclusive rights of others, musical, literary and or artistic works. It is the responsibility of the individual to abide by all copyright laws of the United States of America.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with any of the guidelines and provisions outlined here will be grounds for disciplinary action. St. Mary Parish reserves the right to change this policy at any time and at its discretion. The interpretation and administration of this policy will be made by parish leadership, in light of changing circumstances and events.

St. Mary Policy

This policy encompasses any and all parish websites incorporating the **St Mary** name. The web presence is created for the sole purpose of ministry for the parish. These sites are owned, monitored and administered by St. Mary employees. Report unofficial sites that carry the parish or school logo to the parish IT Administrator or pastor.

- Prior to the development of a **social networking page**, written approval must be obtained from the Parish IT Administrator. Final approval must be given from the Pastor & Executive Team. The Parish IT Administrator must be informed of the existence of any Ministry Website and provided a password that enables the office to view the site.

So as to provide timely response and adequate management of the posts, comments, and replies there will be two adult non-related employees appointed to moderate the site.

Two-Deep Ministry

Abiding by “two-deep ministry” that governs all youth activities also applies to use of social media. Two-deep ministry means at least two Protecting God’s Children certified and parish-approved volunteers or employees must be present around minors at all times.

As it relates to social media, two-deep ministry means that there should be no private messages and no one-on one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messages, instant messaging (Google chats, etc.), or other similar messaging features or video communication (e.g. Skype, Google Hangouts, Facetime, etc.).

All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum (e.g. the public Facebook or Twitter page), or at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth should always include one or more authorized adults openly “copied” (included) on the message or message thread.

If a student/minor contacts you privately (i.e. emails you or sends a one-on-one message), always include their parent on the reply.

Photo Sharing

Photo sharing should be limited to those images that are directly associated with the purpose of the ministry, i.e. field trip photos, facility photos, etc. Photos of individuals or small groups of individuals should be uploaded or displayed only with verifiable consent.

Written or digital photo permission is required from the parents of all minors before any photo or video can be posted to these sites. Photo permission can be kept within each parish organization, but must also be kept with the IT Administrator and/or the safe environment coordinator. Photo permissions are updated yearly.

St Mary Non-Official Social Media Sites

If a group (e.g. sports team, Boy Scouts, etc.) would like to create a social media page for communication among adults of the group, they may do so. The group is to notify the parish IT Administrator that a page has been created. We encourage these accounts to be closed (i.e. not viewable by the public). The purpose of these accounts would be to communicate or share photos among members in a private, safe, members-only environment. If you would like to promote photos to the larger public, please send them to the parish IT Administrator, who will post them on behalf of an official social media account.

- When creating and using non-official social media sites, St. Mary Parish and School logos may not be used. When naming the group, do not make it look as if the page is an official St. Mary Parish and School page.
- If an adult wants to take video of minors (e.g. a coach making an instructional video recording athletes), permission must be granted from the parents of the children in the video (including the opposing team if applicable), and parents **must be made aware** of the purpose of the video.

BLOGS

A blog is a website where entries are written in chronological order and commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

Blogs are permitted as long as they are kept current and maintained on a regular basis. They are to be used as a means of sharing information (not opinions). The allowing of comments is permitted only if they are reviewed and approved by the moderator before they are posted. Comment moderation can be very time consuming and requires forethought by the individuals and their administrators impacted by this decision.

Podcast

A podcast is a digital media file, or a series of such files, that is distributed over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players, and personal computers. A podcast is a specific type of webcast which, like “radio,” can mean either the content itself or the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also termed podcasting.

- Podcasts are permitted when they are in compliance with the general guidelines established by the Diocese of Columbus.
- Volunteers at St Mary may not identify themselves on any manner of social media in ways that may appear to indicate employment. This includes sending out emails or communication that appear they come from St Mary Parish or School.

Note: Twitter – falls under a different category...It is designed as a means of communicating to a group of people quickly. A “tweet” does not facilitate nor expect a response. If parish personnel wishes to use twitter, they may only send messages that pertain to adults or currently registered students.

Diocesan link:

<https://columbuscatholic.org/protecting-gods-children>