



Archdiocese of St. Louis

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Archdiocese of St. Louis Social Media Policy and Best Practices

The following are the official guidelines for the use of social media in the Archdiocese of St. Louis. We expect all members of the Curia who participate in social media to adhere to and follow these guidelines when posting on a personal account or an official archdiocesan account in order to best enhance and protect personal and professional reputations.

Currently the Archdiocese of St. Louis maintains an official presence on Facebook (Archstl, Archbishop Carlson), Twitter (@archstl, @Abp_Carlson), Pinterest (Archstl), LinkedIn (Archstl), and YouTube (archstlmedia).

Any office or agency-maintained Facebook pages and/or Twitter accounts are considered to be official social media platforms for the Archdiocese of St. Louis and must follow the guidelines for official use. Offices and agencies are not to have their own YouTube, Vimeo or other video sharing-account, as all video projects must be coordinated through and approved by the Department of Marketing in the Office of Communications & Planning.

Both in personal and professional use of social media, members of the Curia need to follow the same behavioral guidelines that are outlined in the Christian Witness Statement- signed by all who serve in the Archdiocese of St. Louis- as social media is to serve as an extension of public life online. **Therefore, all who serve in the archdiocese will witness by their behavior, actions, and words, a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church in all social media engagement.**

Section 1: Policies for All Social Media Use, Including Personal

Use of Email Address: *For personal use*-Do not use your @archstl.org email address to establish an account on social media, *unless you are a priest (please see next point). To establish an account for your office or agency, use your office's group email address. For example, do not use SallyJones@archstl.org to establish your Communications Twitter account. Instead you would want to use communications@archstl.org. (For help setting up your accounts, please contact the Office of Communications and Planning)

Protect Confidential Information: Do not post confidential information regarding the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, details about our software, details of current or upcoming projects that are not yet public, financial information, and pending litigation. We must always be mindful of the privacy of others.

Work Hour Use: Social media should only be used to enhance your office or agency's ministry and is not to be used for personal use during work hours. As it is stated in the archdiocesan Electronic and Telephonic Communications section of the Employee Handbook, **"Employees should understand that they waive any expectation of privacy with respect to anything they create, store, send or receive in connection with their use of Archdiocesan electronic, and telephonic communication systems."**

Terms of Service: Obey the Terms of Service of any social media platform employed.

Section 2: Setting up Official Social Media Accounts

Approval and Support: In order to promote a collaborative effort across the Archdiocese with the Office of Communications and Planning, please contact the Office of Communications and Planning for assistance in creating a social media presence for your ministry. [The Office of Communications and Planning requires administrative access on all archdiocesan social media accounts.](#)

Have a Plan: Social media may not be appropriate for every archdiocesan office or agency. Before you begin, consider your messages, audience and goals. Ultimately the goals of archdiocesan social media should focus on catechesis and evangelization. Similar to your office or agency's presence on the archdiocesan website, be prepared to keep up to date with all content on social media before creating an account. The Office of Communications and Planning can assist and advise you in social media planning.

Add a Guidelines Disclaimer: All archdiocesan social media accounts must provide the following approved guidelines available as text or a link for protection of the archdiocese and its stakeholders: *Guidelines for posting comments on the Archdiocese of St. Louis* [\[name of your office or agency\]](#) [\[choose: Facebook page/Twitter Account\]](#):

We encourage you to ask questions and share news/opinions for other users on our page to read and engage in discussion about.

Please avoid, however, language that is obscene, vulgar, or sexual in nature. Avoid posting anything that is slanderous in nature toward any individual, group or organization. Do not make any threats toward any individual, group, or organization.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis reserves the right to remove any comments that it deems, in its sole discretion, to be abusive, obscene, defamatory and/or not in accordance with its Mission: "...we are called by our Lord Jesus Christ to be His Church and live His Gospel...by teaching and sharing our faith, serving others, and fostering unity in diversity..." (To read the full Mission Statement visit <http://archstl.org/archstl/page/mission-statement-archdiocese-st-louis>)

Section 3: Social Media Best Practices

Respect Other's Opinions: Healthy conversation regarding controversial issues is not discouraged on social media, but respect other's opinions by never making obscene comments or slanderous remarks. If someone else threatens or makes obscene remarks to you, it is probably best to not engage, no matter how much you would like to defend yourself or office or agency. It is our job as Catholics to share the

Gospel message of Jesus Christ, just be mindful of individuals who do not want to hear the Truth and are often too angry to accept it. Remember that it is always our responsibility to maintain a Christian response.

Be Transparent: Do not create a personal social media account with a pseudonym. Be honest in what you post. If you are embarrassed to take ownership of a comment on a social media site, it simply should not be posted.

Think Before You Post: Regardless of your security and/or privacy settings, privacy does not 100% exist in the world of social media. Once you post something you might regret, it could be “shared” by other users before you get the chance to delete it. Do not post anything that is contradictory of the mission of the Archdiocese of St. Louis or the Catechism of the Catholic Church. **Avoid even the appearance of impropriety** – in the end, both you and the Archdiocese of St. Louis can and will be judged on what you post.

Strive for Accuracy: Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. This is especially important if you are posting anything on behalf of your office or agency.

OFFICES AND AGENCIES MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO SUIT THEIR SPECIFIC MINISTRY NEEDS AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION PRIOR TO ANY ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA. EACH RESPECTIVE MINISTRY IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR ENFORCING THESE CORRESPONDING POLICIES AMONG THEIR STAFF.