

RELEVANT TO	All Chancery, Parish and CatholicCare employees and volunteers
INTRODUCED	22/11/2013
REVIEW DATE/S	22/06/2014
APPROVED BY	Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle Signed: 
RELATED POLICIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Acceptable Use Policy (2009)</li> <li>• Child Protection Reporting Policy (2012)</li> <li>• Code of Conduct Policy (2009)</li> <li>• Media Policy (2009)</li> <li>• Confidentiality Agreement</li> <li>• Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy (2012)</li> <li>• Privacy Policy (2009)</li> </ul>
SPONSOR	Communications Office

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules and direction on the acceptable and unacceptable use of social media by staff employed by the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle, including CatholicCare (the "Diocese").

The use of social media in this Policy relates to both official engagement on behalf of the Diocese (where authorised) and also the use of personal social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter). The use of personal social networking can also include conduct outside of work hours, on personally-owned ICT equipment.

### Definition of social media

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Social media uses mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user-generated content.

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_media))

Social Media may include (*although is not limited to*):

- social networking sites (eg Facebook, Google+, Myspace, LinkedIn)
- social bookmarking sites (e.g. Pinterest, Digg, Reddit)
- video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Flickr, Youtube)
- blogs, including corporate blogs and personal blogs
- comment and discussion sections (e.g. 'Newcastle Herald, SMH comments', Disqus)
- social micro-blogging (eg Twitter)
- wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)
- forums, discussion boards and groups (eg Google groups, Whirlpool)
- vod and podcasting
- online multiplayer gaming or social platforms (eg World of Warcraft, Second Life)

## 2. Guidance

- **Online or offline, respect for human dignity rules.** Behaviour online should reflect the standard of appropriate behaviour which is expected in all person-to-person interaction ("**Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia**", 2009).
- Behaviour and content published on social media networks must always observe other relevant Diocesan policies, in particular the Child Protection protocols.
- A clear distinction should be maintained between personal and professional communication in the social networking environment, particularly when making (or responding to) "friend" requests.
- Those who engage in official Diocesan social networking activities must take great care to represent the teachings of the Catholic Church and the mission of the Diocese of Maitland Newcastle.
- Appropriate human resources must be allocated to **official** social networking activities. This ensures successful moderation, as well as a vibrant and effective presence in the social networking world ("**Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia**", 2009).

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle Chancery, Parishes and CatholicCare including employees, volunteers, religious and contractors.

This policy applies to conduct during work hours and also conduct outside of working hours, where the communication can be connected to, or reflect on, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

## 4. Policy

### Monitoring

The Diocese's ICT and electronic communications are to be used primarily for business purposes. You are responsible for using them in an appropriate, professional and lawful manner. For more information, please see the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (June 2009).

All content on the Diocese's ICT will be treated as business related and may be monitored. From time to time, the content and use of ICT may be examined by the Diocese or by a third party on the Diocese's behalf.

You should not expect that any content transmitted or stored on the Diocese's ICT will be private. This includes electronic communications which are sent to you or by you, both internal and external to the organisation. Even where content is later deleted, it can often be recalled.

Additionally, the Diocese reserves the right to view the public-facing social media profile of any employee, including publicly accessible Facebook pages, blogs, websites or Twitter feeds.

If the Diocese is made aware of content published by an employee that violates this policy, and that content is visible to members of the public via social network relationships (ie. "friends"), the Diocese may wish to investigate this breach, even if the content is not completely open to the general public. Accordingly, care should be taken with both the content published to "friends", and also the selection of "friends" within your social network – particularly co-workers and those who may have a relationship with the organisation.

### **Official use of social media**

Employees must not engage in online social media on behalf of the organisation unless they have been explicitly authorised by the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Employees who have been authorised by the Diocese to use online social media as part of their duties must conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of behaviour as set out in the organisation's policies.

In particular, employees engaging in social media on behalf of the Diocese must:

- Never damage, or potentially damage the Diocese's interests, good name, or reputation.
- Only publish photos or video of people once permission has been sought to use the images.
- Take care to moderate any comments from other users which are rude, or disrespectful.
- Never violate any confidentiality of clients, parishioners or students.

### **Personal use of social media**

When accessing online social media for personal use (either using Diocesan ICT resources or personal ICT equipment; outside of, or during, working hours), you should exercise all care and discretion to ensure the content that is contributed is both appropriate and private. This applies particularly to any interaction with other personnel of the Diocese outside of working hours. Conduct that is not appropriate in the workplace will also be inappropriate when using online social media.

### **Unacceptable Conduct**

Conduct by an employee is considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the Diocese where it:

- is likely to cause damage to the relationship between the employer and employee;
- damages, or has the potential to damage the interests of the Diocese; good name or reputation;
- is incompatible with your duty as an employee;

- violates, or has the potential to violate, the confidentiality of clients (for CatholicCare) or parishioners (for Clergy/Diocesan employees).

For CatholicCare, private social media accounts should not be used to communicate with clients and official public pages are not an appropriate forum for direct counselling. Where you access online social media for personal use, you must ensure you restrict access to clients. Care should always be taken to maintain the confidentiality of clients, either explicitly via published content and comments, or implicitly, via the mere presence of a *relationship to that person*.

**NOTE** – Whilst it is inappropriate to offer counselling via social media networks, if a person is in danger or at risk, social media can be used to pass on contact details for CatholicCare and the person urged to seek assistance in this manner. Good judgement and discretion is encouraged, and these incidents will be handled on a “case-by-case” basis.

It is essential that you understand that comments you make via social media platforms can be made as public as if you were making the same comments to the media, or at a public forum.

You are reminded that content published using online social media is not, or may not remain private, and may be publicly accessible now, or become so in the future.

Please be aware that your conduct and the content you publish or share online, including comments, may be perceived in a different manner to that which you intended, and may cause hurt or embarrassment to others. Such conduct may come to the attention of the Diocese.

When accessing social media via the Diocesan Internet, intranet and extranet systems, you must do so in accordance with the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, which requires you to use these resources ‘reasonably’, in a manner that does not interfere with your work, and is not inappropriate or excessive. It is not acceptable to spend hours using social media that is not related to your work.

Diocesan resources should never be used to access or post any material that is fraudulent, harassing, threatening, bullying, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, racist, sexist, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful.

## **General**

The terms and recommended conduct described in this Policy are not intended to be exhaustive, nor do they anticipate every possible use of the Diocese’s ICT resources or instance of electronic communications. You should act with caution and take into account the underlying principles intended by this Policy. If you feel unsure of the appropriate action relating to use of social networking, you should speak to your Manager.

## **5. Interaction with other policies**

It is expected that this Policy is read and understood in conjunction with the existing policies and procedures of the Diocese. In particular, it is expected that you understand and regularly review the following policies:

- Child Protection Reporting Policy (2012)
- Code of Conduct Policy (2009)
- Confidentiality Agreement

- Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Policy (2012)
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy (2009)
- Grievance and Complaints Handling Policy (2009)
- Privacy Policy (2009)
- Media Policy (2009)

## 6. Breach of Policy

Breaching of this Policy by an employee can result in, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Disciplinary action
- Dismissal
- Notification to an external agency
- Criminal charges

Contractors who engage in unacceptable behaviour may have their contract or engagement with the Diocese terminated or not renewed.

Breaches of this policy should be reported to an immediate supervisor / manager. Reports may then be escalated using the Escalation Process if necessary.

All employees are responsible for knowing and understanding the policy.

Management is responsible for making sure that all staff and supervisors understand that any breach of policy or complaints of inappropriate use of Social Media will be taken seriously and handled in accordance with the Counselling and Disciplinary Guide.

Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with this policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct (under the Diocesan Counseling and Disciplinary Guide), sexual harassment, discrimination, or some other contravention of the law.

Those who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement. Any publication on social media that identifies and defames, bullies or harasses a client, a co-worker or the diocese can be used in disciplinary proceedings.

## 7. References

- 'Social Networking Protocol for the Catholic Church in Australia' published by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, December 2009.
- Integrity in the Service of the Church document.
- <http://www.catholic.org.au/>

## Appendix A: Tips on Discretion – Personal Use of Social Media

The Diocese recognises that you may wish to use social media in your personal life. This policy does not intend to discourage nor unduly limit your personal expression or online activities.

- Post only what you are happy for the world to see. Consider whether a particular posting could put your effectiveness as an employee in jeopardy.
- Most social networks offer privacy and security controls. Use these settings to maintain control of security, privacy and access to your personal social networking pages.
- On Facebook, your comments are only as private as the post you are commenting *on*. Although your own profile may be locked down and private, a post on another person's page and especially a comment on another users' post may be visible to a large group of unknown people.
- Do not write comments deemed to be defamatory, obscene or libellous.
- Talk to your friends about the need for discretion when they post images or information about you. Once material is posted and identifiable, it is impossible to control its rapid sharing. Posts, images, messages and tweets can maintain a life outside of social media even after the initial post has been deleted. This can often happen via e-mails, re-postings, or even making their way into mainstream media.
- It is advisable to research the privacy settings of social networks before you undertake to use them. There are a number of resources available online explaining many of the concepts and security settings.