

**Working Safely with Children & Young People  
Use of Information Technology  
Guidelines for Archdiocese of Dublin 2015**

Safeguarding children and young people with the ever increasing use of information technology (IT) is essential practice. While there are many benefits to the uses of information technology children and young people can be targeted and exposed to uncomfortable or abusive situations. Policy and guidance is required to protect children from harm. Parental consent must always be obtained prior to engaging in any activity and for the use of IT equipment. Guidelines must always be clear as to the reason and purpose of the use of a particular form of technology.

**1.1 Mobile Phones**

Many children and young people have access to mobile phones. Given that mobile phone devices can perform a myriad of tasks it is the responsibility of the event organiser to determine and explain the level of mobile phone usage deemed appropriate when working with children and young people.

- When participating in groups with children ensure that you have their parent's telephone contact details and that all arrangements are made with parents
- Do not share your personal mobile phone number with children and young people
- Avoid communicating directly via text or talk with children under 16 years old
- In emergency circumstances where this is unavoidable follow this up with a telephone call to their parents to make them aware of the content.
- Text messages should never contain personal information about a child or young person
- Never contact a child or young person on their mobile phone via text or talk before 9am or after 8pm

**1.2.1 Email**

- Individual email communication with young people under 16 years old is not permissible
- Individual email communication with young people aged 16 and 17 years old is only permissible with prior written consent from the young person and their parents
- Parents should be included in these emails
- Email communication should be made using the parish email account only
- Personal email addresses should never be exchanged with children and young people

### 1.2.2 Bundled Text and E-mail messaging

Using bundled text and e-mail messaging can minimise risks associated with this form of communication.

- Written consent must be obtained from the young person and their parents prior to using this method of communication
- The contact details for young people must not be shared
- The contact numbers for the identified young people should only be used for information sharing about church activities
- The young people's contact details must be stored in a secure cabinet or a password protected computer system
- All text and email messages must be sent via a bundle to a group of young people
- The text or email messaging system should NEVER be used to send a text or email to an individual
- All texts or email messages must clearly define who has sent the message
- This system should be one way with no opportunity of response from the young people receiving the messages
- The texts and emails sent from this service must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language
- All of the text and email messages sent must include an opportunity for the young people to "unsubscribe" from receiving further text and email messages

### 1.3 Photography/ Digital Cameras

- Photographs of children and young people on any device are never permitted without prior signed parental consent
- Children and young people's consent should also be sought giving due consideration to their age and stage of development
- Photographs should only be taken by authorised personnel with a suitable reason with prearranged consent from parents and children
- When using a photographer ensure that they have completed Garda Vetting
- Ensure the photographer wears identification at all times
- Do not allow the photographer unsupervised access to the children and young people
- Children and young people must not be identified in photographs
- Written permission must be sought from children, young people and their parents if consented photographs are to be published in any forum i.e. print or online
- Children must be fully clothed in images
- Avoid images which depict children breaking rules or behaving in a dangerous fashion
- Avoid photographing children and young people in vulnerable situations
- If parents and parishioners are intending to photograph an organised event ensure that they are told what is allowed
- Any photography concerns must be reported to the event organiser and the child safeguarding representative

## **First Communion & Confirmation Ceremonies**

There should be no taking of photographs during First Communion Masses or during Confirmation Masses. This practice has been welcomed both as a Child Safeguarding measure and to enhance the dignity and beauty of the Ceremony. There is always ample time for taking photographs before and after the ceremonies.

### **1.4 Internet Usage/Websites**

- Avoid participating in surfing the internet with children and young people with whom you are working if it is not a direct requirement for the nominated activity
- If internet usage is available as part of an activity seek prior expert consultation to ensure that safety requirements are met
- Have a plan for responding to circumstances where unsuitable material is accessed
- Seek expert advice when considering setting up a website
- Using a computer to access images of child abuse is a crime and will be reported to an Garda Síochána
- Any use of information technology to access sites that are pornographic or illegal when working with children and young people is strictly prohibited

### **1.5 Social Media**

The minimum age to join social networking sites is usually 13 years old. NSPCC (2014) research discovered that 7 in 10 12 to 15 year olds who go online have a social network profile; 1 in 5 8 to 11 year olds who go online have a social network profile; 1 in 20 5 to 7 year olds who go online have a social network profile.

- Never befriend children and young people with whom you are working on social media sites This includes Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube (this list is not exhaustive)
- If you use social media remember to respect the privacy of others
- Consider the implications of any posts
- Report any inappropriate material that you come across to an Garda Síochána

### **1.6 Webcams and CCTV**

Please see Guidelines for Web Broadcasting Document from the Communications Department attached.

**Child Safeguarding & Protection Service 2015**

## Guidelines for web broadcasting in churches

### Guidelines for Parishes Broadcasting on the Internet

*Parishes should strive to get the best possible quote for installation and streaming costs from your webcam service provider. This should be reviewed by your parish on a regular basis. Competition between suppliers has seen a significant decrease in costs recently. Consider and consult on whether a web streaming service of any particular benefit to your parishioners or could they access Mass online from another Dublin or Irish church that already provides this service free.*

### **Web Broadcasting Guidelines**

Cameras should be installed with due care and respect to church buildings. They should not be permanent fixtures; they should be easily removable without any impact on the building.

Cameras should **only** be switched on for the duration of Mass or other Liturgy and switched off at the end. There should be no live streaming of Churches when there is no Mass or Liturgy taking place.

There are a number of Data Protection issues that must be met in relation to broadcasting on the internet.

Recording people via a web camera and the subsequent displaying of such images over the internet is regarded as the processing of personal data and one of the key provisions regarding the processing of such data is that it must be done with the consent or knowledge of the individuals concerned.

Camera shots (images) of the congregation should be wide shots – minimising the possibility of easily identifying individuals with close up images.

Signs should be placed at a range of entrances to the church and in other prominent locations informing people that web cameras are in operation.

Parish workers and members of the clergy should sign forms consenting to their image being used for web broadcasting the course of their regular duties. Copies of consent forms should be kept on parish records.

With regard to altar servers and others taking part in Liturgies (eg choirs, musicians, Ministers of the Word and of Holy Communion) it is advised that consent is also obtained. In the case of children, consent from given by parents/guardians is required.