



Fact sheet: Use of technology and social media to communicate with children

Be respectful, transparent and responsible when using technology to communicate with children.

Children use technology to communication in various ways, including by phone, email and social media. Social media includes things like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Bebo, Myspace and Xt3.

The following are some "**do**"s and "**don't**"s for communicating with children through technology and social media:

Do:

- Avoid communicating on an individual (one on one) basis with any child **unless** you have the written consent of that child's parent or guardian
- Be respectful, polite, and considerate
- Communicate in a way that is consistent with your role at the parish or agency
- Identify yourself in your communication and use your own name
- Ensure communication channels with children are able to be supervised by their parents
- Respect the privacy of others and ensure that no information is communicated or published that should not be made public

Notify inappropriate behaviour

You should immediately contact your Parish Priest (or administrator), agency head or the Vicar General if:

- any inappropriate comments or images are directed to you by child;
- you become aware of inappropriate comments or images being exchanged between children;
- you become aware that another employee, volunteer or religious appointee has broken a rule contained in this fact sheet; or
- you become aware of any conduct via social media that is reportable under **Flowchart: Reporting child protection concerns**. reportable to the NSW Police, NSW Ombudsman or the Department of Family and Community Services (**FaCS**).

Don't:

- Invite or accept invitations to connect from children you have met through the Archdiocese on your personal social media site, eg as friends on your Facebook profile
- Interact with children on your personal social media site in any way
- Communicate with a child on a one-on-one basis by phone (including mobile phone and text messages) or email, unless the Parish Priest (or administrator) or agency head has obtained the child's parent's **written consent**
- Use derogatory terms or foul language
- Communicate in a way that undermines your role at or the parish or agency
- Hide your identity or use a false identity in communications with children
- Use inappropriate language and images, eg material that is harassing, defamatory, bullying, threatening, sexually explicit, obscene, profane, illegal or otherwise offensive
- Send and receive images of a particular child or children in individual (one on one) communications with a child **even if** there is written consent from that child's parent or guardian to communicate with them