



Fact Sheet: Use of Technology and Social Media to Communicate with Children and Adults at Risk

Be respectful, transparent and responsible when using technology to communicate with Children and Adults at Risk.

Children and Adults use technology to communicate in various ways, including by phone, email and social media. Social media includes things like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Discord, Myspace, Bebo, Xt3, Skype, Kik, Tik Tok, and video-online gaming. Refer to the **Fact Sheet: Cyberbullying**.

The following are general “**do**”s and “**don’t**”s for communicating with Children and/or Adults at Risk through technology and social media:

Do:

- Ensure communications with Children and/or Adults at Risk are via face-to-face discussions, group communications and other means which are open and transparent
- 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
- Respect the privacy of others and ensure that no information is communicated or published that should not be made public
- Limiting communications to working hours (e.g. 9 am to 5 pm)
- Have more than one administrator who is over the age of 18 years for social media accounts/platforms

Notify inappropriate behaviour

You should immediately contact your Parish Priest, Agency Head or the Safeguarding Office if:

- any inappropriate comments or images are directed to you by a Child or Adult
- you become aware of inappropriate comments or images, or any Cyber-Bullying Material or Intimate Images being exchanged between Children, or between a Child/Adult and an Employee, Volunteer, member of Clergy or Religious Appointee
- you become aware of any Cyber-Bullying Material or Intimate Images on any Diocesan social media platforms
- you become aware that another Employee, Volunteer, member of Clergy or Religious Appointee has not adhered to a direction contained in this fact sheet
- you become aware of any conduct via technology or social media that could be notified to the eSafety Commissioner or reportable to the NSW Police, NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian, or the Department of Communities and Justice

Don’t:

- Communicate on an individual (one-on-one) basis via technology or social media (including mobile phone, text messages or email) with any Child **unless** you have obtained the **written consent** of that Child’s parent or guardian and the parent or guardian are included in the communication
- Invite or accept invitations to connect from Children you have met through the Diocese on your personal social media site, e.g. as friends on your Facebook profile
- Participate in any one-on-one interaction or communication with Children on your personal social media site
- Use derogatory terms or foul language towards a Child or Adult
- 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 and/or Adults at Risk
- Send, share, post or link any Cyber-Bullying Material targeted at or Intimate Images of a Child and/or Adult at Risk
- Use inappropriate language and images, e.g. 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.