



## **Guidelines for the Use of Websites and Social Media**

For All Personnel and Volunteers at  
St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church Campuses

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## **I. Purpose and Application**

These guidelines are designed to aid all campus entities, programs, ministries, and services at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church (St. Raphael) in ensuring that personnel and volunteers adhere to appropriate usage, boundaries, and best practices related to, and to define specific standards of conduct for the use of, websites and social media services.

These guidelines apply to all digital (online or mobile-based) tools for sharing content and discussing information, whether controlled by St. Raphael or hosted on other platforms (such as Facebook), on which members of St. Raphael parish campus entities, programs, ministries, or services engage in St. Raphael-sponsored or led activities. Because social media is a constantly evolving area, these guidelines apply to all current and future social media platforms whether or not they are currently in use by St. Raphael parish campus entities, programs, ministries, or services or mentioned in these guidelines.

These guidelines are in compliance with and do not contradict the contents of the Diocese of Raleigh *Guidelines for the Use of Websites and Social Media*. Those guidelines are available at: <https://dioceseofraleigh.org/communications-office/social-media-guidelines>.

## **II. Official St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, Ministry, and Service Websites, Social Media Accounts and Groups**

### **A. Establishing a St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, Ministry, and Service Website, Social Media Account or Group**

A website or social media account or group that will be associated with any St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service, through which content will be published on behalf of any St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service, or that uses the St. Raphael name, acronym, or brand mark in titling or other elements is considered St. Raphael-sponsored and shall not be established without the written approval of the Pastor.

Prior to receiving this approval, it is incumbent on the parish campus entity, program, ministry, or service leadership to provide an opportunity for the parish Communications Director to evaluate the plans for the website or social media account or group. Basic considerations include alignment with parish vision and priorities; purpose and goals; media format and its particular strengths; target audience(s); site development, oversight, and maintenance plans; expected posting/updating frequency; coordination across all parish campus entity, program, ministry, and service digital and print communications structures; and use of St. Raphael name, acronym, and/or brand mark for branding or titling pages, blogs, or other social media elements.

St. Raphael parish entity, program, ministry, and service websites and social media sites and groups are not intended for the use of children under the age of 13. All users should be familiar with the

Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act, federal legislation that oversees how organizations interact online with children under age 13.

All uses of St. Raphael church, ministry, or service name, acronym, or brand mark on websites and social media accounts or groups in existence at the time of adoption of these guidelines are not grandfathered and should be authorized pursuant to these guidelines. Permission to use the name or logo may be revoked at any time in the sole discretion of the Pastor. These guidelines, however, fully intend to preserve free expression. It should not, for example, be interpreted to limit the ability of members of the St. Raphael community from using the name of St. Raphael to identify themselves in profiles, discuss matters relating to St. Raphael, or other similar uses.

## **B. St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, Ministry, and Service Account Management**

A St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service must ensure that it establishes and maintains control over any website or social media account or group associated with that entity, program, ministry, or service. Additionally, with respect to any website associated with a St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service, St. Raphael must be the registered owner of the domain. *Note:* In some cases, it may not be possible to obtain ownership over a website, such as a St. Raphael campus entity’s, program’s, ministry’s, or service’s Facebook page because some social media organizations will insist on retaining ownership rights.

The Pastor may choose to delegate in writing the role of “Account Manager” for a website or social media account to a person who will manage and monitor day-to-day operations, including comment moderation where appropriate. To be considered an Account Manager, this individual must be a level C personnel in the Diocese of Raleigh. Whenever practical this person should be an employee or clergy.

Account Managers are responsible for maintaining a strong social media and/or website presence that reflects the parish’s vision and for the content posted on the accounts and websites that they manage.

Only the Pastor, Communications Director, appropriate information technology personnel, and approved Account Managers may have Administrative Access to a St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service website or social media account or access to Administrative Access login credentials. The Communications Director must retain Administrative Access to all St. Raphael campus entity’s, program’s, ministry’s and service’s websites and social media accounts. The Communications Director must ensure that, acting alone or through information technology personnel, they can terminate the Administrative Access of any designated Account Manager. The Communications Director, information technology personnel, and Account Managers must ensure that login credentials are secured against unauthorized access, such as by storing them in an encrypted file.

Any email address used as a login credential to obtain Administrative Access to a St. Raphael entity, program, ministry, or service website or social media account should be generated through a corporately-owned domain that is controlled by the parish. For instance, the email address should not be a Gmail or Yahoo email address—rather, it should be through an @saintraphael.org email address.

For social media accounts, it is preferred that a tool such as Hootsuite or Tweetdeck be utilized by Account Managers in order to avoid sharing the account’s primary login credentials with the Account Manager. This makes the granting and terminating of Administrative Access rights a smooth process whenever it is necessary.

The Communications Director reserves the right to **disable or temporarily un-publish St. Raphael parish entity, program, ministry, and service social media accounts that are dormant (no posts, no activity) for more than SIX (6) months**, as such stagnancy reflects poorly on the parish.

### **C. Standards for St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, Ministry, and Service Websites and Social Media Accounts and Groups**

Personnel and volunteers authorized to use any of the St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service social media or website accounts, are effectively acting as a spokesperson for the parish and must conduct themselves accordingly.

Account Managers may not use St. Raphael parish campus entity, program, ministry, or service websites or social media accounts or groups for personal gain or benefit, for the benefit or gain of other individuals or outside organizations, or in a way that compromises the security and integrity of the parish, information, or software.

The *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Diocese of Raleigh* applies to activity on Diocesan entity websites and social media accounts and groups. All content published on behalf of a St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service must be consistent with the teachings and tenets of the Roman Catholic Church, for which the Bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh has responsibility and authority, and must not otherwise be inappropriate, create a risk of reputational harm to the Diocese or any Diocesan entity, or create legal exposure for the Diocese or any Diocesan entity. Examples of Diocesan entity-published content that would be prohibited under this standard include, but are not limited to, content that would reasonably be considered dishonest, derogatory, sexually suggestive, sexually explicit, defamatory, fraudulent, degrading, malicious, disrespectful, or threatening. Personnel and volunteers must maintain an appropriate professional demeanor when communicating on or through a St. Raphael entity, program, ministry, or service website or social media account.

Account Managers must verify information and fully comply with copyright law when posting and

uploading copyrighted materials. Any posting of materials to St. Raphael websites and social media must be limited to materials which are in the public domain, copyrighted materials owned by the party seeking to post the information, or copyrighted materials where the copyright owner has granted permission in writing to St. Raphael for use of the material.

Photos of minors must always have the written permission of parents/guardians and should never include names or other personal information about the individual. Parish campus entity, program, ministry, and service leaders are responsible for obtaining and maintaining these consent forms.

Account Managers are responsible for adequately monitoring and responding to content on St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, and service websites and social media accounts and groups. Conflicts over posted content that are not resolved at the parish level will be referred to the Diocese of Raleigh Communication Department for resolution by the parish Communications Director.

#### **D. Commenting Policy and Disclaimer for St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, and Ministry Websites and Social Media Accounts and Groups**

Every St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, and service website or social media account that offers the ability to “comment” should: 1) allow comments only with prior approval of the Account Manager or 2) be frequently checked to ensure that all comments are appropriate and in keeping with the standards for Diocese websites and social media accounts set forth in Section II C above, including the teachings and tenets of the Catholic Church.

Additionally, whenever commenting is available, the parish Commenting Policy must be clearly visible, if possible. Displaying the policy, or the full policy, may not always be possible. In cases where it is possible to post a Commenting Policy, here is what should be used:

Readers and patrons of this site are welcome to comment. Discussion is encouraged, but proper etiquette must be in place. Obscenities, spam, bashing, bullying, verbal abuse, insults, link solicitations, repetitive or fraudulent comments, and comments irrelevant to the post under which they are written will be immediately removed. It may be decided that comments will require approval prior to publication.

St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, and service websites should clearly display a disclaimer that communicates, “Users of this website should have no expectation of privacy.”

Occasionally Account Managers may encounter an individual or organization that is engaging with a parish campus entity, program, ministry, or service in a disrespectful manner. Account Managers should follow the Commenting Policy above to determine if the comments warrant a response. Account Managers have the ability to hide and delete posts or block or ban users. It is preferred that comments are hidden before they are deleted or blocking a user is considered. Account

Managers who feel that a person or organization should be banned or blocked should contact the parish Communications Director before doing so.

### **E. Transparency of St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, and Ministry Websites and Social Media Accounts and Groups**

Websites and social media accounts and groups should clearly display the contact information of the Account Manager. St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, and service websites and social media accounts and groups should declare that they are an “Official” website or account of the St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service.

Any website or social media account or group operating under the guise of a St. Raphael campus entity, program ministry, or service without proper approval and that refuses to remove the page/account/group, should be reported to the Diocesan Director of Communications immediately.

### **III. Proper Relationships and Online Communication**

Parish personnel and volunteers must ensure that their use of web pages and social media accounts maintains a proper professional relationship, especially with minors, and does not create or give the appearance of an inappropriate relationship.

Appropriate boundaries must be maintained between adults and minors at all times. Excessive familiarity of a purely social relationship between adults and minors is not appropriate. Being “friendly” and being “friends” with children are very different, and should not be confused by St. Raphael entity personnel or adult volunteers. As such, personnel and volunteers should not communicate one-on-one with minors through personal websites or social media accounts.

Parents of children under the age of 18 should be made aware of how websites and social media are being used and be told how to access the sites. No St. Raphael campus entity, program, or ministry website or social media account may knowingly link to a minor’s website or social media account. If it is learned after the fact that this has inadvertently happened, the link or post must be removed immediately upon learning of the association.

St. Raphael personnel who are also ministry or service leaders must consider whether it is appropriate to be a friend on a social networking page of a parent, student, parishioner, or other individual who interacts with them only through this leadership role.

### **IV. Guidelines for Personal Websites and Social Media Accounts**

These guidelines (Section IV) apply to personal websites, social media accounts, and online content (i.e., websites, social media accounts, and content owned, managed, and/or created by St.

Raphael entity, program, ministry, and service personnel and volunteers other than on behalf of a St. Raphael entity, program, ministry, or service). Personnel and volunteers are solely responsible for content they post online, including, but not limited to, Facebook posts, comments on blog posts, tweets, and Facebook or Instagram “likes” (which may suggest approval of a post or other related content). Before creating online content, St. Raphael entity, program, ministry, and service personnel and volunteers should consider the risks and rewards that are involved. They should keep in mind that any conduct, including failure to adhere to these guidelines, that adversely affects their job performance, the job performance of other personnel or volunteers, or otherwise adversely affects other persons, the legitimate interests of St. Raphael Catholic Church, the Diocese of Raleigh, or any Diocesan entity, may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and/or their ability to serve as a volunteer.

Personal online postings should be in line with Catholic values, should not offend the faith, morals, and teachings of the Catholic Church, and should not be otherwise inappropriate. Efforts to adhere to this standard should include the following:

- Personnel and volunteers should not post discriminatory remarks, harassment, or threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct.
- Personnel and volunteers should always be fair and courteous to others, including clergy, personnel, volunteers, parishioners, and other persons associated with the Catholic Church. Personnel should keep in mind that they are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with their co-workers, rather than by posting complaints online. If personnel decide to post online content, they should avoid posting anything that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, or that disparages clergy, personnel, volunteers, parishioners, or other persons associated with the Catholic Church. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone’s reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment.
- Personnel and volunteers should not post sensitive or confidential information obtained in connection with their employment or volunteer status, such as banking information, Social Security numbers, and, in most cases, contact information.
- Personnel and volunteers should be honest and accurate when posting content online.
- Personnel and volunteers should never represent themselves as a spokesperson for St. Raphael Catholic Church, the Diocese of Raleigh, or another Diocesan entity. If they post content related to their position with St. Raphael or a Diocesan entity, they should make clear that their views do not represent those of St. Raphael, the Diocese of Raleigh, or any Diocesan entity, such as by including a disclaimer such as “Posts are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of St. Raphael Catholic Church or the Diocese of Raleigh or [the relevant Diocese Entity, such as a school if appropriate].” Such a disclaimer does not exempt personnel and volunteers from accountability and

responsibility for what they communicate.

Furthermore, all personal websites must be in accord with all Diocese of Raleigh policies and *Code of Conduct for Church Personnel of the Diocese of Raleigh*.

Despite privacy setting options, all content posted or communicated via any website or social media account will be treated as though it is universally or publicly available.

## **V. Compliance**

Any use of St. Raphael parish campus entity, program, ministry, and service websites and social media that does not comply with this policy should be brought to the attention of the parish Communications Director.

## **VI. Updates**

**This policy may be updated and modified at any time. The most current policy will always be posted on the St. Raphael parish website ([www.saintraphael.org](http://www.saintraphael.org)).**

## **VII. Definitions**

The term “**Administrative Access**” shall mean access to website management tools or a social media account/profile that allows a person to modify, create, delete, or publish Content.

The term “**Content**” shall mean any digital information that communicates a message, including but not limited to text, photos, audio files, and video files.

The term “**St. Raphael Campus Entity, Program, and Ministry**” shall mean any parish or school department, ministry, outreach, Parish, school, agency, committee, task force, advisory board, or institution within the Diocese of Raleigh.

The terms “**St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry and/or service Website**,” “**St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, and/or service social Media Account or Group**,” and “**St. Raphael Campus Entity. Program, Ministry, and/or Service Website [and/or] Social Media Account or Group**” shall mean a Website and/or Social Media Account or Group—depending on the context—that is owned or managed by or on behalf of a St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service. This term does not include personal websites or social media accounts or groups.

The term “**Minor**” shall mean any person under the age of eighteen, or over the age of 18 but still enrolled in high school.

The term “**Personnel**” shall mean the bishop, priests, deacons, seminarians, non-ordained religious, lay employees, and lay volunteers who are involved in work for St. Raphael Catholic Church, the Diocese of Raleigh, its parishes and agencies and who represent the Church by

virtue of office, designated position, employment or contract.

The term “**Personal**” shall mean, with respect to any website, social media account or group, or online content, the website, social media account or group, or content of an individual or external group that is not owned, managed, or published by or on behalf of the Diocese of Raleigh or a St. Raphael Catholic Church campus entity, program, ministry, or service. This term does not include St. Raphael campus entity, program, ministry, or service websites or social media accounts or groups.

The term “**Social Media**” shall mean an account or group associated with a social media service including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Google +, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Vine, YouTube, Soundcloud, etc.

The term “**Website**” shall mean any web presence, including any website that displays social media content or features.