

Electronic Communication and Technology Policy

Policy Statement

Electronic communication and the use of technology within the Church and its ministry is an effective means of evangelization. Clergy, employees and volunteers who minister on behalf of the Eparchy of Edmonton and its parishes must use electronic communication and technology, including, but not limited to, organizational websites, blogs, email, text messages, social networking accounts, pages, and other platforms, in a manner that upholds Christian values and behaviour.

Intent of Policy

To provide clear standards for the use of electronic communication, technology and social media platforms by clergy, employees and volunteers as it pertains to their ministry within the Church.

Procedure

General Expectations

1. All clergy, employees and volunteers will confirm in writing their adherence to this Electronic Communication and Technology Policy by signing the Covenant of Care.
2. Clergy, employees and volunteers assume the full burden of responsibility for adherence to the Electronic Communication and Technology Policy.

Administration

3. **Parish and eparchial websites, blogs and social media accounts:**
 - a) must be administered through the parish or eparchy
 - b) must be regularly monitored by the pastor or eparchial director and/or administrators
 - c) must be used exclusively for Church ministry
 - d) must reflect the teachings of the Ukrainian Catholic Church
 - e) must be protected by a password, known and held in confidence by at least two qualified adults who are appointed as administrators by the pastor or eparchial director, as well as the pastor or eparchial director
 - f) must honour copyright and license agreements - music, videos and photos may only be used with permission of the original source.
 - g) must not be used for conducting outside/personal business
 - h) must not be linked to a personal account

- i) must not be used for socializing, counseling minors or vulnerable persons, prolonged conversations or any interactions of a personal nature.
- j) must not be of a political nature that supports or opposes a candidate or political party in Canada or abroad. Such material is not permitted on any parish or eparchial website, blog, or social media account.

4. Electronic communication

- a) Parish and eparchial staff involved in ministry must use a parish or eparchial based email account.
- b) Clergy, employees, and volunteers must observe the following when using a computer, the internet, any electronic device, or email accounts provided by the Church:
 - i. Respect the privacy of others
 - ii. Safeguard user IDs and passwords
 - iii. Scan for viruses when downloading files from the internet
 - iv. Never attempt to bypass, block, or remove filtering software
 - v. Protect confidential information from unauthorized use or disclosure
 - vi. Never post, share or email material that is inappropriate to their ministry
 - vii. Never use these devices, accounts or the internet for inappropriate/illegal purposes
- c) Clergy, employees and volunteers who use their personal cell phones and other devices and/or accounts for electronic communication for their work in the Church must do so in a manner that is befitting their professional role in ministry.

5. Oversight

- a) The Eparchy reserves the right to review, monitor, track and analyze (with or without notice) electronic communications of clergy, employees, and volunteers which have been generated by parish or eparchial accounts or that have been sent using equipment or devices provided by or belonging to the Eparchy or its parishes, especially where there are reasonable grounds that eparchial policy may be in violation.
- b) All inappropriate electronic communication must be made known to the immediate supervisor and/or proper authorities.

Privacy

- 6. Parish lists and parishioner contact information must not be published or posted online.

7. Financial contributions may be acknowledged publicly with the permission of the donor.
8. Emails sent to ministry group participants must not disclose recipients' contact information without permission. In most cases, the blind carbon copy (bcc) function should be used when sending emails to more than one individual to protect individuals' privacy.
9. A statement authorizing the use of photos and videos of ministry participants on ministry social media platforms must be included in every parish or eparchial activity registration or permission form.
10. Signs must be clearly posted at each entryway, alerting individuals that church services or events are recorded or live streamed.

Minors/Vulnerable Adults

11. Clergy, employees and volunteers must obtain written consent of a parent/guardian:
 - a) before posting the personal information, including photos and/or videos, of a minor or vulnerable person on any social media platform
 - b) before sharing the contact information of minors/vulnerable adults with others
 - c) before they can communicate with minors/vulnerable persons through telephone, cell phone, text messaging, email, social networks, or other electronic means
 - d) prior to a minor's or vulnerable adult's participation on a parish or eparchial social networking site
 - e) in order to initiate/accept "friend/follow" requests of minors on a parish or eparchial social networking site
12. Clergy, employees and volunteers must not initiate "friend/follow" requests with minors from their personal accounts.
13. Parents must be given access to all communications between their children and clergy, employees or volunteers if requested.
14. Two qualified adults must be present for all live chat or video conferencing involving minors or vulnerable adults.
15. Every one-on-one electronic correspondence between an adult and a minor will have a second adult present and/or electronically copied.
16. Electronic communication between an adult and a minor/vulnerable person should not be used to address/discuss confidential matters.

17. Minors should not be given access to the private or personal postings or emails of an adult (clergy, employee or volunteer).
18. All interactions between clergy, employees and volunteers and minors/vulnerable adults should reflect the ministerial role of the person in ministry.