



Guidelines for Safe Online Teaching

The transition to teaching online comes with a unique set of challenges. Teaching in this way forces educators to view their instructional and teaching practices differently. One area that needs specific attention is regulating the online safety of our students. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia's *Standards for Ministerial Behavior and Boundaries* continue to provide criteria for appropriate behavior in all interactions with children and young people, whether in person or online. Additionally, The *Information and Communication Technology Addendum*, which specifically addresses interaction with young people through the use of digital technology, provides specific guidance for our virtual classrooms and online communications.

The Information and Communication Technology Addendum

It is important that all staff **read** the *Information and Communication Technology Addendum* and **understand** the expectations outlined therein. The following are key points from the policy:

- Regardless of the manner or method, all communication with minors must be faithful to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church.
- Permission must be obtained in writing from a parent/ guardian for all forms of digital communication with a minor including telephone, cell phone, text messaging, email, social networks, or other electronic means.
- Permission must be obtained in writing from a parent/ guardian prior to posting pictures or videos that include the minor.
- All communications with students must be through school based e-mail accounts and/or school authorized websites and applications.
- When sending a message to more than one child, use the blind copy in order to protect the privacy of the minor.
- If the minor is engaged in a video chat session that is private, care should be taken to make sure that the parent/guardian gives permission for the minor to participate. Another adult may supervise the interaction by either being present with the minor or the adult leader during the chat.

Maintaining Professional Standards While Teaching Online

- When online, it is expected that staff will continue to model appropriate professional behavior and all communications with students will be faithful to the teachings and values of the Catholic Church.
- Be mindful of dress, behavior, and location when teaching online, maintaining professionalism at all times.
- Use only school-approved online learning platforms when working with students.
- Never share inappropriate material or personal contact information with students.
- Electronic communication may only take place with the knowledge and permission of the parent/guardian and should set appropriate boundaries around the times when phone calls will be made and electronic communications will be sent.
- When creating digital learning plans for remote work for students, be aware of which online resources and links you share with your students. When you can, create your own content or share PDFs so students aren't being brought out of your schools' online system.
- If sharing videos from YouTube, remember that YouTube has ads and suggested videos that may not be appropriate. Use a tool like Google Classroom that only shares the video and does not take students to YouTube.

Maintaining Student's Wellbeing

- Remind students that your school/classroom tech rules apply to a virtual classroom just as they do the physical classroom. No taking or posting images/video of classmates and instructors to the web or to Social Media without permission.
- Be vigilant for verbal and nonverbal signs of distress, anxiety, or abuse. Remember that your responsibilities as a mandated reporter do not change when teaching online.
- Reporting procedures remain the same.
- Be alert to signs of cyber bullying and maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any forms of bullying, whether in-person or online.
- Anything of concern should be brought to the attention of the Pastor, Principal, and Director/Coordinator of Religious Education or Program Administrator as appropriate.