



Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse

Office of Safe Environment

Instagram Best Practices

Diocesan parishes, schools, and agencies find Instagram as a creative and effective way to interact with the public. The Office of Safe Environment has outlined some best practices to safeguard the well-being of youth by following Safe Environment social media guidelines.

Please ensure all content on Instagram is lawful and follows Instagram's Community Guidelines and the diocesan Code of Conduct.

If you see something that you think may violate Instagram's guidelines, such as bullying or harassment, report it by using Instagram's built-in reporting option.

- To report a comment or block the person, swipe the comment to the left and tap the exclamation point.
- To report a specific post, tap the "...” at the top of the post, and then “Report.”
- Click on the profile name, and tap the "...” at the top of the post to restrict, block, or report a person,
- You may also fill out Instagram's online form to report a comment, post, or person. The Instagram review team will determine whether to delete the comment, post, or account.

Lastly, if you believe someone created an Instagram account and is impersonating you, your business or organization, or is pretending to be someone you represent (ex: your child), fill out Instagram's impersonation report form.

Diocesan Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of administrators to adhere to the current diocesan Safe Environment Code of Conduct.

A reminder of some essential points from the diocesan Code of Conduct:

- There must be a minimum of two administrators for any social media account.
- All programs, groups, or activities, including an Instagram account, must have prior approval of the administration of the parish, school, or agency.
- Private (direct) messaging is not allowed on any social media apps with children,

young people, or vulnerable adults due to the inability to retain a record of communication. Instagram’s messaging app may not be used because the identity and ages of the Instagram followers are unknown and may be minors or vulnerable adults. If you do receive a message, you may respond with a standard message such as, “Thank you for your message, but we are unable to respond to messages at this time. If you would like to speak to someone at our parish/school/agency/ministry, contact us directly at 315.555.5555 or aaa@gmail.com during regular business hours.”

Best practices

Allow only followers of your Instagram account to comment on your posts, stories, and live videos. This feature is under “Settings/Privacy/Comments.”

“Hide Offensive Comments” is another feature that allows Instagram to automatically hide offensive comments from the posts, stories or videos. Administrators will have the ability to decide whether to post or delete the comment.

The “Manual Filter” can immediately hide comments that contain specific words or phrases of your choosing from your posts, stories, and live videos. Administrators will have the ability to decide whether to post or delete the comment.

Monitor your followers’ comments by receiving “Push Notifications” at least every hour. This feature allows you the option to delete or report comments, posts, stories, or videos or block the individual from following your Instagram account. Another option is to permit a follower to remain on your Instagram account but restrict the ability to comment on any posts, stories, or videos. You may remove the follower’s restriction at any time.

“Manually Approve Tags” prevents the posting of inappropriate pictures or videos.

Disable “@mentions” from allowing individuals from tagging others in pictures and comments.

These guidelines, and best practices are designed to help you as you minister, educate, and entertain your followers. Contact the Office of Safe Environment with any questions or concerns at 315.470.1421 or safeenvironment@syrдио.org.