**St. John’s Youth Ministry Communication Policy**

Updated October 2, 2024

In accordance with Archdiocese communication policies, Youth Ministry now has a direct number! This number allows volunteers, parents and teens 14 years and older to communicate directly with youth ministry staff. The Youth Ministry # is monitored by Jim Martin, our Director of Community Life and our Safe Environment Coordinator to ensure its proper use.

* This number can be called or texted and our team will answer and respond when working (non-typical hours).
* Parents, volunteers, and teens 14 years and older are welcome to contact our youth ministry staff using this number.
* Youth under the age of 14 should communicate through their parents.
* For the purposes of our policies, direct messaging this number is not considered a private message because it is monitored by St. John’s staff.
* If youth ministry volunteers, such as d-group leaders, wish to text teens, they must communicate with teens via group messages that include the youth ministry number and/or the parent’s number.

Examples

* A d-group has a group message with 8 teens, two volunteer adults and the youth ministry number. This group chat is used to communicate times and locations for meetings, encouragement throughout the week, and to connect appropriately as a group.
* High school youth may directly text the youth ministry number with a question about youth group, meeting locations and times, or a question of faith.
* High school youth may not directly text a youth ministry volunteer, such as their d-group leader, without also including the youth ministry number and/or a parent’s number.
* Parents may text or call the youth ministry number with questions or updates.
* Volunteers may text or call the youth ministry number regarding volunteer responsibilities.

Below you will find excerpts of our Archdiocesan policies.

**Excerpt from “Code of Conduct for Volunteers working with minors”**

2.11 Communications by volunteers with unrelated minors must be for volunteer ministry-related reasons only. Volunteers must maintain appropriate boundaries in all communications with an unrelated minor, including communications through the use of electronic devices or web-based media.

Volunteers should only communicate to minors or vulnerable adults in a group message or public forum. Any private, one-to-one communication initiated by a minor or vulnerable adult to a volunteer must be shared with the parent/guardian as well as the volunteer’s supervisor.

**Excerpt from “Code of Conduct for Church Personnel”**

2.9 Communications by Church Personnel with unrelated minors must be for professional reasons only. Church Personnel must maintain appropriate boundaries in all communications with an unrelated minor, including communications through the use of electronic devices or web-based media.

a. Church Personnel should make certain that the parents or guardians of an unrelated minor are aware of the content of private electronic or print communications sent to or received from that unrelated minor or vulnerable adult. In exceptional situations when a parent or guardian is not made aware of the content of a private communication, Church Personnel must share the communication with another Church Personnel.

b. Informing parents or guardians is not required for non-private communications, such as those sent to youth groups regarding meeting locations or times, or other administrative matters.

c. Some Church Personnel have been issued school, parish, or Archdiocesan computers or other communication devices that are monitored for proper usage. Electronic communications sent to, or received from, unrelated minors using such devices are not private for the purposes of this *Code*.