

# Communications Policies and Guidelines

## Section I: Purpose

The purpose of church communications is to relay information about the Gospel and about our parish to a broad, or to a specific, audience.

St. Margaret of York's Communications Policies and Guidelines are intended to present clear guidelines to staff members and parishioners to deliver consistent, high quality, and appropriate communications to all members of the parish community, prospective members, and the neighboring community.

These policies cover communications by anyone—clergy, lay staff member, or parishioner—who represents St. Margaret of York Catholic Church or its ministries, whether as a paid employee, layperson, or volunteer.

The policies apply to printed materials, mass mailings, ongoing publications, bulletin boards, interior, and exterior signs and to all electronic, social media groups and pages, online scheduling tools, and other electronic communications media or messages identified with St. Margaret of York Catholic Church and any of the church's ministries, committees or groups, online or mobile-based communications tools, whether controlled by St. Margaret of York or hosted on other social platforms.

Because technology and various platforms evolve over time, these policies are meant to apply to all communications channels and tools now and in the future, whether or not specified by name or in use at this time. Accounts, groups, and pages created before these policies were established are expected to be brought into compliance on request.

These policies do not apply to private or small-group communications between parishioners.

## Section II: General Policies

- No copyrighted material will be published without proof of permission from the copyright holders.
- Church communications may not be used for partisan political messages. Any activity that could be perceived as supporting any political party and/or its candidates, including the signing of petitions promoting political issues is not permitted. Just because a political party, a candidate, or a group of supporters says that some proposed activity or statement of support is appropriate does not make it appropriate.

## Section III: Announcement Guidelines

### Article I: Requirements for Inclusion:

All requests for announcements are reviewed before publication on any communication outlet. Sacraments, Religious Education, and Parish Functions take priority over other ministry events. SMOY ministries have priority over external Catholic ministries and events outside the parish.

All announcement submissions are ultimately approved by the Pastor. He or the qualified staff will review all entries before publication on any communication platform. We reserve the right to edit, omit, or replace text, images, etc. due to quantity, quality, content, or space available, lack of verified legal permission, if necessary.

Please make sure any event or activity representing St. Margaret of York both on or off campus have submitted an Event Request Form and been approved for inclusion on the parish calendar prior to submitting announcements. Events and activities that have not submitted an event request form to our calendar manager has not been approved will not be promoted. Additionally, off campus events held during parish Mass times will not be promoted. For more information, please see our **Events and Activities Policy** for details regarding events and reserving space on campus.

Please note we will make every effort to include your announcement when it is received on time and has appropriate content for the parish, but we cannot guarantee publication. Due to the limited nature of our communication efforts we cannot guarantee publication on all requested communication outlets for events that have been approved.

St. Margaret of York will not promote any event, group, etc. that contradicts Catholic Teaching.

### Article II: Submission Process for Announcements

Announcement requests should be submitted digitally via email to [communications@smoy.org](mailto:communications@smoy.org) on or before the deadline in a text only format.

Announcements requests are typically due Wednesday of the week before they are to appear in the bulletin. (10 days before bulletin date) Deadlines are subject to change due to Holidays, vacations, or publisher mandated deadline changes.

*(Example: If announcement is to begin appearing Sunday, September 24th announcement must be received no later than Wednesday, September 13th)*

Announcement Due Date Calendar:

<https://smoy.org/bulletins>

The parish office will do our best to inform and remind the parish about early deadlines or changes in the announcement request deadline calendar.

## Article III: Run Times for Announcements

As a very active parish we often have an overwhelming amount of announcement requests. In an effort to keep our announcements fresh and give all parish ministries and groups an opportunity to share their events and activities with the parish announcements will generally be limited to a 3 week consecutive run, as space permits in accordance with priority order of announcements. (ie. Sacraments, Religious Education, and Parish Functions take priority over other ministry events. SMOY ministries have priority over external Catholic ministries and events outside the parish.)

## Article IV: Best Practices for Announcements

Announcements should be brief and to the point, not “chatty” and be sure your announcement includes the who, what, when, where, why, and a contact person. Please don’t instruct people to call the parish office for more information about your event.

Assume, your announcements are being read by first time visitors to our parish and spell out acronyms the first time they appear. (Example: St. Margaret of York (SMOY)...)

Please refrain from using two spaces between sentences or tabs and spaces to format. These extra spaces have to be edited out before publication as it disrupts the formatting.

Only capitalize the first letter of your sentences and please refrain from using all caps or capitalizing the first letter of every word.

## Section IV: Social Media Policy (SMOY)

St. Margaret of York maintains an official presence on six social media sites: Anchor, Facebook, Instagram, Spotify, Twitter, and YouTube. These accounts are produced, maintained, and monitored by the Parish Office. These social media outlets are where all persons can learn about and enjoy some of the great things happening at the parish.

### Article I: Official Social Media:

#### 4.1.1 Approval:

Approval must be granted by the corresponding department head, pastor or principal prior to creation. A record of approved accounts will be maintained in the parish office.

#### 4.1.2 Use of Logos:

Approved accounts are required to contain the official St. Margaret of York Parish, School, or related entity logo. No website account may include the official St. Margaret of York logo or that of a related entity in a way that implies official ownership/sponsorship, without being an approved account.

#### 4.1.3 Administration:

Approved accounts must have at least two adults with full administrative access and at least one of the administrators must be a parish or school staff member. All administrators, moderators, etc. must be Virtus trained and compliant.

#### 4.1.4 Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Media Policy:

All official accounts that represent St. Margaret of York accounts are subject to the rules established and set forth by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Media Policy. Link:

<https://resources.catholicaoc.org/download/106/youth-evangelization/7214/social-media-policy.pdf>

#### 4.1.5 Official School and Parish Social Media:

The following social media outlets are the only social media outlets that represent St. Margaret of York:

##### Anchor.fm

<https://anchor.fm/smoyparish>

##### Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/smoyparish/>

<https://www.facebook.com/SMOYfest/>

<https://www.facebook.com/smoyschool/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/894034687465353> (VBS)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/541694532964976> (Boosters)

##### Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/smoyschool/>

<https://www.instagram.com/smoyparish/>

##### Spotify:

<https://open.spotify.com/user/484i75w602qy40vtgvtmx7v5h>

##### Twitter

<https://twitter.com/smoyparish>

<https://twitter.com/SMOYschool>

##### Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTm2wN1iEJWRRgTDkzYILHA>

## Article II: Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media:

#### 4.2.1 Disclaimer:

Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media accounts that are not valid representations of St. Margaret of York must post the following disclaimer: "This digital space is not an official representation of St. Margaret of York. The views and content expressed in this digital space do not necessarily represent or reflect the views of St. Margaret of York or the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or of the Catholic Church at large"

#### 4.2.2 Use of Logos:

Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media may not include any official St. Margaret of York logo or that of a related entity in a way that implies official ownership/sponsorship.

#### 4.2.3 Administration:

St. Margaret of York staff members may not be administrators, moderators, or hold similar roles within these Unauthorized and Unaffiliated Social Media accounts.

### Article III: Comment Policy

#### 4.3.1 General Policies

All of our fans and followers are welcome and encouraged to share content on St. Margaret of York social media pages. All posts or comments should be relevant to the St. Margaret of York community.

Remember that you are personally responsible for all content you post online, whether in a blog, on a social networking site, or in the comments section of an online news story.

We strive to make our social media community reflective of the values of Jesus and the Catholic Church. Therefore, St. Margaret of York reserves the right, but is not obligated, to remove comments that:

- are off-topic
- are profane, violent or obscene
- are duplicate or spam
- advocate illegal activity
- are misleading or contain falsehoods and/or inaccurate information
- libel, incite, threaten or make ad hominem attacks on employees, guests, or other individuals
- endorse or oppose anyone campaigning for election to a political office
- violate the social media platform's policies

We also do not permit messages selling products or promoting commercial, political campaigns, or other ventures unless we deem them related to the parish, its members or its operation. Posted comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the parish.

#### 4.3.2 Additional options for individual users:

- Hiding or reporting comments may also be an action you can take. Review the Terms and Community Guidelines for the service and see what options are available to you.
- You can always choose to express your disagreement or state your own point of view in a way that's consistent with the above policies.
- If you sense a comment is written with the express purpose of provoking an argument, denying the comment the attention it seeks is sometimes the best course of action.

Employees' social media usage is expected to comply with Archdiocese of Cincinnati Social Media Policy and all applicable policies. All users, including page administrators, are subject to the terms of service of each social media site and this policy.

Posted comments do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of St. Margaret of York.

If you have any concerns about the content posted on one of our social media outlets, please email us at [communications@smoy.org](mailto:communications@smoy.org). We welcome all of your feedback and thank you for your help in creating a safe, vibrant and respectful online community.

## Section V: Images, Photos, & Graphics

### Article I: Photographic Images

We want to share what our ministries are doing to evangelize and to serve others for us to use in the bulletin, flocknote, or website. Photographs submitted for use in church publications are welcomed, provided the contributor owns the image or has secured permission from the owner and supplies proof of permission to the parish for publication.

#### 5.1.1 Submission of Photographic Images

- Email your photos along with a description of what your ministry is doing “in action” to [communications@smoy.org](mailto:communications@smoy.org).
- Any ministry photos including minors will need to have the necessary parental or guardian Archdiocesan release form on file. If minors are included in your photos, please send the names of the minors in your email so that it is reviewed by the parish office. A copy of the release form should be sent to the parish office.
- In submitting photographic images for use by the church, contributors grant St. Margaret of York Catholic Church non-exclusive rights to edit and publish the images in various print and digital media.
- Images must be of adequate technical quality, and large enough, in terms of pixels, for the intended use. Ideally, photographic images will be created and provided at the camera’s highest possible resolution settings. Photographs should be high resolution jpg files (300 dpi preferred minimum resolution).

### Article II: Graphics

As a general rule St. Margaret of York does not use graphical images created outside the parish office. Any graphics that are used must have documented permission for use.

## Section VI: Encyclopedia of Parish Communications

### Bulletin

The primary form of communication for the parish. The Bulletin is produced weekly and contains a variety of content including but not limited to notes from the pastor, articles of Catholic interest, spiritual reflections, and upcoming parish and regional Catholic events and activities as space allows.

### Bulletin Inserts

Additional sheet of paper stuffed in the bulletin, used for designated collection information or extraordinary circumstances.

### Flocknote (Parish E-News):

The parish email management tool. Specifically the parish e-News is a weekly digital newsletter sent on Wednesday afternoon and periodically an additional newsletter on Saturday mornings. The newsletter is primarily for faith formation containing a limited number of announcements that are timely and relevant within the next week and a half. Also used for critical communication outside of scheduled times.

### Guest Speaker Announcements

A speaker invited by the pastor to speak briefly at Mass on a certain matter.

### Posters/Flyers

Posters and flyers showcased in the bulletin boards are primarily for major parish events, faith formation and special collections.

### Pulpit Announcements

Critical and timely announcements primarily relevant to the majority or parish announced at the close of Masses.

### Slide Reel Announcements

Highlighted announcements shown before Mass selected from the announcement requests submitted for publication in the bulletin.

### Social Media

Collection of several different online platforms and communities where St. Margaret of York maintains a presence.

### Video Announcements

Brief video announcements for Sacramental or Faith Based programming shown before Mass that are approved by the pastor and are three minutes or less shown before Mass, limited to only Sacramental or Faith Based programming.

### Website

The central hub for information about the parish.

### Website (Beyond the Parish Doors)

A page on the website for parishioners to find information on the wealth of opportunities for the Catholic community within our Archdiocese that may be of interest to parishioners.