

# EMAIL/INTERNET POLICY

### **Introduction:**

Electronic mail enables all persons associated with, employed by and volunteer workers in the Diocese of Ferns to communicate promptly and efficiently with people within and outside the organisation. While email brings many benefits to the diocese in terms of communications internally and externally, it also brings risks when it is used for purposes outside defined roles. Therefore it is necessary to have a code of practice which will regulate its use and which sets down specific rules for the use of e-mail and internet.

### **Legislation:**

The internet functions in a global context whereas the law functions in a localised one. However the following pieces of legislation have relevance to internet safety:

#### **The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998**

*This Act legislates against any one who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography.*

#### **The Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003**

*This Act relates to issues arising from personal and private information stored on individuals. It affords them rights to access personal data held about them by an entity whether in the public or private sector.*

#### **The Video Recordings Act, 1989**

*This Act prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material.*

#### **The Interception of Postal Packets and Telecommunications Messages Regulation Act 1993**

*This Act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence.*

### **Internet Use**

*The internet must not be used for any illegal purposes.*

*If more than one person is using email/internet on a computer, confidential passwords must be issued. Diocesan internet connections are intended for supporting diocesan business or the professional development of clergy, employees or volunteer workers. Web surfing unrelated to these activities is strictly forbidden.*

### **Use of E-mail:**

- Do not send or intentionally receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Do not reveal your own or other people's personal details, such as addresses, telephone numbers or photographs.
- Never use email to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone.

*Children should only use the email and internet for acceptable purposes within a church based organisation and under supervision at all times.*

*All computers in parishes should be regularly monitored to ensure that they are being used in accordance with the stated policy.*