Social Media Screening Guidelines

Why should we screen our Candidates’ social media presence?

- Potential negligence if not reviewing what is already “knowable” public information
- Becoming industry standard for due diligence in organizations that serve youth
- Opportunity to identify red flags that this person may be higher risk to behave inappropriately with children, youth, or vulnerable persons
- Another source of information about the individual to compare to what you have already gathered
- May provide insight into this person’s maturity and readiness for religious life

What are we looking for?

- Information that suggests inappropriate boundaries with children, youth, or vulnerable persons
- Information inconsistent with what is known about the individual
- Behavior that is inconsistent with the values of the Institute
- Illegal conduct, online harassment, poor judgment

How do we do this?

- Ensure all Candidates are subject to a social media review and the review is completed consistently in both the method of the search used and the use of the information acquired.
- Consult with legal counsel prior to utilizing a third-party source, as more stringent federal and local laws may apply to professional service providers.
- Refrain from asking for social media passwords; this practice is illegal in many states.
- Document which sites you review using a social media checklist (see sample provided).
- If possible, include other decision makers as you review the information. It may be helpful to get perspective from different people.
- Inform the Candidate that your Institute has policies for how its members use electronic communication.

What if we find something questionable?

- Discuss any questionable findings with the vocation committee.
- Consider the behavior’s frequency, duration, intensity, and context.
- Consult legal counsel about any adverse action you may take because of a finding.
- Consider discussing the findings with the Candidate.