

## **Policy: Communications Policy**

Includes **Appendix A: Brand Guide**

**Appendix B: Communications Protocol**

**For Vincentians and Employee Management**

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**Policy # 3**                      **Number of Pages:** 10                      **Date of Approval:** April 2009

**Approved By:**              Board of Directors, Management              **Review Date:** June 9, 2021

**References:**                      General Personnel Policy #2  
    Brand Guide  
    Communications Protocol

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### **Statement:**

The Board of Directors of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, Toronto Central Council, also known as the Greater Toronto Central Council (hereafter referred to as the “Society”), and the Executive Director share the responsibility to protect the good name and reputation of the Society by setting standards and reviewing all significant forms of communications, defined below. This policy provides guidance on the use of various means of communications including verbal, electronic and written communications together with the appropriate use of the Society’s name and logo. The Society has an approved Communications Protocol that is enacted when significant information is to be disseminated within the Society. The Protocol is included in this policy (Appendix B).

### **Policy:**

The Society encourages Vincentians and management to communicate regularly with local community partners, benefactors and those whom we serve. This is a critical component of serving the poor with love, respect, justice and joy. We are all ambassadors for our organization and as such we have a responsibility to communicate as clearly and effectively as possible. The challenges facing our neighbours-in-need are constantly shifting and we must be nimble in responding to those needs in order to best serve and support the most vulnerable among us. In all matters we take Brother Frederic Ozanam as a model to strive to be open, transparent and respectful in our communications with our neighbours, members and one another.

**Definitions:**

Routine Communications: The “who, what, where, when” of the usual work of the Conference in the local community; examples in the text box below.

Significant Communications: The “why” of the work of the Society; policy, relationships, major funders; examples in the text box below.

Vincentians should only communicate to external stakeholders who are within their direct area of jurisdiction and directly related to their specific area of work.

This general rule of jurisdiction begins with the conference president. The president of a conference or particular council is responsible for acting as the spokesperson for the Society within his or her area of jurisdiction, and only on routine matters. A president shall also ensure the accuracy of all forms of external communication originating in their conference or particular council and for keeping the chair of the Particular Council Presidents’ Committee informed of all significant forms of external communication prior to it being issued. The Chair of the PCPC will consult with the Board as necessary. The Executive Director is responsible for all communications generated by employees or program volunteers.

Communications referencing the Society for the purpose of advocating on behalf of those we serve shall be coordinated through the Board of Directors.

*Common examples of communications and who is authorized to make them*

**Conference presidents**

- Parish bulletins
- Parish recruitment materials, like posters and emails
  - Messages from the pulpit
- Questions from media about routine, parish-based initiatives
  - Messages for donors of the conference

**Executive Director of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul  
Greater Toronto Central Council**

- Communication with the Archdiocese of Toronto on behalf of the Society
  - Questions from media about the work of the Society
- Communications from employees of the Society to external stakeholders

**Procedures:**

**Logo and Name**

The Society should always be described as “*Society of Saint Vincent de Paul*”. Even though we use the article “the” before the name in a text, we do not use that article when the name is used alone, for example in a document title or on a poster. The abbreviated form is “*SSVP*”. The logo

used is the international logo as adopted by National Council and is represented on the cover of the April 2020 edition of the Society's Rule. The logo includes the Latin motto: "serviens in spe" (meaning "serving in hope). The logo may not be altered in any way except for the optional use of the Latin phrase: "Serviens in spe". Electronic versions of the logo may be obtained from the Toronto Central Council office. **Please refer to the attached Brand Guide (Appendix A of this document) for further details.**

### **Print & Electronic Material**

The design and production of material such as posters, brochures, signs, promotional material, letterhead, business cards, envelopes, clothing apparel, websites and web pages must conform to the standards for the logo and the Society's name specified above. **Please refer to the attached Brand Guide (Appendix A of this document) for further details.** The president of the Conference or Particular Council creating such material shall review and determine if the content requires further review by the President of the next higher Council. The Executive Director shall be made aware of the creation of electronic media including websites, web pages, Facebook and other social media accounts and will provide guidance as required. Note that any electronic media should clearly communicate which part of the Society owns and produces it (i.e. a Facebook page for a parish conference should clearly be recognizable as such, and not easily mistaken as a Facebook page for the Society generally, the Central Council, etc.). The Executive Director shall review all print and electronic material generated by employees.

### **Correspondence**

Correspondence related to local conference or council activities such as bulletin inserts, letters of appeal for funds, letters of appreciation and other related correspondence shall be approved by the president of that conference or council and must conform to the specifications in the Brand Guide (Appendix A). When the Special Works of Toronto Central Council are referred to in correspondence, the information must be reviewed by the Executive Director to ensure accuracy.

### **Media Interactions**

The Presidents of a Conference and its Particular Council must be made aware of all interactions with media including articles, interviews and opinion pieces. On all matters that extend beyond media inquiries on specific, local parish-based initiatives of a particular conference, or matters that have the potential to bind the Society or may in any way be controversial, the Chair of the Board of Directors or the Executive Director, or substitute appointed by the Chair, is the only individual authorized to be interviewed by the media.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **All Vincentians**

Vincentians who desire to make public statements as an individual may refer to their affiliation with the Society but may not speak on behalf of or identify themselves as representatives of the Society without prior authorization.

In cases where Vincentians are requested to make policy decisions, interpret policy or provide statements that bind the Society, the Board of Directors or the Executive Director must be consulted beforehand.

Vincentians who wish to seek clarification on Vincentian matters from Archdiocesan officials should do so through the Executive Director or Board of Directors.

Enquiries or correspondence with Regional or National Council regarding policy or interpretation of the Rule must be coordinated with the Executive Director.

### **Conference Presidents**

Conference Presidents should be made aware of all external communications undertaken by the local conference. The president reviews and approves correspondence on matters within the conference jurisdiction (e.g. bulletin inserts). Matters beyond the conference jurisdiction or referencing Special Works require consultation with the President of the Particular Council, and the Executive Director before publication.

### **Particular Council Presidents**

The Rule specifies that Particular Councils ensure that conferences do not do anything to jeopardize the Society. Particular Council Presidents are to be made aware by their conference presidents of all significant external communications undertaken in the local conferences and seek guidance from the Executive Director or the Board of Directors as required.

### **Toronto Central Council Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors of Toronto Central Council is responsible for all matters of communications within its jurisdiction and should be made aware of all significant external communications undertaken in the local conferences and particular councils. The Board shall provide guidance as required.

### **Executive Director**

The Executive Director is responsible for all material generated by employees for the purposes of serving the Special Works. The Executive Director is available to provide support or direction to Vincentian members on communications. For all media inquiries, the Executive Director is the first point of contact and shall direct inquiries to the Board Chair or to the appropriate subject matter expert.

# Appendix A: The Brand Guide

Dear Vincentians,

A cornerstone of our conferences’ work is communications materials: banners, thank-you letters, info brochures, bulletin inserts, handouts for Bundle Up Collections, camp registration promotional material, special events, neighbour-in-need info cards, recruitment information, and more. Our members and conference leaders often ask how they can make these materials most effective. What is the correct use of the logo? The Society’s name? And more.

This **short brand guide** is meant to answer these common questions. On the first two pages of this guide you’ll find some direction on words to use when describing the Society and its work. On page three you’ll find information about the most effective ways to use our logo.

As always, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions at [lcoutu@ssvptoronto.ca](mailto:lcoutu@ssvptoronto.ca).

It is my hope that this guide will empower you to create the best communications materials possible and help you to fulfill our mission and your vocation.

Sincerely,  
Louise Coutu  
Executive Director,  
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council

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## IMPORTANT TIPS WHEN DESIGNING COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

- There is no need to include lengthy histories of SSVP in a short document like a brochure. Instead put our mission, our work, and the specific projects of your local conference front-and-centre. It’s all about telling people the important work we are doing now and how they can serve the vulnerable in their community—that is what draws in new members.
- No need to include Greater Toronto Central Council’s contact information. Instead, provide contact information for your conference or conference leadership. We want new Vincentians to reach out to you and your community directly! (This would be dependent on what the info is – the GTCC website is often helpful).
- **Send all communications materials to the Greater Toronto Central Council for a quick review prior to printing or publication. Email Louise at [lcoutu@ssvptoronto.ca](mailto:lcoutu@ssvptoronto.ca).** We are here to help you develop the best materials you can!

## USING THE NAME, THE ACRONYM, & THE SLOGAN

The official name of the organization is *Society of Saint Vincent de Paul*. The official acronym is *SSVP*. Often, the word “the” is used before the name or the acronym, as in *the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul* or *the SSVP*. These usages are acceptable, though they are not the official name and acronym.

**Common errors:** capitalizing the ‘d’ in “de”, as in “Saint Vincent De Paul”; capitalizing “the” when it precedes the name of the Society, as in “The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul”; incorrect ordering of the words in our name, as in “Saint Vincent de Paul Society”; incorrect ordering of letters in the acronym, as in SVDP, SStVP, etc. **Remember—there are only four correct ways to refer to the organization: Society**

of Saint Vincent de Paul, SSVP, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the SSVP. The short-hand “the Society” is also acceptable.

**The slogan of SSVP:** *Is Serviens in spe*, Latin for “To serve in hope.”

## DESCRIBING OUR WORK

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is a lay Catholic organization whose mission is *to live the Gospel message by serving Christ in persons who are experiencing poverty with love, respect, justice and joy*. The Mission of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul implies that as Vincentians we see Christ in anyone who suffers, come together as a family, have personal contact with persons experiencing poverty, and help in all possible ways. No work of charity is beyond the Society, but our mission most commonly comes alive in the form of visiting and assisting vulnerable people in their homes through food vouchers, friendship, and other supports.

**How should we describe those whom we serve?** Avoid words and terms that do not express the God-given dignity of our neighbours, terms such as “the mentally ill”, “the homeless”, “addicts”. Remember that we serve *people*. Place their personhood front and centre when describing them. Consider: people who are vulnerable, people experiencing poverty, people experiencing homelessness, neighbour-in-need.

**Questions? Ideas?** Let us know! You can reach out at [info@ssvptoronto.ca](mailto:info@ssvptoronto.ca)

## DESCRIBING WHAT WE DO

As conference leaders and Vincentians, we are often asked: **Why join the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul?** Every Vincentian has a different answer. Here is what we like to say:

*Many of us are concerned about people experiencing poverty, homelessness, and vulnerability. Vincentians turn that concern into action. We build relationships with our vulnerable neighbours and help in any way we can—no work of charity is beyond the scope of the Society. The most common activity is visiting people in their homes, bringing them food and clothing vouchers and building community with them. We also operate shelters for people experiencing homelessness, supportive housing facilities, summer camps, programs for those dealing with addictions, clothing drives, and much more. The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul is the organization to join if you want to do more than just talk about poverty—it’s where you go to do something about it.*

## COLOURS

When creating digital or printed communications materials, please ensure the materials only use one of the following three colours: white, blue, and red. Black is also acceptable for type and for black-and-white materials.

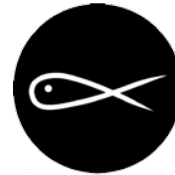
The official blue is Pantone 300U, the same colour as this sentence. To use this colour in Microsoft Word, click *Format* among the tabs at the top of your document; then *Font*; then *Font colors*; then *More colors*, then *RGB Sliders*. There are three boxes where you can insert numbers. In descending order, insert 0, 110, and 182—this will set the colour to our blue.

The official red is Pantone 032U, the same colour as this sentence. To turn words in Microsoft Word this colour, follow the same instructions as with blue but instead type in the numbers 246, 80, 88 in descending order.

Can’t get the font colour to work? Here’s a cheat: copy and paste the above coloured sentences into your document and then edit them in the new colour!

## THE LOGO

There are two versions of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul logo: a colour version and a black-and-white version.



When using the logo, make sure it is no smaller than 12mm high on printed materials and 35 pixels high on web pages. Use the logo unaltered—no need to add trademark symbols! [Click here to download the colour logo](#). [Click here to download the black-and-white logo](#).

**Use the colour logo when:** Printing communications materials in colour; using the logo on social media or other digital platforms.

**Use the black-and-white logo when:** Printing communications materials in black-and-white.

# Appendix B: Communications Policy

## SSVP GREATER TORONTO CENTRAL COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

### *Introduction*

From time to time, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Greater Toronto Central Council will need to communicate to our Particular Councils, our Parish Conferences, or Vincentians broadly. This may occur when implementing a new policy or program change approved by the Board of Directors, when we need to share new training tools, or when we need to broadly communicate other key documents. In these cases, it is essential that these policies, programs and announcements be clearly communicated to every Vincentian in the Greater Toronto Area. It is particularly important that Vincentian leaders understand these policies and programs so that they are equipped to address questions or feedback from the Vincentians they lead.

This protocol outlines a process by which important information can be communicated with maximum clarity to every key stakeholder in the Vincentian family—from the Central Council to Particular Council presidents, to conference leadership and the broader Vincentian membership. The intention is to ensure that every Vincentian is aware of new programs, policies, and announcements and knows who to contact if they have questions. This protocol will be applied going forward to all significant communications.



### **STEP ONE: WHEN DRAFTING A NEW POLICY, PROGRAM, OR ANNOUNCEMENT, CREATE A BRIEFING DOCUMENT AND Q&A DOCUMENT.**

As part of the process of preparing any program, policy, or announcement, the drafting parties (a Board committee, SSVP staff, Board members, or other designated individuals) will also prepare the following documents. Please note that the Board’s Communications Committee is available to assist in the development of these materials, should any staff, committee, or Board member seek counsel on their development:

1. **A short, one-page (at most) brief:** This introductory document should outline in non-technical language the nature of the new program, policy, or announcement, answering the “who, what, where, why and how/when”:
  - a. What is the new program, policy, announcement?
  - b. Why is it being implemented?
  - c. Who is the key audience for the policy, program, or announcement? In the case of a policy or program, who is primarily responsible for or involved in its implementation (i.e. Central Council exclusively, the conferences, etc)?
  - d. How will it be implemented (immediately, timed in stages, online or offline, etc)?

As an example of a brief, consider the introduction to this communications protocol as a model—the briefing document should be short and to the point. This will make it easier to share with others.

**Identify one or more experts who can address the policy or program in detail, to be included in the brief.** Depending on the technical intricacy of the policy or program, it’s important to proactively identify who can speak to the policy or program credibly and in detail and share their contact information



for those who are seeking clarification. In many cases this will either be Executive Director, or the subject matter expert involved in crafting the policy or program. For instance: In the case of mandatory changes to the financial management practices of conferences, this would mean identifying an accountant who can speak credibly and authoritatively to the technical details of the change and the rationale for the policy.

2. **A Q&A document:** A short set of questions and answers. These should be written to anticipate questions which might be expected from Vincentians and Vincentian leadership as they learn about the new policy, program or announcement. Consider questions from the conference perspective and write questions and answers with those considerations in mind. Consider especially:
  - a. What questions about implementing the policy or program would we expect a Vincentian to have?
  - b. If the policy or program changes an old way of operating, what questions might a Vincentian have about the old system and how it is changing?
  - c. What new commitments or responsibilities are now expected of Vincentians, because of this change? Make those expectations clear. Also provide a contact name for support
  - d. Write questions and answers from the perspective of a person without technical expertise. For instance: if the policy relates to accounting practices, understand that many Vincentians will lack expertise in that area. Write answers that can be understood by someone without technical knowledge.
  - e. Consider other questions that a conference might have about the policy or program. Will it cost them money? Will it change their membership structure?
  - f. Provide a rationale for the change. For example, a recent new policy on finances was updated to respond to issues raised by the auditor.

The aim of this document is for every Vincentian to read it and feel that they understand the full implications of the new policy or program and how it affects the way they serve our neighbours.

## **STEP TWO: THE POLICY, PROGRAM OR ANNOUNCEMENTS GO TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL.**

As part of the approval process, the Board will be provided with the briefing document and the Q&A document. Board approval will in effect serve as a “test” of the brief and Q&A to see if the policy or program is readily understood. Questions and feedback from Board members not addressed by the draft Q&A can then be added to a second draft of the Q&A, to be shared with Particular Council presidents in step three.

*Action Item:* Update Q&A document based on new questions from Board members not addressed in the first draft.

## **STEP THREE: THE NEW POLICY OR PROGRAM IS SHARED WITH PARTICULAR COUNCIL PRESIDENTS.**

*Note: On issues within the Terms of Reference of Particular Council Presidents, steps two and three could be reversed; where PC Presidents are consulted on these documents prior to their referral to the Central Council Board of Directors.*

Over email or through a separate meeting—depending on the complexity of the new policy or program—Central Council’s Executive Director will brief the Particular Council presidents on the new policy, program or announcement. The briefing document and Q&A document will be shared at this time. If any

new questions are raised by Particular Council presidents which have not been covered by the draft Q&A document, these new questions and answers will be added to the Q&A.

Action Item: Update Q&A document based on new questions from Particular Council presidents not addressed in the draft.

**STEP FOUR: THE NEW POLICY OR PROGRAM IS SHARED WITH CONFERENCE LEADERS AND VINCENTIANS.**

Through the Central Council distribution list, the new policy, program or announcement is shared with conference leaders and Vincentians directly using the briefing document and Q&A document shared with Particular Council presidents (updated to reflect the PC presidents' questions). Vincentians will be referred to their Particular Council presidents if they have questions, and any questions that the Particular Council leadership cannot answer will be referred to the Central Council Executive Director and/or the expert(s) identified in the briefing document.

**STEP FIVE: PUBLISH BRIEFING DOCUMENT AND Q&A DOCUMENT ONLINE.**

For future ease of reference, the briefing document and Q&A document will each be published on the Central Council website where Vincentians can refer to them when needed.