

Safeguarding Guidance for Working with Children and Young People online



July 2020



Guidance

This policy document has been written in order to give leaders/volunteers the tools and information they need to be able to begin or continue to support the children and young people online.

Safeguarding

Online technology affords a great opportunity to connect with your young people. It is really important that the safeguarding of everyone is considered. The usual safeguarding rules apply online in any activity that you hold for children and young people. Please make sure that you vet all volunteers as you would normally to make sure that they are suitable to work with children and young people. Also, that all volunteers/ leaders have a DBS check at an enhanced level. Please also be aware that technology is always changing and that it is important to keep up to date in order to make sure that our children and young people are safe. We have put together some information that is intended to help you make sure that all are kept safe when working in these ways.

The church in Wales has a provincial safeguarding policy with a section on online safeguarding [here](#).

Specific information on the protocols for working with children and young people safely online:

Setting up online working with Children and young people

1. Seek your churches approval – speak to your Vicar, churchwarden, standing committee or PCC group to get agreement and (where possible) minute that this is how you intend to be working with the church's children and young people. *(Please see Application for approval of activities in Appendix 1)*
2. For contacting children and young people, it is best practice to use a church or organisation account so that multiple people could log in and maintain accountability. Do not use personal accounts to contact children and young people.
3. Ensure that parents or guardians are aware of your contact with children and young people – there are consent forms for this specifically. *Appendix 2 (Consent form for electronic communications with young people) & 3 (Consent form for taking and using images)*
4. Many video conferencing platforms require invitations to be issued to the email address of participants. You should use parent's email addresses to invite a young person to a video call during church youth work.
5. Consent to participate in the video chat means that young people will be sharing their personal data online. You should obtain consent prior to engaging a young person in video calling. If the young person is under 13, consent should be obtained from the parent. For children over 13 there is no requirement in data protection law to obtain parental consent, however Church in Wales safeguarding policy requires permission for all children and young people under 18.

Choosing the right platform

6. The Church in Wales does not endorse one particular platform. It is therefore important that a decision is made to choose a platform which is appropriate for the content you wish to share. Many churches have found that more business-focused applications such as Skype, Zoom and Microsoft Teams can be used to facilitate group video calls. Whereas Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are better suited to static content which does not require group engagement.
7. Ensure that children and young people are only using apps and programmes that they are legally the right age to use.
8. If you are posting videos on some platforms, then it is possible to turn off the comments section to avoid any form of cyber-bullying or discrimination.

Working Safely online

9. The rule about lone-working is the same as with face-to-face encounters: at least two adult leaders/volunteers should be involved in any communication either by video call or chat system, just as with all other work with children and young people in church. Each leader/volunteer should be DBS checked at an enhanced level.
10. For accountability, it will be important for leaders and volunteers to log any contact they are having; *Appendix 4 Session Record Form*.
11. Limit access to video chats by only issuing passwords to those who have contacted in advance.
12. Establish some basic etiquette with young users before beginning. These should include
 - being fully clothed (if it would not be acceptable to wear to school then it is not acceptable in this context either)
 - Being in a communal area within the home – children and young people should not be in their bedrooms.
 - Parents should sign their children into a session and log them off.
 - The household of the child/ young person taking part need to uphold the same standards of behaviour that you would expect from the participant e.g. all the above plus no swearing or using inappropriate language.
13. Consider how you would deal with any inappropriate behaviours. Some platforms have the ability to allow you to mute participants or move participants to a “waiting room”.
14. Remember on some programmes that you may have limited control over what the rest of the group may hear or see from each other e.g. what someone might put on chat. There should be no allowance for private chat either with a leader/volunteer or another participant – please make chat rooms either public or disable them completely.
15. Do not under any circumstances record video calls
16. Avoid using emoji or icons that could be misleading e.g. xx, LOL, 😊.
17. One-on-one contact should never be used with a young person, always have an extra leader/volunteer as part of the chat who does not have to take part in the conversation but can ensure accountability. Make sure that the young person is aware of the presence of another DBS checked adult. Any concerns for a young

person or disclosure should be addressed by following the usual safeguarding practices.

Wider Awareness

18. In terms of GDPR you should be aware of the personal data that is gathered by the platform you use. When seeking consent for video conferencing, you should be clear with parents and/or young people that they are consenting not only to being part of a video call, but to this data being gathered. Please be aware that each of these platforms has their own privacy policy/notice. You should read these yourself and make parents/carers and young people aware of them – in particular, ensure that you review what cookies are active and change these settings to necessary cookies only.
19. Make sure that children and young people know where to go for support. This includes having a link to Safeguarding Officers within the diocese. This ensures that young people can report anything they are concerned about in regards behaviour of a leader/volunteer towards them.
20. Be aware of your digital footprint: - make sure that there is no content connected to anyone involved that could be construed the wrong way. Make sure that you have no under 18s connected to the work you are doing as friends on any platform.
21. If you are having to store personal details for participants due to the current restrictions with regards to places of worship, then make sure they are secure. If they are being kept digitally then they should be encrypted, and password protected. If these are physical documents, then they should be kept in a lockable container such as a filing cabinet.

[Information and an excellent video from Youth for Christ](#)

[Youth for Christ: How to use zoom](#)

[Diocese of Llandaff Working with Children and Young People online](#)

For more details or support on any of the matters in this document, contact:

Children, Youth, Families and Education team

CYFO.swanbrec@churchinwales.org.uk

For any safeguarding issues, contact:

Faye Howe

Tel: 07551124219

Email: fayhowe@churchinwales.org.uk

Dorian Davies

Tel: 07908963335

Email: doriandavies@churchinwales.org.uk

Appendix 1



Application for approval of activities

This form is to be completed by the activity/event/group leader or other designated church representative for the purpose of seeking approval for the activity.

This form, when completed, should be submitted to the Parish Priest together with a completed Risk Assessment and appropriate consent forms from those with parental responsibility for the children who will be involved in the activity.

The Parish Priest, Church Wardens or PCC needs to sign to agree that the activity has been approved and a copy of this approval kept by the Priest.

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (BY PARISH PRIEST OR LEADER OF THE ORGANISATION)			
PARISH/ ORGANISATION:			
EVENT LEADER:	This person will also take the lead in dealing with any safeguarding concerns.		
Details of Activity/Event:			
Names, Gender, Experience, and specific responsibilities of adult leaders:			
Full Name	Gender	Experience and specific responsibilities	
	Male Female		
Proposed size and composition of the group:			
Age Range:		Adult to child ratio	
Contact details of Liaison person			
Telephone Number			

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF ANY INFORMATION SHEETS SENT TO PARENTS, PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS AND THE RISK ASSESSMENT FORM (IF REQUIRED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARISH)				
Risk assessment to be undertaken:				
By:		On:		
Signed:	X _____	Date:		
Event Leader:				
Event Approved:	Yes		No	
Risk Assessment:	Yes		No	
Consent Form	Yes		No	
Any Comments				
The person completing this form must sign below and then send the form to the Parish Priest, Church Wardens or PCC for approval and signature.				
Signed:	X _____	Date:		
Position:				
This activity was approved /not approved by Parish Priest/ Church Warden/ Designated PCC member.				
Signed:	X _____	Date:		
Position:				

Appendix 2



Consent form for



electronic communication with young people

Please fill in all relevant sections of this form and return to your session leader.

Parish Name:

Although we have had to put all our in-person meetings on hold, we are still keen to meet, stay connected and to try new activities. We'd like to use virtual meetings to do this but need to be sure you are clear on how these will work, what we will do and what we expect you to do to keep your child safe online. (This section should be completed by the session leader)

These meetings will start on	
The online platform that we will be using is	
They will take place on 	
Start Time	
Finish Time	

In order to make sure that your child stays safe online, we ask that you do the following:

- Access to the platform is made through the parent/carers account unless your child meets the age restrictions for the platform.
- An appropriate adult, like a parent or carer will remain in the room with participants under 13 during video or conference calls to help or join in. For older participants, please make sure there is an appropriate adult nearby so that they can ask for help if they need it.
- For children under 13, you will 'sign in' and 'log off' your child at the meeting like you would at a activity, so we know that they have an appropriate adult nearby if they need a hand. This will also give us a chance to talk with you if we need to.
- Your child must take part in the video call in a suitable communal environment (not a bedroom) and be appropriately dressed in clothing that fully covers top and bottom half of the body- if it wouldn't be suitable in school, it's not appropriate for a call either. All members of the household must be aware that the call is taking place and make sure they use appropriate language and behaviour when nearby or in the background.
- You will make sure your child has 'logged off' the call correctly and signed out before turning off any devices.
- You and your child will not try to contact any leaders/volunteers using these online tools outside of the pre-arranged calls. If you need to contact a leader/volunteer for any reason you will do so following your normal contact procedures (i.e. emailing).

In order to protect your child, we will:

- Have a minimum of two adults leaders/volunteers with a DBS check present throughout the video call who will stay on the call until all participants have 'logged off'.
- No leader will contact you outside of any pre-arranged meetings using these online tools and if they do need to contact you will do so following their normal contact procedures (i.e. emailing)
- Leaders will watch through and check any links or videos they may direct your young person to. They will make sure everything they use is age appropriate.
- Leaders and other adults on the call will use appropriate language/behaviour throughout the call.
- All leaders will ensure they are in a communal living space throughout the call, and any members of their household will use appropriate language/behaviour throughout the call.

In signing this you are confirming that (please tick all that apply):

I have read, understood, and agree to my part in the above requirements.

I give consent for my child to be part of online virtual meetings.

Signature Parent/Carer

Name of child

- If you have another child who would also like to join in with the video calls, please complete a second form for that child.
- Please fill in all relevant sections of this form and return to your session leader – this can be done by email
- Please type your name in the signature space provided, a physical signature is not necessary.
- You (parent/carer) must return this form to the session leader.

If we do not get consent your child will not be able to join the call. The virtual meetings will only continue for as long as all leaders are happy and comfortable.

Appendix 3



Consent form for taking and using images



**PARENT/GUARDIAN AND YOUNG PERSON CONSENT FORM FOR
THE TAKING AND USING OF PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEO**

Ministry Area _____ is made up of _____ churches.

These churches are _____

In accordance with our safeguarding policy we will not permit photographs, videos or other images of children and young people to be taken or used without the consent of the parents/carers and children.

We use images to help us raise awareness of the work of the organisation, for publicity/promotional purposes or to share information. Consent given will apply for a period of two years, after which a renewed request for consent may be made.

Please note if consent is not given this will not disadvantage any individual in any way.

The named parish/ministry area/event will abide by the principles of safe practice in the taking, use and storage of photographs/videos of children and young people.

Insert name of parish/ministry area/event _____

The named parish/ministry area/event will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform: _____

Click to add name and contact details _____

Event name-

Date

PARENT/GUARDIAN TO COMPLETE:

Please Print letters clearly

I (Parent/Guardian name)

consent to Parish/ministry area

photographing or videoing my child

[Click here to add Child's name](#)

I understand that these images/videos will be displayed in the following circumstances:

SOCIAL MEDIA/ CHURCH AFFILIATED WEBSITES/ DIOCESAN AND PROVINCIAL WEBSITES
AND PUBLICATIONS

and I hereby agree to this.

Signature:

Date:

please type your name in the signature space provided, a physical signature is not necessary

Session Details (type/name of event or activity or group, date, and time)

Incidents of significance: (if any – including concerns)

Action taken: (if any)

Signed:

X

Date:

Position: