

ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CHURCH WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

To meet with young people through video conferencing you must use the Grace Church Zoom accounts.

You must notify the Grace Kids Coordinator and the Leadership Team by email with the date and time that the meeting has been organised.

All people attending groups will continue to complete registration forms providing key parent / guardian contact information and photography / social media permissions. These will continue to be updated annually in September.

All links and details (date, time, and participants e.g. 'Pathfinders', names of leaders) for online group sessions will only be communicated to parents (not directly to the young people), and only communicated via private channels (email, messaging apps, NOT on public social media or website). As all links will only be communicated to parents, parental consent for young people attending meetings will be assumed each time the child joins.

At all times, kids team leaders must demonstrate respectful modes of behaviour and speech and suitable physical presentation and clothing.

Two DBS checked members of the Grace Kids team must be present for the duration of the meeting and must be present before any young people 'arrive' and must remain until all young people have left.

When 'break out rooms' are used there must be at least one safely recruited leader present in each group, AND more than one young person.

Online meetings MUST be password protected.

Links for participants to join must not be shared publicly but instead sent only through private channels (emails, or specific group messages).

Disable:

- Private chat function
- Annotation
- Far-end camera control
- File transfer
- Allow participants to join before host
- Virtual backgrounds (this reduces the risk of the online meeting being recorded by a third party out of screen shot).

The 'waiting room' function should be enabled.

Recordings of group calls must not be made.

Young people should be asked to be in a family space (i.e.. not their bedrooms) while on the call and you might consider asking parents of younger children to be present during the video call.

If a video call to an individual is deemed necessary, then two members of the Grace Kids team must be present. Under no circumstances must one member of the team contact a young person individually.

If you have concerns about a Grace Kids team leader or young person's conduct during a video chat, then you must speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If contacting young people through a chat app such as WhatsApp, group chats (rather than one-to-one) must always be used. At least two members of the kids team must be part of the chat and parents should also be included / or have access to the chat.

Chats may be saved by the host to refer to what has been said just as notes on post-its or flip chart paper in a face-to-face session are sometimes saved for future reference.

Normal kids team code of conduct rules apply in video conferencing.

Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.

Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.

Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.

Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; don't abbreviate or short-cut your communications.

Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.

Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.

Leaders should be mindful of what is in the background of their video and avoid attending meetings from their bedrooms if possible.

Only give personal contact details to children that are within the public domain of the church / organisation, including your mobile telephone number.

If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.

Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of the church/organisation and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.

Where possible only use equipment provided by the church/organisation to communicate with children.

Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.

Email should only be used to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.

Email history should be kept and dated.

When using email/internet for communication with children, it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. Where working with children outside normal office hours workers should seek advice from their leader but there should be no email communication after 9pm, and online meetings should stick to their designated time slots.