



Video Conferencing with Young People

Whilst the use of video conferencing for youth work can provide exciting opportunities, there are potential safeguarding challenges that must be managed. When considering virtual meetups with youth groups (young people aged 11 years, plus), the following best practice should be adhered to:

- Avoid the use of Skype / Facetime – these are social media tools and as such share contact details with all users, you may inadvertently connect young people up with other people as an unintended consequence.
- Instead use a video conferencing platform such as Zoom: <https://zoom.us/> This is free to use (will give you a 40 min chat) or a paid for account allows you to host longer sessions. Users only need to have an email address for account setup.
- Use of video conferencing with young people will require:
 - **Risk Assessment:** as with any activity in church with children or young people, video conferencing must be properly risk assessed. Risks should be identified, as well as ways to manage those risks.
 - **PCC Approval:** video conferencing should be approved by the PCC, who should see the risk assessments as described above and ensure that risks have been identified and are being managed appropriately. Any PCC approval for video conferencing with young people, should be recorded in the PCC minutes.
 - **Safer Recruitment:** leaders and volunteers must be safely recruited, in accordance with the [CofE Safer Recruitment guidance](#) and have undertaken role relevant safeguarding training within the last 3 years.
 - **Parental consent** should be obtained for video conferencing. If new youth members want to join the group, they should have 'usual' group consent forms completed as well.
- **Code of Safer Working Practice:** The [Code of Safer Working Practice](#) must be adhered to. As with all work with children and young people, we should ensure that the behaviour of those representing the church meets these standards during online communication and video calling.
- **No lone-working:** Always make sure you have at least 2 safely recruited youth leaders present who would normally have 'real time' contact with the youth group. Make sure both leaders are live before young people arrive. Reserve video calling for group chats – not making one-to-one video calls.
- **Use parents / carers email address** to send the meeting invite to, as this ensures parents/carers are aware of the activity and can set the young person up to access the session appropriately.
- As always, be inclusive – are there any young people from your group who would struggle to participate in this way, what extra support can be put in place for them? Be aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties, eg issues with speakers/microphones.
- As well as the video interface, there is usually space to write comments and participants can screen share too – consider use of this facility for example to write one-word answers to questions to share. Be creative!
- **DO NOT RECORD.** Most video conferencing software allows for the session to be recorded – this is an option for the host of the meeting only. Do not record video conferencing with young people.

Useful resources for children, parents and workers about keeping safe in the online world: [Thinkuknow](#)