



Diocese of St Asaph and Bangor joint guidelines on Meeting online with Children and Young People

Video Conferencing

So much has changed for children and young people over the past few months. There have been significant changes to the way in which we as a church seek to engage and to share our faith with them. What has not changed, however, is the reason behind why we are passionate about doing this. As a church we desire to share the Hope and Love of Jesus with children, young people and their families in relevant and creative ways. We have all had to work at understanding new technologies - video conferencing to name but one!

The Dioceses of Bangor and St Asaph are currently advising that no face to face meetings should be taking place unless they are deemed essential, are risk assessed and are approved by the local Archdeacon. In light of this we are offering these following guidelines to support churches/Mission Areas/Ministry Areas in their ministry with children, young people and families.

Please read and follow the guidance and links below and do not hesitate to contact either Tim Feak (St Asaph) or Naomi Wood (Bangor) for more information.

General Principles

1. 'All current Church in Wales guidelines and policies continue to apply including Recruitment, Behaviour of Leaders and Participants, Safeguarding and General Good Practice. All of the Church in Wales Guidance can be found [here](#).
2. Avoid the use of Skype/Facetime/What's App/Facebook Chat and other Social Media tools – these share contact details with all users and you may inadvertently connect children with other people as an unintended consequence. Instead use a dedicated video conferencing platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
3. Video Conferencing for some will be new and beyond the normal running of your group and therefore needs explicit permission before use in the following ways:
 - a. You must have:
 - i. Mission/Ministry Area approval – speak to your vicar, Ministry/Mission Area Leader or Archdeacon to discuss your intentions. Do make sure you follow the guidelines from the Church in Wales on how to set up a new project including documenting the decision in the MAC minutes.
 - ii. Parental consent – set up an email which explains:
 - what you are doing
 - the date and time of the video conference session

- which leaders (at least 2) are participating
 - that the parent/ carer needs to be present at all times during the session with the children, they need to make themselves seen at the beginning of the session then can go into the background, but you need to know they are there
 - the responsibility of the adult and the expected behaviour of the child during the session
 - Ask for a reply as a form of consent and keep these emails in a separate folder. You may also want to do a test video call with just parents before you start.
4. You need at least 2 DBS checked, safely recruited, consistent and familiar leaders present.
5. Use parents/carers email address and Zoom/Teams Account.

This ensures parents/carers are aware that it is happening and can set up the session appropriately. The minimum age for having a Zoom or Teams account is 16 years old.

Please ensure you Bcc all contacts and comply with GDPR when sending out invitations and login details.

6. Do not make meetings public and follow Church in Wales Guidance.

This includes not publishing the login details of the meeting in the public domain i.e. Social Media, local newspapers, church website. These should be sent directly to those attending.

There are some really easy to follow guidelines for Zoom that can be found on the Church in Wales website [here](#) or Teams information is available [here](#).

7. You must not record.

Most video conferencing software allows for the session to be recorded – this is an option for the host of the meeting only. You would need separate permission for data capture and there are all sorts of issues around storage, GDPR etc.

Other Considerations

- Make sure both leaders are live before children arrive.
- Ideally use the same time slot as your normal group meeting.
- Only video in a family room. No bedrooms please!
- Everyone should be fully dressed in daytime clothes. No PJs please!
- As always, be inclusive – are there any children from your group who would struggle to participate in this way, what extra support can be put in place for them?
- As well as the video interface, there is usually a 'chat' space to write comments and participants can screen share too.

Consider the use of this facility for example an adult who is sat with a young child could write answers to questions to share or the young people could play a word based game - be creative!

Please note that the chat function on some platforms, including Teams, is saved to everyone's computers even once the meeting has been closed. If sensitive information is shared during the meeting all participants will have access to this.

It would be good practice for one of the leaders present to have the role of monitoring the chat function.

- Use the mute button so that everyone can take turns in speaking.
- Be aware of technical difficulties! There can be issues with speakers and microphones! So possibly have a practise with parents in an evening before your meeting.

Code of Conduct for children and adults involved

- An adult must be present in the room with the child/ren at all times
They need to be seen at the beginning of the session so leaders are aware they are there but can then be out of view for the remainder of the session.
- The child/ren must always be in a daytime family room when participating in the session, not in a bedroom or visiting other rooms in the house with a mobile device.
- The child/ren must always be in daytime clothes (no pyjamas)
- If a child is in PJ's or not in a family room the leader as the host can 'exclude' that child/ren until they change and move rooms, then they can re-enter the group.
- You can turn off video if you want and just access the session via audio.
- Please try to keep your microphone muted as much as possible during the session. We know that the child/ren will be excited and that many (but not all) will want a chance to speak, so we will be practising good turn talking.

Good Practice for Communicating Online

- Where possible use organisational email and online accounts to communicate with children and young people, never personal accounts. Your Mission/Ministry Area could set up a dedicated email address for you to be able to use.
- Where possible use an organisational computer, mobile or tablet to communicate with young people.
- If you want to take and/or share photos of a child for any purpose, always make sure you have written parental permission along with asking the child. This is also true for any video clip of young people. Forms are available [here](#)
- Communicating with young people by electronic means should be kept within the hours of 9am – 9pm.
- Avoid sharing or revealing personal information to young people you work with.
- Do not use video conferencing one to one with a child or young person.
- Always use age-appropriate language in your communications and make sure all your communications are relevant to the work of the project you're involved in.

Handy Tip

Why not trial a video conference with your leaders first?!

Links

Zoom guidance from the Church in Wales <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/clergy-and-members/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/zoom-safe-use-guide/>

Safeguarding Guidelines from the Welsh Government about Live Streaming and Video Conferencing <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/live-streaming-and-video-conferencing-safeguarding-principles-and-practice>

The Church in Wales Safeguarding and Guidance
<https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/safeguarding/>

(for Live-Streaming please see separate Guidance Document)