

Video Conferencing with Families and their Children *(to be used in conjunction with document Code of Conduct for Using Zoom)*

In these extraordinary times, you may want to consider virtual meetups with parents and children from your church. Here is some advice on how to do this safely.

Please adhere to the following points:

- Avoid the use of Skype / Facetime – these are social media tools and as such share contact details with all users, you may inadvertently connect children and their parents 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 this is beyond the normal running of your group and therefore needs explicit permission before use in the following ways:
 - **You must have PCC approval** – speak to your vicar, churchwarden, standing committee or PCC group to discuss and minute that this is happening – why not trial a video conference with some of these people first?! This does not need to be a complicated process.
 - **Use parents/carers email address** to send an explanatory email in the first instance, giving them the choice of whether they wish to engage in the group in this new way. If they consent, send them a Zoom meeting invite.
 - **You need parental consent** – set up an email which explains
 - what you are doing during the session
 - the date and time(s) of the video conference session
 - Names of children's leaders (at least 2 DBS leaders) are participating
 - the parent/ carer has to be present at all times during the session with the children
 - 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.
 - Also send code of conduct for using ZOOM

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- **Do NOT make meetings public.** In Zoom, there are two options to make a meeting private: require a meeting password or use the waiting room feature and control the admittance of guests.
 - **Manage screensharing options.** In Zoom, change screensharing to "Host Only." So that you are in control of the screens, you can also oversee the video meeting, you can mute everyone also.
 - **Users must use updated version (Jan 2020) of Zoom.** This requires the host to send a password or use the waiting room feature to admit guests.
- **Code of Conduct for leaders involved**
 - 'Normal' Children's group rules would apply including with regards to recruitment and safeguarding process
 - you need at least 2 DBS and safely recruited children leaders present for every session who would normally have 'real time' contact with this group.
 - Make sure both leaders are live before children arrive. Ideally use the same time slot as your normal group meeting.
 - Only video from a family room.
 - Leaders dressed in daytime clothes.
 - **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. Avoid doing this, as you would need separate permission for data capture and there are all sorts of issues around storage, GDPR etc
 - 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.
 - Meeting invites are **only** sent to private groups of named individuals. (Do NOT post meeting details on social media platforms)
 - No new children can join the group while you are not meeting in the normal way
 - 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 space to write comments and participants can screen share too – consider use of this facility for example possibly the parent who is sat with them could write down one-word answers to questions to share, be creative! Also use the mute button so that everyone can take turns in speaking.

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- Be aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties! There can be issues with speakers and microphones! So possibly have a practice with parents in an evening before your meeting.

The latest Covid-19 safeguarding information from the National Safeguarding Team is available at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/promoting-safer-church-safeguarding>

Do please be in touch with any further questions or issues and I will endeavour to help or point you to someone who can.

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” Hebrews 10:24-25

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