



Guidelines for Video Conferencing with children

In these extraordinary times, you may want to consider virtual meetups with your children's group. It is never normally best practice to communicate with children under the age of 13 online, so here is some advice on how to do this safely. Please, above all else adhere to your safeguarding policy

- **Avoid the use of Skype / Facetime / What's app – these are social media tools and as such share contact details with all users, you may inadvertently connect children 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 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.**
 - **You need parental consent – set up an email which explains what you are doing, the date and time of the video conference session, which children's leaders (at least 2 DBS leaders) are participating and make sure you make clear to the parent/ carer that they have 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 and they need to what responsibility they have as the Grown up. 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. Share the *Code of Conduct* below with them**
 - **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. This has been switched on now and should come into effect immediately.**
 - **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.**

- **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 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.
 - All participants should be in their daytime clothes in a family room. No bedrooms and PJs! 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.
 - No new children can join the group while you are not meeting in the normal way
 - As well as the video interface, consider using the chat and whiteboard function so that children with different abilities can join in with the support of their parents. Encourage the use of the mute button and hand raising for permission to speak
 - Be aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties! There can be issues with speakers and microphones! So possibly have a practise with parents in an evening before your meeting.
 - **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.
- **Code of Conduct for Children and parents involved**
 - *An adult must be present in the room with the child/ren at all times, sitting with them to help them with the technology, you need to be seen at the beginning of the session so leaders are aware they are there and then can be out of view if you would like.*
 - *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)*
 - *You can turn off video if you want and just access the session via audio. We will not be recording the session.*
 - *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 taking*