

Fact sheet: Information for Archdiocesan employees and volunteers (workers) engaging in face-to-face communication with children and young people



Technology is rapidly changing and with this change comes new opportunities to explore the online world. Many in the Archdiocese rely on online platforms to stay in contact with their employees and parish communities. If you are engaging in face to face communication with children and young people then the following safeguarding measures need to be taken:

- Expected behaviours to be announced at the start of the communication by workers¹. Consequences of inappropriate behaviour should also be explained.
- Communication with children and young people should be held in appropriate hours that have been approved by the supervisor and parent/guardian.
- Communication with children and young people must be conducted from an appropriate location. Appropriate locations are living rooms, kitchens and home office areas. Inappropriate locations are private places like bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Appropriate clothing must be worn by all during communication.
- Young people are to be informed that they can only participate in group communication from an appropriate location.
- Participants must not share any inappropriate text, images, videos, backgrounds or other inappropriate content. Any content that could be considered pornographic, bullying, derogatory, defamatory or in any way inappropriate will not be tolerated, this includes what participants say verbally.
- Parent and/or guardians should be informed of the communication details between workers and child or young person prior to taking place.
- Written parental/guardian consent needs to be obtained prior to communication.
- Online communication with children and young people must be initiated by Archdiocesan workers and with the approval of their supervisor.

¹ Workers are Archdiocesan employees and volunteers

- Workers must ensure that the background during video calls is appropriate. Where ever possible use a virtual background as this will ensure participants can't see what is happening in the workers home.
- If the communication service has a *waiting room* like feature it should be enabled. Workers should only admit children and young people into the chat who have permission from their parent/guardian.
- No worker is to communicate with a child or young person on a 1 to 1 basis.
- All communication with children and young people should be noted in workers and supervisors calendar.
- Two workers must be present at all times when communicating with children and young people.
- A parent or guardian should be in line of sight of young person when they are communicating in a group.
- *Private chats* must be disabled. This will prevent inappropriate conversations.
- *File transfers* must be disabled. This will prevent inappropriate content being posted.
- *Screen sharing* must be disabled. Only the host should be allowed to share screens.
- Communication is not to be recorded.

Reporting

If you become aware of any inappropriate behaviour please contact your Parish Priest or Agency Head. In an emergency please call the Police **000**.

Further information

For further information please refer to the following Archdiocese Safeguarding and Child Protection documents.

- *Overview of the Archdiocese's Child Safeguarding Policy*
- *Code of Conduct for Working with Children*
- *Fact Sheet: Use of technology and social media to communicate with children*
- *Fact Sheet: Cyberbullying*
- *Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Youth Ministry Safeguarding and Child Protection Handbook.*

<https://www.sydneycatholic.org/safeguarding-and-child-protection/>