

Teaching and Supporting our Young People during the current Covid-19 Crisis

This note carries advice or recommendations. The document is subject to change as our response to COVID-19 develops.

Context

- The Free Church has clear guidance on working with children and young people (under 18) – see the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines for the Protection of Children and Adults, the Safeguarding Policy for Social Media and the GDPR guidance.
- This should be adhered to by all leaders.
- Leaders have been asking for some guidance on how they can adhere to the current policy and at the same time, safely contact and support the young people they work with, in the current situation.
- The following paper sets out some suggestions for sharing with leaders.
- This paper focuses on Zoom. It seems to be the most commonly used platform in the Church at the moment. There are other platforms out there, but the same principles could apply.

Overview of Zoom

- Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool that can be used on desktops, laptops or on a mobile app that allows users to meet online, with or without video. Zoom sessions can be recorded. Zoom offers quality video and audio interaction.
- Zoom is not social media if used with the recommended settings.
- Children/young people cannot contact leaders or message them on Zoom.
- There is a private chat function on Zoom but this should be disabled by the group leader.
- Children/young people do not require Zoom account in order to participate.
- There is a waiting room where participants can be 'held' then admitted all at the same time, meaning that no private chat is possible between leaders and children/young people, or between the children/young people themselves.
- Zoom has break out rooms where you can allocate children/young people with a leader to discuss issues etc. - always two or more children/young people in each group with two leaders.
- [Congregation Name] Zoom can only be used if one of the leaders has set it up; it cannot be used by the children/young people on their own. They would have to have an account and each other's email addresses.
- If children/young people prefer not to be seen on screen they can call into the meeting and join it in audio only.

*Covid-19 – Overview of Zoom
(Teaching and Supporting)
Version 1*

- You can record Zoom sessions. This could be used by leaders wishing to have a record of the meeting.
- When using Zoom for church meetings the screenshare facility should be set so that only the host can share their screen.
- All leaders must have a satisfactory PVG check through the Free Church.

In order for children and young people under 18 to join church activities through Zoom, their parents/guardians must give permission. A template letter to parents/guardians is provided for use as a separate Word document.

FAQs

1. What number of children/young people will be in the breakout rooms?

Two leaders with two children/young people minimum.

2. Will we do 1-2-1 meetings with children/young people?

No. Not with any under 18s as per the Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines.

3. Will children/young people be able to see the leaders contact details on Zoom?

No.

4. Should we encourage children/young people to have their own Zoom calls together say during the week, to chat and pray?

No, they cannot host Zoom chats as they are not of 'legal age'. They can only use it when adults are hosting.

5. How would we remind children/young people of their responsibilities online at this time?

Children/young people would be reminded of the code of conduct at the beginning of each meeting i.e. be respectful to others in the group and not to do anything online that they would not do were we together e.g. taking photos of the screen showing others faces or instigating any private chats among the group.

6. Can young people call into the meeting if bandwidth is an issue?

Yes. Zoom has a dial in facility.