



Use of web-based video conferencing tools – information sheet with FAQs

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 the use of social media, and the GDPR guidance. This should be adhered to by all leaders in all settings.
- This paper focuses on Zoom. It seems to be the most commonly used platform. There are other platforms available, but the same principles would 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 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.
- Participants do not require a Zoom account in order to participate.
- There is a waiting room where participants can be 'held' and then admitted all at the same time, this means that no private chat is possible between participants.
- Zoom has break out rooms where you can allocate participants with a leader to discuss issues etc. - always have two or more participants in each group with two leaders.
- A congregational Zoom account can only be used if one of the leaders has set it up; it cannot be used by participants on their own. They would have to have an account and each other's email addresses.
- If participants prefer not to be seen on screen they can call into the meeting and join it in audio only.

- You can record Zoom sessions. This could be used by leaders wishing to have a record of the meeting. However, the agreement of all participants in the meeting is required if this is the case.
- When using Zoom for church meetings, the screenshare facility should be set so that only the host can share their screen.
- All group 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 participants 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?

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 participants call into the meeting if bandwidth is an issue?

Yes. Zoom has a dial in facility.