



diocese  
of **limerick**  
our catholic community

**Digital, Social Media and Online  
Communications with  
Young People  
Policy 2022**

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**If there is a safeguarding concern contact the  
Director of Safeguarding : 087 323 3564**

## **Introduction: Rationale for Using Digital, Social Media and Online Communication with Children and Young People**

Social media platforms increasingly dominate how people communicate, find information, and access news and entertainment. As our world moves into an increasingly digital and online environment, so have our ministries. This is particularly true for those ministering to youth groups as more young people utilise a wide variety of online, digital and social media platforms as their preferred methods of communication. Indeed, these mediums are essential tools in our efforts to communicate and share the Gospel with the next generation. There is great potential in the utilisation of these platforms to aid Parishes / Youth Ministry in deepening relationships with young people, encouraging them in their faith, and promoting opportunities and events for the.

However, social media involves challenges for both young people and those who minister to them. The Diocese of Cloyne acknowledges the dangers and potential risks these platforms can pose to both our young people and to our Parish / Youth Ministry personnel. Children and young people must be protected from all forms of online abuse, including such activities as online bullying, grooming and sexting. Thus, transparency, prudence and professionalism must guide our digital communication and online interactions with young people. In this way, we can improve ministry effectiveness while ensuring the privacy and safeguarding of everyone involved.

### **2.0 Guidelines for Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Using Social Media Platforms with Children and Young People (Under 18).**

- Diocesan Safeguarding Policy applies in your online communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults, as it does in face-to-face settings.
- In Ireland under the Child Care Act 1991, the Children Act 2001 a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years.

#### **2.1 Facebook / Messenger**      Age rating 16+ (Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years)

Facebook is a platform where you can post text, images and videos to your “wall”, as well as promote events. Messenger is the direct messaging (DM) function of Facebook. It has a separate app.

- Any Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Facebook account must be used for Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry purposes only and not as a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel personal account.
- All ministry with young people through Facebook must be in line with the Diocesan Code of Conduct for Volunteers and be appropriate:
  - The Facebook account must not be utilised between 10pm and 8am.
  - One to one communication with young people must be kept in the public eye to safeguard both the young person and the adult leader. Communications must be done through the ‘wall’ function and it is advised that this is utilised to reply to any private messages which young people may have sent to the page.

- Messenger must not be used for individual or group chats.
- All messages must be saved in Messenger (both incoming and outgoing).
- If you are using emojis, they should reflect the information you are communicating. For example, music notes can be used if you are communicating about music /worship. Never use emojis which could be misinterpreted (hearts, lips etc). If in doubt, do not use. Acronyms should not be used as they may be misinterpreted or misconstrued by parents /guardians or young people e.g. LOL, YOLO.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel are not permitted to direct message or accept/send friend requests to young people from their own personal Facebook account.
- Young people are free to like or follow Parishes / Diocesan Youth Ministry on Facebook however Parishes / Youth Ministry cannot 'follow' any young person back. The accounts the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry can 'follow' must be organisations or official Facebook accounts relevant to the youth ministry e.g. Holy Family Mission, Youth 2000.

## **2.2 Instagram** Age rating 13+ (Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years)

Instagram is a free photo and video sharing app available on iPhone and Android. People can upload photos or videos to our service and share them with their followers or with a select group of friends. They can also view, comment and like posts shared by their friends on Instagram. It has a direct messaging (DM) function.

- Any Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Instagram account must be used for Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry purposes only and not as a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel personal account.
- All ministry with young people through Instagram must be in line with the Diocesan Code of Conduct for Volunteers and be appropriate:
  - Photos uploaded onto the Instagram must be in line with the ethos and guiding principles of the Diocese.
  - The account is not to be utilised to showcase the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel's own interests.
  - All photos uploaded to Instagram should be stored as per Diocesan GDPR requirements.
  - The Instagram account is not to be utilised after between 10pm and 8am.
  - Young people are free to 'follow' any Parishes / Youth Ministry on Instagram however Parishes / Youth Ministry cannot 'follow' any young person back. The accounts the Diocese Youth Ministry can 'follow' must be organisations or official Instagram accounts relevant to the youth ministry e.g. Family Mission, Youth 2000.
  - Replying to comments on Instagram should be restricted.

- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel may reply to a comment on the relevant Instagram post only if it is a query about an event.
- Replying to general comments is not allowed.
- Any replies in the comments section must not use Emojis or Acronyms e.g. LOL, YOLO, heart emoji, as these may be misinterpreted by parents / guardians or other young people.
- Appropriate 'hash tags' are allowed e.g. those related to youth ministry, liturgical seasons, scripture, prayer, saints, inspiring quotes #Christmas #praytherosary #preparetheway.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel are not permitted to direct message or accept/send follow requests to young people from their own personal Instagram account.
- When posting "Stories" on Instagram, it is recommended to highlight the story and bookmark it in the relevant section, so that all information that has been posted can be accessed at any time and not just for 24 hours.

• **Instagram Groups:**

- Instagram Groups allows you to create a specific group of Instagram users, and to send direct messages (DMs), pictures and videos within the group chat.
- When using Instagram group chats you should be aware that adding people to the group discloses their Instagram handle to the rest of the group, and the written joint consent of children/ young people and parents / guardians must be given for this.
- If the youth group is made up of both over and under 18's, a separate Instagram chat group should be set up for both age groups.
- At least two Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry designated adults (who have been Garda vetted) must be part of an Instagram group chat. Only vetted leaders can be part of a group with u18's.
- As a young person leaves the youth group, they should immediately be deleted from the group Instagram group list.
- Young people should be given the option to unsubscribe / opt out of the Instagram group chat also. They can also choose to leave the group themselves.
- Instagram also offers a Video Group Chat option, limited to 6 people. We recommend using Zoom as an online communications platform rather than this option. View zoom policy document available on: [www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie)
- Breaches of the Online Code of conduct will result in the young person being removed from the group chat. Incidents should be recorded with as much detail as possible immediately after the meeting has ended and stored as per Diocesan GDPR requirements. parents / guardians are to be informed of the breach and consequences.

### **2.3 Use of Facebook / Instagram or YouTube “Live” by Parish / Diocese**

Live-streaming is a beneficial way of reaching out to those in your ministry, but be sure you have a clear purpose for the video and be well-prepared in advance. Be aware that when you go live on any platform, there is no going back to edit this footage – whatever happens is happening in front of a live audience. Before using Facebook or Instagram / YouTube Live, clergy and other contributors, should be aware of the implications of doing so. These include the following:

- Written permission from a young person and their parent / guardian shall be obtained prior to any child or young person featuring in any Facebook / Instagram or YouTube video created on a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry account.
- Uploading a video to Facebook/Instagram/YouTube Live means that it is streamed on the internet. Depending on what settings you use, this may mean that anyone who subscribes to your Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry account may view the video. However, it is not necessarily confined to the account’s friends / followers / subscribers.
- Once a live-streamed video is uploaded, the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry loses control of that video. While it is possible to delete the video after broadcasting, if they are left on the Parish / Diocesan Youth ministry account, page or channel, they can be saved or shared by individuals who view them with their own friends, followers and / or subscribers.
- Live-streamed videos can be deleted from the social media platform, unless there is a purpose for making them available after the livestream has ended.
- It is possible to block specific users from commenting / spamming on Facebook or Instagram Live for the duration of the feed, and to turn off live chat during a YouTube live stream or block certain words. If you choose not to do this, be aware that comments are not always complementary.

Steps to take when using social media in this way:

- Check the Facebook/Instagram/YouTube privacy settings. The settings dictate who can view the video. These are generally either (i) everyone on Facebook/Instagram; or (ii) the “friends” of the social media account. If you want to direct a particular video to specified individuals, it is also possible to pick the “friends” who you want to see it.
- If you have not disabled live chat when using YouTube live stream, the account administrators must ensure the comments below any video posts are monitored.
- Set a time frame after which the video will be deleted / removed unless you choose to save them. Instagram live stories automatically delete after 24 hours unless you choose to save it to IGTV (Instagram TV) or download it to share to Facebook.

## 2.4 Twitter

Age rating 16+ (Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years)

Twitter is a platform that allows users to write short posts. It also allows picture and video to be shared, and there is a direct messaging (DM) function.

- Any Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Twitter account must be used for Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry purposes only and not as a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel personal account.
- Tweets sent from this account must be in line with the ethos and guiding principles of the Diocese. It is not to be utilised to endorse or promote the Parish's / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel's own interests.
- All 'tweets' must be saved in the Twitter feed and not deleted.
- All communication must be appropriate:
  - All communication with young people via Twitter must be done publicly and on the 'twitter feed'.
  - The ability for young people to 'direct message' the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Twitter account must be disabled at all times.
  - The Twitter account must not be utilised between 10pm and 8am.
  - Young people are free to 'follow' Parish / Youth Ministry Twitter account however Parishes or Youth Ministry cannot 'follow' any young person back or comment, like or retweet any of their posts. The accounts the Parish / Youth Ministry can 'follow' must be organisations or official twitter accounts relevant to the youth ministry e.g. @Pope Francis, @Alpha.
  - If you are using emojis, they should reflect the information you are communicating. For example, music notes can be used if you are communicating about music /worship. Never use emojis which could be misinterpreted (hearts, lips etc). If in doubt, do not use. Acronyms should not be used as they may be misinterpreted or misconstrued by parents / guardians or young people e.g. LOL, YOLO.
  - Appropriate 'hash tags' are allowed e.g. those related to youth ministry, liturgical seasons, scripture, prayer, saints, inspiring quotes, specific Youth Ministry challenge hashtags #Christmas #praytherosary #AshWednesday
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel are not permitted to direct message or accept / send follow requests to young people from their own personal Twitter account.

## **2.5 Snapchat**

Age rating 16+ (Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years)

The use of Snapchat by any Diocesan Group/Parish/Youth Ministry Group is prohibited. Snapchat is a picture and video sharing app with an ephemeral nature. This means that the pictures/videos taken and shared are only viewable for up to 10 seconds before they disappear from the recipient's phone. Images and messages cannot be saved on the app. Due to its nature it is impossible to safeguard the use of Snapchat, hence the decision to implement a no use policy in relation to this social media app.

## **2.6 WhatsApp**

Age rating 16+ (Digital Age of Consent in Ireland is 16 years)

WhatsApp uses the internet to send messages, images, audio or video. Messages can be sent to individuals or groups.

- WhatsApp can be a great tool for sending group messages between / to young people however written permission from a young person and their parent / guardian shall be obtained first.
- When using WhatsApp group chats you should be aware that adding people to the group discloses their mobile number to the rest of the group, and the consent of children/ young people and parents / guardians must be given for this.
- If the youth group is made up of both over and under 18's, a separate WhatsApp chat group should be set up for both age groups.
- At least two Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry designated adults (who have been Garda vetted) must be part of a WhatsApp group chat. Only vetted leaders can be part of a group with u18's.
- As a young person leaves the youth group, they should immediately be deleted from the group WhatsApp chat list.
- Young people should be given the option to unsubscribe / opt out of the WhatsApp group chat also.
- WhatsApp allows you to back up your chats, and this should be done through the designated Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry email account.
- WhatsApp has a "Disappearing Messages" setting, which when turned on by either person in a one-to-one chat or by Group Administrators, this will make new messages disappear from the chat after seven days. Group Administrators should ensure this setting is disabled (turned off).

## **2.7 Youth Ministry Websites or Web pages**

- Parish / Diocesan Youth ministry webpages or websites shall be related to or an extension of the parish / diocesan website. If a parish website is not available, the youth ministry website shall be registered in the name of the parish / diocese.



- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry webpages or websites may be utilised for catechesis, encouraging prayer and spiritual growth, ministry event promotions and coverage, sharing relevant resources.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry websites or webpages must be in line with the ethos and guiding principles of the Diocese of Cloyne.
- A minimum of two adults within the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry shall have full access to the website account.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry websites or webpages shall not contain personal photographs, personal information, or contact information about young people.
- Written permission from a young person and their Parent / Guardian shall be obtained prior to posting any photographs, videos, or other identifying information about young people on a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry webpage or website.

## **2.8 Online Video and Music Sharing Accounts: e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Spotify, iTunes**

- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry digital online video and music accounts may be utilised for catechesis, event promotions, sharing resources, encouraging prayer or evangelization. It is not to be utilised to endorse or promote the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel's own interests.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry digital video and music uploaded, shared or recommended must be in line with the ethos and guiding principles of the Diocese of Cloyne.
- A minimum of 2 designated adults in the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry shall have full access to / administrate the digital online video or music account.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry channels or accounts shall not contain personal photographs, personal information, or contact information about young people.
- Written permission from a parent / guardian and young person shall be obtained prior to posting any photographs, videos, or other identifying information about young people in a Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry online video.
- If a video has a "comment" function enabled, administrators shall monitor comments closely and react quickly should any comment turn inappropriate. Comments may also be disabled.
- Replying to comments should be restricted. Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel may reply to a comment only if it is a query about an event. Replying to general comments is not allowed.
- Young people are free to 'follow' or subscribe to a Parish / Youth Ministry video channel / music account, however Parishes or Youth Ministry cannot 'follow' (or subscribe to) any young person.

- The accounts / channels the Parish / Youth Ministry can 'follow' or subscribe to must be organisations or official accounts relevant to Youth Ministry. e.g. Youth 2000 Ireland.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel are not permitted to subscribe to young people from their own personal accounts or share their personal account information with them.

## 2.9 Email, Texts

- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry emails and texts may be utilised for catechesis, event promotions, sharing resources, encouraging prayer. They are not to be utilised to endorse or promote the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel's own interests.
- Texting / emailing should only be used for communication, not conversation.
- Only an officially designated Diocesan / Parish Youth Ministry email account or mobile number should be used to send emails / texts. Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel should never use their own personal email account or provide a young person their personal contact details.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry texts and / or emails must be in line with the ethos and guiding principles of the Diocese.
- Direct communication with individual children and young people (for example, asking them to attend a choir practice or a Zoom Call) is to be done through their Parents / Guardians rather than directly to the children and young people.
- It is permissible to send messages (by text or email) to older adolescents who are still minors (16 and 17 year olds), under certain conditions:
  - the young people and their Parents / Guardians have given written consent
  - the messages come from Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry accounts
  - copies of emails are sent to their Parents / Guardians
  - individual email addresses are to be put in the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) section so people cannot access each other's email addresses
  - a second leader must always receive a Carbon Copy (CC) of the email
- Using bundled text and e-mail messaging, where the same message is sent to a group of young people, can minimise risks associated with this form of communication.
  - Written consent must be obtained from the young person and their parent /guardian prior to using this method of communication.
  - The contact details for a young people receiving such a message must not be visible to other recipients (use BCC function).

- The young people's contact details must be stored securely as per Diocesan GDPR requirements.
- All texts or email messages must clearly identify who has sent the message.
- All text and email messages sent must include an opportunity for the young people "unsubscribe" from receiving further text and email messages.
- The texts and emails sent from this service must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language.
- Texts or emails should never contain personal information about a child or young person.
- The contact numbers and email addresses for the identified young people should only be used for information sharing about Parish / Diocesan Youth ministry.
- Do not respond to emails / texts from young people other than those directly related to Youth Ministry matters. Do not use text or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature.
- In emergency circumstances where a call, text message or email has to be sent to a minor (for example, if a young person has become separated from the group) follow this up with a telephone call to their parent / guardian to make them aware of the content.

## **2.10 Online Communication Platforms e.g. Zoom**

Follow guidance as outlined in policy document: Using an online Communication Platform with Children and Young People – Zoom

### **Safeguarding Guidelines for Parish / Diocesan use of Zoom with young people**

- Diocesan policy around safeguarding applies in your online communications with children, young people, and vulnerable adults, as it does in a face-to-face setting.
- In Ireland under the Child Care Act 1991, the Children Act 2001 and the United Nations on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18.
- The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years.
- Zoom is not intended for use by individuals under the age of 16, unless it is through a school subscriber using Zoom for education, or for the purposes of Parish / Diocesan family and children's ministry.
- Young people under and over the age of 18 should not be in the same online Zoom meeting together.

## **Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Zoom Accounts**

- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry should not use the free version of Zoom as it does not include the security measures that the subscription versions do. The Zoom subscription should be taken out by the parish / diocese and not by individuals.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel should not use a private Zoom account to contact young people.
- Young people should only access the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Zoom meeting through their Parent / Guardian's email.

## **Parental Consent**

- Parental Consent is required to participate in Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry virtual programmes / events. Available on Safeguarding Website at [https://www.limerickdiocesessafeguarding.com/index.cfm/\\_api/render/file/?method=inline&fileID=EC29E196-155D-D234-0A2195C9304144DF](https://www.limerickdiocesessafeguarding.com/index.cfm/_api/render/file/?method=inline&fileID=EC29E196-155D-D234-0A2195C9304144DF)
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry leaders must use the specific Parental Consent form relating to Zoom.
- Links to Zoom Meetings (with Meeting ID / password) will be sent to the Parent / Guardian's email address.

## **Garda Vetting and Safeguarding training**

- All Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Leaders must be Garda Vetted and at least one Leader must attend appropriate Safeguarding training.

## **A Guide to Zoom Features and Requirements**

### **Record Meeting / Screenshots**

- Meetings on Zoom with young people are never to be recorded.
- Participants are not allowed to record or take screenshots. This is outlined in the Code of Conduct.
- Screenshots of the meeting can only be taken by hosts if the young people and their parents / guardians have given written consent. Participants' names must be blacked out if they can be identified in the photo. Waiting Room
- When participants join a meeting, place them in a waiting room and require the Tech Host to admit them individually.
- Enabling the waiting room automatically disables the setting for allowing participants to join before host.

- Display a welcome message any disclaimers in the Waiting Room e.g. “Meeting in Progress” / “Welcome to (insert meeting name / purpose) / The host will let you in soon” and a reminder to participants to have their correct name displayed on screen.

### **Video / Camera**

- Encourage participants to have their cameras on and their first names displayed.
- If a young person is not comfortable with having their camera on they can choose to turn it off.
- **A clear method of verifying the identity of the young person in an online session is essential.**

### **Microphones**

- The Tech Host should mute all participants’ microphones when they start the call.
- Ask participants to mute their microphone when not speaking (otherwise, with background noise it can get very distracting).
- There is the option of using the “Raise your hand” feature to talk next if there is a lot of people on the call. Chat Feature
- The Chat Feature is a great tool for participants who may feel too shy to say something. It allows them to engage in conversation in a way that they will feel more comfortable with.
- The Tech Host has the responsibility for the Chat feature.
- The Tech Host should review the Chat directly after each Zoom meeting in order to make sure that no issue arose during the meeting.
- Zoom has two security features which should be used in Zoom meetings with young people:
  - Prevent participants from saving the chat.
  - Prevent participants from sending each other private chats. Young people can still communicate with the hosts through private chat if necessary. Screen Share
- Screen Share is a great function for showing PowerPoints, videos etc.
- Zoom has the option to allow participants to share their screens. This option should be disabled at the start of the meeting.
- The only person that should be able to share their screen is the Tech Host and / or other youth ministry leaders designated to share their screen for the Zoom meeting Breakout Rooms
- Breakout rooms allow you to split your Zoom meeting into separate sessions for facilitating small group discussions.
- The Tech Host can choose to split the participants of the meeting into these separate sessions automatically or manually.
- The Tech Host can set a timer for the rooms. When the time is up, the breakout rooms automatically close and send all participants back into the main session. The Tech Host can also choose to close the breakout room early if needed.

- Leaders should never be on their own in a breakout room with a young person.
- Tech Host and MC should remain in the main session at all times in cases where a participant drops off the call and tries to join again or accidentally leaves the breakout room.

### **Generic Backgrounds**

Be mindful of requesting people especially young people to join group video chats or share video content from their home. Some may feel uncomfortable sharing their home environment. Other family members, personal information etc. may also be visible. Zoom enable users to use generic backgrounds when sharing video content.

Encourage people to choose this option where possible and/or provide alternative means of connecting for young people who are uncomfortable with group video chats or sharing video content. Young people and adult leaders should only use this online platform from a public part of the house i.e. not a bedroom or bathroom, mindful that other people who are not part of the ministry should not be visible on camera. Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Zoom meetings for a School Setting In instances when physical visits to a school / class group may not be possible, a Zoom meeting may be a viable option to take place between Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry personnel for the purpose of a ministry outreach, presentation or retreat-style event.

If students are not visible for the Zoom Meeting, and all technology is managed by the designated teacher, this ministry can be offered in a Primary School Setting (e.g. for Sacramental Preparation), and not just to students over 16 years of age.

- The host must comply with Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- The purpose and outline of content for the Zoom Meeting will be discussed and agreed to in advance with the designated teacher.
- The designated teacher arranging the “Zoom visit” on behalf of the school / class group should provide evidence that the children / young people, along with their parents / guardians who will be part of the Zoom meeting have given consent to the activity. Those students who do not wish to be part of the activity should be accommodated as per the school’s own policy and procedures.
- The designated teacher will be sent the secure link and password for the Zoom meeting. He/she will log in, mute his/her camera (or turn their device away from the students so only the teacher themselves are visible), so that students will not be visible on the host’s screen. A notice that a Zoom meeting is taking place in the classroom should be put on the classroom door to discourage any unnecessary interruptions.
- The teacher can pass questions / feedback to the host(s), either verbally or through the chat feature, unless parents / students have given consent to the students being visible to the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry hosts.

## **General Guidelines**

### **Before Zoom meeting**

- Risk assessments to be carried out prior to organising event for virtual meetings planned with young people. Instructions on risk assessments and the template is available on the diocesan website.
- Youth Leaders will decide the purpose of the zoom meeting and the invitees, this will be recorded and kept onfile.
- Only those invited by the Leaders will be allowed into the zoom meeting.
- Consent forms for any member must have been signed and returned to the Leader.
- Leaders send the zoom invitation by text / email via the parent / guardian for the meeting.
- Parents are to be informed of upcoming dates and times of when the virtual group will gather.
- Encourage parents to discuss online safety with their young person prior to session. <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/>. Parents should also be asked to review Zoom's Privacy terms and conditions carefully before registering. Participants to be advised in advance how best to prepare for the Zoom Meeting:
- Charged laptop / phone with access to camera and microphone. (Laptops are needed to access the full features of Zoom. It is not recommended to use a phone for this reason, although it is possible to access Zoom on your phone.
- Recommend using a headset if available but it is not a necessity.
- Strong Wi-Fi connection (In the event of a weak Wi-Fi connection at home, contact your Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry leader to discuss alternative ways of participating in the Zoom Meeting.)
- Ensure your background is free from any personal images / items that can identify personal information e.g. where you live.
- Within the Zoom session with other participants please do not give out any personal information about yourself or your family members e.g. home address, email address or phone numbers, alternative social media profile information or personal images / videos.

### **During the Zoom meeting**

- There are to be at least two leaders at every zoom meeting.
- Each member will sign in and enter the waiting room.
- The leaders will be on line and each potential member will be admitted to the meeting one at a time.
- Leaders will record the name of the person that appears on the screen.
- Members faces must be visible to the leaders.
- Members must be in a shared space in their homes with parents / guardians in vicinity.
- No calls to be from bedrooms.

- Appropriate dress code for leaders and young people.
- Uninvited guests will be blocked.
- All Leaders should remain in the meeting until all participants have left.
- Keep a log of Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry Zoom meetings: Attendance record, time and date, duration of call. Also include a brief description of what was covered and if any issues arose. Record to be securely stored as per Diocesan GDPR policy and procedures.
- If a young person says something that causes concern and seems like it could lead to a safeguarding disclosure, follow the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures available at [www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie](http://www.safeguardingchildrenclayne.ie)
- These guidelines, policy and procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of feedback and experience.

### **3.0 General Guidelines**

- Take responsibility for what you write or post, and assume everything is public. On the internet, everything is visible, and everything is stored. Nothing you say will be forgotten or hidden.
- Be careful when commenting or liking posts when using the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry account, since anything you say can be seen as the official words of the Church / Parish or Diocese.
- Be transparent: identify yourself clearly and do not use pseudonyms. Young people must also use their own first name as their user name (e.g. not a gaming name).
- There must be at least two administrators for each social media app to allow for rapid response, monitoring and updating.
- Be aware of privacy settings: Use secure passwords and don't click on links you are unsure about. Where possible, the settings should be set up so that posts can be reviewed before being made public.
- Monitor Content / Comments: Postings to be monitored regularly by a named agreed administrator(s). If the administrators deem comments (or other content) that are posted to the Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry social media accounts or pages to be unsuitable or offensive, they must take action that may include hiding, deleting or reporting comments, or blocking users. Reasons for the removal of comments / content should be explained to the person who posted the content.
- Always comply with copyright laws and data protection requirements when posting anything on Diocesan social media accounts.
- It is requested that the "no tagging" option be set on all social media (including use of handles/profile names of young people).



- Be mindful of requesting young people to join group video chats or share video content from their home. Some may feel uncomfortable sharing their home environment. Other family members, personal information etc. may also be visible. Certain platforms (e.g. Zoom) enable users to use generic backgrounds when sharing video content. Encourage people to choose this option where possible and/or provide alternative means of connecting for young people who are uncomfortable with group video chats or sharing video content. Young people and adult leaders should only use this online platform from a public part of the house i.e. not a bedroom or bathroom, mindful that other people who are not part of the ministry should not be visible on camera.
- Appropriate dress code must be adhered to.
- Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry apps should be updated, as required, to benefit from the latest security and privacy options.
- Participant's options should be limited to commenting only (if this feature is to be enabled) and not posting of pictures or videos.
- Young people must be made aware of who they can go to if they need to report any problems or concerns while using Parish / Diocesan Youth Ministry online platforms and social media.
- These guidelines, policy and procedures will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of feedback and experience.

#### **Online Code of Conduct for Young People:**

- Be kind: No judgmental attitudes or bullying. Negative, hurtful or derogatory comments will not be tolerated. The group should be a safe space for members to express themselves.
- Respect others: Respect the different opinions of everyone in the group and listen. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required. Keep discussions to discussion time. Follow the instructions of the leader(s).
- Respect privacy: No photo-taking, screenshots or screen recordings of meeting. Do not share group codes or passwords with people outside the group. Do not tag other people in photos or posts on social media without their permission.
- Be honest: Make a leader aware if you are feeling uncomfortable due to a person or topic being discussed. If you need a break do not be afraid to ask.
- No self-promotions or spam: Self-promotion, spam and irrelevant links aren't allowed.
- Respect confidentiality and do not gossip: if you are telling a story about someone, ask yourself, "Is this my story to tell?" Do not talk about other people without permission: this includes your family members. Always respect confidentiality: what is said in the group, stays in the group, unless there is a safeguarding concern.
- Appropriate Dress Code and Surroundings: Only use the online platform from an appropriate location i.e. bedrooms and bathrooms are not appropriate. Make sure people around you

cannot be seen on camera unless they are part of this group. Dress appropriately e.g. pyjamas are not appropriate.

- Breach of the Code: Anyone who breaks the rules or acts inappropriately while on the online platform will be removed from the meeting.