Safeguarding Practice for Using 'Zoom' to Host Youth, Children and Family Group Meetings

As responsible adults working with young people online,[1] the key principle we will need to prioritise is **accountability.** This means we shall adhere to the following guidelines:

1. **Age of Participants:** Online meetings can include any of the following groups: youth (11-17), children (5-10) and families.

2. **Adult-Child Ratios:** As with normal contact, meetings should not be 1:1. Therefore, either a second adult (who has gone through safer recruitment) must be present. Alternatively, this can be substituted for parental supervision.

3. **Parental Consent:** Parental consent and agreement to the disclaimer must be obtained from a parent via email prior to the online meeting.

4. **Meeting Host:** The leader hosting the meeting shall use the Infusion Gmail account to host the meeting and not a personal account.

5. **Meeting ID and Password:** Once the meeting has been setup, to allow young people to join the meeting, send the Meeting ID and Password to the parents for them to pass on to their children. Please note that some groups will share the login details to allow the wider community to participate as part of our outreach.

6. **Starting:** Online meetings with no parental supervision should always begin with the leaders connecting first, for example 15 minutes before the 'official' start of the event, and then young people are given the meeting ID and password to join.

7. **Child Reporting:** At the beginning on an online meeting, one of the group leaders will post up the link to CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre) into the conversation, ideally before young people join the group: https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/. Make sure young people know who to tell if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate. This link shall also be included in the email to parents.

8. **Finishing:** As with beginning a meeting, the leaders shall agree before the meeting begins that they shall be the last to leave the meeting. The group leader may end the meeting for all participants at the same time or the young people leave the group before the leaders, to ensure that a leader is not left in the group alone with young people.

9. **Record Keeping:** Leaders will keep a log for any meetings online of who has attended and from when in a single logbook. This will be kept as a Google Sheet in the Infusion Google Drive so it is accessible for all Infusion workers. This will be updated at the beginning/end of online meetings with the attendance and a brief description of the meeting.

10. **Private Messaging:** Group leaders shall not use the private/individual message function on Zoom.

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[1] A 'young person'/'child' is any person under the age of 18.

11. **Technical Error:** If for a technical reason all but one leader's internet failed (or was too slow part way through a meeting), that leader would leave the meeting and we would setup a new meeting.

12. **One-to-One Meetings**: We agree not contact a young person privately/in a one-to-one setting online, as we would regard this being in the same way we would regard a one-to-one meeting with a young person in a private room. To enable more individual support for specific young people, the Circuit Safeguarding Officer must be informed beforehand and another leader must be present and engaged in the meeting, though they do not need to say anything, but it should be clear that there are two responsible adult leaders (or a parent) present (whether from the same feed or separate feeds).

13. **Group Leader's Behaviour:** Be respectful in all your communications, act in the same way you are expected to in a face-to-face setting with the youth group.

14. **Responding to Concerns**: If a young person discloses something that concerns you during the meeting, try not to react strongly to what they are saying. Never promise to keep a secret. Listen carefully and do not stop a child who is talking freely about what has happened. Avoid making comments or judgements. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you. Record this, using the young person's words, in writing as soon as possible following the disclosure and pass this information onto the Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Do not leave the matter until a later time.

15. **Shared Screen Function**: Ensure that materials shared with a group using the 'Shared Screen' function are age appropriate and serve the aims of the group.

16. **Emojis, Giffs, Tik-Toks etc.**: Due to the ambiguous nature of these images, leaders shall not use emojis, giffs, tik-toks or similar media in online meetings involving young people.

17. **Call Background:** Ensure that there is no 'offensive material' or age-inappropriate content within the view of you video feed.

18. **Call Location:** Do not join a meeting from a public location or where there are other adults present who have not received the appropriate safeguarding training and have undergone the relevant DBS check. Regard other adults present as you would another adult joining the youth group face-to-face.

19. **Photos and Videos**: Photo consent must be obtained (in the consent form) before a 'photo opportunity' is offered. The whole meeting will be recorded and stored on a worker's laptop for accountability purposes. The laptop it is stored on must be included in the log.

20. As with any other face-to-face situation, if you have a concern about a vulnerable child, adult or leader, contact:

    Kevin Down, West Devon Methodist Circuit safeguarding officer

    07886927111, wdmcsafeguarding@gmail.com

    Chrissie Slaney, Plymouth and Exeter District Safeguarding Officer

    07794133797, safeguarding@pemd.org.uk

West Devon Methodist Circuit • Superintendent Liz Singleton
registered address: 42 Leeze Park, Okehampton, EX20 1EE charity no.: 1134070

The Methodist Church

Links to Further Information

NSPCC

Online Safety and Social Media

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/online-safety-for-organisations-and-groups/. Accessed 17:30, 21 March 2020.

Online Safety Training consider for all leaders involved in online youthwork.

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/introductory/keeping-children-safe-online-online-course/. Accessed 17:30, 21 March 2020.

Net Aware Useful tool for checking the age rating of online social media platforms.

https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/snapchat/. Accessed 17:30, 21 March 2020.

Youth For Christ

'Safeguarding Online Top Tips'

https://yfc.co.uk/safeguarding-online/. Accessed 15:30, 21 March 2020.

Zoom Consent Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In the current situation, the Infusion Team and the West Devon Methodist Circuit are doing their best in order to adapt so that some form of gatherings can continue.

In order to do so, we have made the decision to use the online meeting tool 'Zoom', that allows multiple people to engage in a live video call.

As this is slightly different, we need consent for the following points:

- I consent for my child to participate in online 'Zoom' calls set up by the Infusion Team.
- I understand that other children/young people/parents will also be participate in the online video calls.
- I understand that video calls happen in public platform so that others can participate.
- I understand that a recording of the meeting will be taken for safeguarding purposes and stored on a worker's device.
- I understand that calls may include a 'photo opportunity' and photos may be taken for Infusion publicity in print and online.
- I understand that this consent is valid for 12 months and that all invitations to Zoom will be sent via the parent's email address.

Child's Name:

Adult's Name:

Date:

Should you be unsure of any of the above points, please get in touch with a member of the Infusion team.

For more information about our Safeguarding Practices for Using Zoom Policy, please go to www.westdevonmethodists.org.uk/

Should you or your child feel they have seen anything upsetting or inappropriate, please tell someone via www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.

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