Meeting with young people outdoors

The relaxing of lockdown restrictions enable the starting of some ministry activities and services in person. For the young people in our communities that have been particularly struggling during the pandemic, safely meeting them for a short time to talk and pray is now safely possible and could be hugely beneficial after months of minimal contact.

Meeting with small groups of young people outdoors could be a great way to offer discipleship and aid wellbeing during the summer and work well in conjunction with online events, private prayer and any formal services that may come back to our church buildings.

My hope is that this document will aid your thinking about how our churches might continue to safely reach out to young people with the love of Jesus, in a time of heightened anxiety, dislocation and isolation.

Meeting outdoors won’t work for everyone and in every context. For some it will be too soon and for others it won’t be feasible. Safety is paramount and The St Albans Diocesan Youth Service also has idea sheets for online youth groups and tips for social media, which can complement meeting outdoors and give ideas for supporting young people who continue to stay at home.

Praying for you and the young people you support,

Christian
(Youth Missioner)
Why is a youth meet-up important?
While we have seen pictures of young people in the media not following social distancing rules, it’s key to note that the majority of young people are taking the pandemic very seriously and acting wisely. They have had little contact with others offline and few chances to process the huge disruption to their lives. It will be important to talk to the young people in your congregation and plan together how to support one another during this very different summer term. We have begun to see reports of the great impact the pandemic has had on young people’s wellbeing. Worries about lost education, cancelled exams and reduced opportunities in the years ahead are prevalent, many calling themselves ‘The Covid Generation’. Young people have wisdom, energy and passion to offer in this season but will need support even as we move out of lockdown.

Check you have the following in place before going ahead with an outdoor youth meeting.
- An updated safeguarding policy and safely recruited leaders
- An updated risk assessment
- Recorded parental consent
- PCC approval and relevant insurance
- An agreed action plan for the meeting including content, duration and attendees.

In this pack you will find:
- A ‘things to consider’ guide
- Links to key websites you will need to frequently check for up-to-date information.
- An extract of government guidelines
- A simple session outline
- A template risk management doc (attached)
- A template parental consent form
Things to consider when planning your meeting

Purpose
Pray and talk to families about using the time well. Particularly after putting all the work in to make it happen! Be sure to share your hopes for the meeting in advance, having asked the young people what they would find helpful.

Not for all
Some young people won’t be comfortable or able to meet in this way. Ensure you have other opportunities for young people to be part of the church community, with space to share their experiences and receive input. You will need to check with carers to consider and plan for young people who are more vulnerable to infection have been in ‘shielding’ households.

Transport arrangements
Although you won’t be able to arrange transport for young people, think carefully about how they will get to and from the meeting location safely.

Checking Latest Advice
Frequently check all the latest guidelines, laws and advice before your meeting. Check the national government advice, local authority advice and National Youth Agency readiness level before deciding to run a meet-up. Some restrictions may have been paused on one week but reintroduced the next.

Location
This will be an important choice for the atmosphere of the meeting. A public park may be convenient but check how busy it gets and whether social distancing can be maintained.
A church yard could be quiet and aid spiritual focus, but check insurance and relevant guidelines. In private gardens, direct access should be used if at all possible, rather than travelling indoors.

Numbers
At the time of writing, the law dictates that only up to 6 people of different households may meet at once. Think about how you will end the meeting and disperse young people if more than 6 arrive. Talk about this to young people when planning the event.

Social Distancing
Plan where each person will sit, enabling everyone to sit comfortable 2 meters apart.

Communicating invitations and friendships.
Don’t use public invitations on social media or mass email etc as there is a risk that others may arrive and push the total numbers over the maximum number. Remember that young people would generally go to social events with friends and are sorely missing the support of friendship groups. If your church has a larger youth group, think about how you can break them into smaller groups to meet, considering friendship groups and making sure no one is left out.
Leaders
There must be at least two safely recruited adult leaders at the meeting. Check your safeguarding policy and talk to your parish’s safeguarding lead about keeping safe and how to report concerns. Consider how you will ensure reporting procedures and contact details of the safeguarding officer are displayed.

Equipment and Facilities.
Sharing equipment i.e. chairs and blankets, can increase risk of transmission. Consider the feasibility of cleaning chairs after use. Read the government rules and advice to minimise risk. If possible, ask young people to bring something to sit on and check for up-to-date guidance on the day of the meeting.

Toilets
Check for up-to-date government guidelines and follow them closely. Clearly show your considerations for reducing transmission in your risk assessment. If toilets will not be available, for instance if meeting in a park, ensure this is well communicated beforehand.

Before and after the meeting
Consider how to encourage young people to keep social distance before and after your scheduled meeting. There may be a temptation for them to leave together or remain in the outdoor space after you have left, where possible, talk to a parent/carer and young people themselves about planning the whole time they're outside their homes.

Length
Meetings should be short and end times agreed and communicated beforehand. Be ready in case there are requests to extend the meeting as some young people may be reluctant to return home.

Communicating to parents/carers and young people
Write out how the meeting will run and send this to the parent/carer before the date of the meeting with a chance to answer any questions the family may have.

Weather
Check the weather! You may need to cancel the event if rain is forecast.

Sports and Games
Many youth groups love to play games when they get together. To avoid disappointment, talk to young people about the plans for the meeting, reminding them what isn’t possible. Any sports or games that pose any risk of impinging on social distancing should be avoided from the start.

First Aid
One leader will need to act as a designated first aider with adequate training and first aid kit.
Links

Gov frequently asked questions on what you can and can’t do

Gov guidelines for meeting people outside your household
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-people-from-outside-your-household

National Youth Agency COVID19 advice page
https://nya.org.uk/guidance/

Managing youth sector activities guide from The National Youth Agency

Church of England National Guidance

Diocesan Safeguarding Webpages
https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding/

Diocesan One-Stop Shop
https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/living-gods-love-at-all-times/
Outdoor Youth Catch Up (Parent/Carer letter and consent form).

Dear Parent/Carer,
Here at (...) we know it’s a tough time for young people so we would like to offer a further opportunity for young people to receive some support and encouragement with an outdoors meet-up. The current social distancing measures allow groups to meet outside and therefore, we have planned an opportunity for young people to meet together to catch up, share how they are doing and pray. If they want to join us, they'll need to follow strict social distancing measures but we have worked hard to make sure this meeting is as safe as possible.

You can find our full safeguarding policy here:
Our safeguarding officer is: Their contact details are:

You can find full plans for our meeting here. (you could adapt the things to consider' bullet points into full guidelines for your meeting).

We are continuing to pray for you during this time and we hope this meeting will be encouraging and restorative. Do get in touch for more information about our plans.

How it will work
We will meet: (place)
Leaders will be: (names)
On: (Date and Time)

Your young person may wish to bring: (Bible/pen/notebook/bottle of water)

Consent
I consent to the named young person joining the 'Outdoor Youth Catch-Up Meeting 'and understand that...
☐ There will be/no toilets available and we can/can't provide snacks or drinks.
☐ We may have to call off the meeting due to poor weather.
☐ We ask that you plan safe transport arrangements with your young person.
☐ Young people will need to leave promptly at the end of the session.
☐ If your young person breaks the social distancing rules or puts other at risk, we will call you and ask them to be collected.
☐ The named young person is not extra vulnerable to infection and my household has not been 'shielding'.
(Please give details if this is the case and get in touch to see if we can make safe arrangements- depending on current government guidelines)
☐ The named young person is not displaying any symptoms of COVID19.
☐ The named young person has not been asked to self-isolate.

Name of young person ...................................................................................................................................................................

Name of Parent/Carer ................................................................................................................................................................

I can be contacted during the event on this telephone number..................................................................................

Signed.................................................................................................................................................................................. Date..................

Note:
-If you don’t have a ‘general ’consent form for the young people involved in the meeting, you may also need
  to obtain a home address, ask for any medical or behavioural factors that leaders will need to consider.
- Remember to note how you will store and use this data.
Simple Session Plan Idea
You might want to use the time to simply chat together, but I would suggest some kind of plan to fall back on, geared to the young people you’re meeting.

Set up
Meet with other leaders before the meeting is due to start. Plan where everyone will sit, staying 2 meters apart. Mark this out if possible. A circle could work well. Pray together before young people arrive.

Intros,
Make any adjustments to the set up to ensure everyone is comfortable and correctly distanced apart. Quickly recap on what we can and can’t do during out time together, and that you have phone numbers or parent or carer to hand!

Icebreaker
Ask everyone what they had for breakfast, then ask what their ideal breakfast would be. And/or try playing ‘Two Truths and a Lie’ (if possible, tell the group before meeting so they can plan ahead).

Listening and sharing exercise
In this exercise, everyone will get a chance to talk about what’s going on for them this week. The challenge is to talk for three minutes about ‘how it’s going’ with a few stops as possible. There are three roles in this exercise, and we will swap until everyone gets a turn.
Role 1: Speaker – their job is to do the talking
Role 2: Listener – their job is to listen and if needed, ask the speaker a question to prompt them if they get stuck!
Role 3: Timer – They will time three minutes on their phone.

Bible verse Read a Bible verse that you have found helpful/comforting strengthening during lockdown and why.
Or
Read Mark 4:35-41

Reflection
When the going gets tough, Jesus ‘friends ask ‘Do you not care?’ . Jesus cares about what is going on in our lives, he wants you to talk to him about it all. It really helps to share, especially at the moment, during all the weirdness. Talking for three minutes was tough, but it felt good didn’t it? Let’s make sure we give our friends and family time... listen to them without judging or telling them what to do. And let’s take time to share with God, asking for His peace into our lives”.

Prayer
Ask everyone to pray together, out loud, for each other. Then invite the group to be quiet for a moment, look up at the sky and bring their own prayers to God.
Extracts of current government guidelines
(not in full and as of 18th of June 2020)
Find full guidelines here: https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Everyone may spend time outdoors with groups of up to six people from outside your household or support bubble. You should stay alert and always practise social distancing with people from outside of your household or support bubble, keeping 2 metres apart.

The more people you have interactions with, the more chance the virus has to spread. Therefore, try to limit the number of people you see - especially over short periods of time.

GOV.UK
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance and support
1. Home
2. Coronavirus (COVID-19)
3. Protecting yourself and others from coronavirus
Meeting people from outside your household
How you can see people that you do not live with while protecting yourself and others from coronavirus (COVID-19).

Published 10 June 2020
Last updated 13 June 2020 — see all updates
From: Department of Health and Social Care

Contents
1. Staying alert when meeting people you do not live with
2. Meeting outdoors with people you do not live with or are not in your support bubble
3. Making a support bubble with another household

The government recognises how difficult it has been for people to be cut off from their family and friends in recent months. This has been necessary to help us all stay alert, control the virus and save lives. This guidance explains how you can now see people you do not live with, while protecting yourself and others from coronavirus.

In England, there are 2 ways that you can do this:

• meeting outdoors in a group of up to 6 people with those you do not live with, but you should do this while observing social distancing guidelines and keeping at least 2 metres apart
• single adult households – in other words adults who live alone or with dependent children only – can form a ‘support bubble’ with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to spend time together inside each others’ homes, including overnight, without needing to stay 2 metres apart. We are making this
change to support the loneliest and most isolated. It is a targeted intervention to provide extra support to some of those most impacted by the most difficult effects of the current social restrictions, while ensuring we continue to keep the rate of transmission down.

You must not:

- meet other people indoors – including in their home or your home – unless you are in a support bubble, or for other limited circumstances listed in law.
- meet outdoors in a group of more than 6 with people who are not in your household or (where applicable) support bubble, or for other limited circumstances listed in law.
- form a support bubble with another household if neither you nor they are in a single adult household.
- stay overnight in another household that is not in your support bubble, unless it is for the limited set of circumstances outlined in law.

**Staying alert when meeting people you do not live with**

You should continue to stay alert and limit your contact with others. Staying at home is the easiest way to do this but, as above, you are permitted to meet family and friends subject to strict rules – on which there is more detail below. At all times, it’s important to maintain social distancing guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

In order to keep you and your family and friends safe, it remains very important that you stay alert outside your home and follow some key principles:

- you should limit your interactions with people outside of your household or your support bubble (if applicable) as much as possible.
- you should continue to follow strict social distancing guidelines, particularly ensuring you are two metres away from anyone not in your household or your support bubble.
- you should take hygiene precautions by washing your hands as soon as you are home for at least 20 seconds, use hand sanitiser when you are out, use a tissue when sneezing and dispose of it safely and cough into the crook of your elbow.
- you should only form a support bubble with one other household, should not change or add to your support bubble once formed, and must only form a support bubble with another household if you or they are in a single adult household.
- you should access private gardens externally wherever possible – if you need to go through someone else’s home to do so, avoid touching surfaces and loitering.
- you should avoid using toilets in other people’s home (outside of your support bubble) wherever possible and wipe down surfaces after every use.
- you should wipe down any surfaces or door handles people from outside of your household or support bubble come into contact with if walking through your home.
- you should avoid sharing plates and utensils with people outside of your household or your support bubble.
• you should avoid using paddling pools or other garden equipment with people outside of your household or bubble
If you or someone in your household or your support bubble (if applicable) are showing coronavirus symptoms, everyone in your support bubble should stay home. If you or a member of your support bubble is contacted as part of the test and trace programme, the individual contacted should stay at home. If the individual becomes symptomatic, everyone in the support bubble should then isolate. This is critical to staying safe and saving lives.

Meeting outdoors with people you do not live with or are not in your support bubble

You are allowed to meet in groups of either:

• up to 6 people from different households outdoors
• any number if everyone is a member of your own household – or a member of your support bubble

You must not meet in a group of more than 6 with people you do not live with or who are not in your support bubble unless one of the other limited exceptions as set out in law apply. This is prohibited in law. The relevant authorities, including the police, have the powers to enforce the law – including through fines and dispersing gatherings.

Support bubbles and meeting outdoors

It is already the case that households can spend time outdoors together even if the household is larger than 6 people. You can also meet outdoors with everyone in your support bubble, even if this is more than 6 people.

Since 1 June, you have been allowed to meet outdoors in groups of up to 6 people from different households. This might include members of your own household and people in your support bubble too. A group that includes people who are not in your household or support bubble must not be more than 6 people.

Meeting outdoors if you have a carer from another household

You can meet in a group of up to 6 people, including you and any carers, but it remains important to observe strict social distancing and keep 2 metres apart. But where you need personal care from your usual carer this may involve being closer than 2 metres.

Where to meet outdoors
You can meet people in both public or private outdoor spaces, such as gardens, yards or roof terraces – as long as you maintain social distancing at all times with people who are not in your household or support bubble.

You should not go indoors. If you do need to use the toilet or are passing through to access someone’s garden, avoid touching surfaces and if you use the toilet wash your hands thoroughly, wipe down surfaces, use separate or paper towels and wash or dispose of them safely after use.

If you no longer want to remain outdoors, you should go home. Do not go into garages, sheds or cabins – these are all indoor areas and where the risk of transmission is higher.

**Using garden equipment**

You should not be sharing garden equipment with people outside of your household or your support bubble because of the risk of transmission. You could bring your own or if you have to use chairs, for example, you should wipe them down carefully with household cleaner before and after use.

You should try to avoid shared equipment. For example you should use your own tennis racquet, golf club or basketball. Any equipment that is used should be cleaned frequently. Cleaning should be particularly thorough if it is to be used by someone else.

You should avoid using paddling pools and private swimming pools with people outside of your household.

**Sharing food and drink outdoors, including picnics and barbeques**

You should not pass each other food or drink unless you live together or are in a support bubble together. You should not use plates or utensils that someone from another house has touched – either bring your own or ensure you have thoroughly cleaned them before using. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and use disposable towels if possible.

If you are in someone else’s garden, you must not go inside to help the host carry the food out or to help with the washing up.

**Playing sport with someone you don’t live with**

You can exercise or play sport in groups of up to 6 people from other households, but should only do so where it is possible to maintain a 2 metre gap from those you do not live with. You will be able to play sport outdoors in groups of more than 6 people and without social distancing if they are all from our household or in your support bubble.
People who play team sports can meet to train together and do things like conditioning or fitness sessions but not in groups of more than 6 and you should be 2 metres apart at all times. While groups could practise ball skills like passing and kicking, equipment sharing should be kept to a minimum and strong hand hygiene practices should be in place before and after.

You can also play doubles tennis with people from outside of your household (or bubble) as long as you remain 2 metres apart wherever possible. Any equipment that is used should be cleaned frequently. Cleaning should be particularly thorough if equipment is to be used by someone else.

If you are showing coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household, or your support bubble, are self-isolating, you should stay at home – this is critical to staying safe and saving lives.

**Travelling to meet people outdoors**

You can travel to outdoor open space irrespective of distance, as long as you can return the same night and do not put others at risk because of services you may need in the time you are away. You should continue to avoid using public transport and should cycle, walk or drive wherever possible.

This guidance only applies to England. You must adhere to the individual country laws and guidance of the devolved administrations (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

You should not travel with someone from outside your household or your support bubble unless you can practise social distancing, for example by cycling.
**Parish of __________________________**

**Activity risk assessment ideas for a youth outdoor meet-up**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity: Outdoor Youth Meet-Up</th>
<th>Date of first risk assessment:</th>
<th>Date to be reviewed:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Name of leader with responsibility:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the hazards?</th>
<th>Who might be harmed and how?</th>
<th>What are you already doing?</th>
<th>Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?</th>
<th>Action by whom?</th>
<th>Action by when?</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transmission of Covid19 through furniture and other surfaces.</td>
<td>Leaders, young people and their families.</td>
<td>Attendees encouraged to bring their own blanket to sit on.</td>
<td>After use, any furniture i.e. camping chairs and blankets handled carefully and thoroughly cleaned/washed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transmission of Covid19 through young people in close proximity</td>
<td>Leaders, young people and their families.</td>
<td>Planning meeting place with social distances outlined, following current government advice - 2 meters apart.</td>
<td>Clearly communicate and agree rules with young people and carers prior to meeting. Plan where everyone will sit before meeting, marking out where possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transmission of Covid19 to vulnerable young people and their families</td>
<td>Leaders, young people and their families.</td>
<td>Ask parents/carers and young people to carefully plan transport arrangements. Consider location close to homes of young people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transmission of Covid19 to young people travelling to and from meeting place.</td>
<td>Leaders, young people and their families.</td>
<td>Offer opportunity for young people to receive support in another way. Ensuring parents and carers have given consent and inform leaders of any increased vulnerability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 6 people arriving at meeting place.</td>
<td>Leaders, young people and their families.</td>
<td>Communicating with young person and parent/carer that guests cannot attend. Inviting young people individually.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Young people leaving meeting early.</td>
<td>Safeguarding and transmission risk.</td>
<td>Hold contact details of carer and agree to call them if any problems arise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with unvetted adults</td>
<td>Safeguarding and transmission risk if meeting in busy public space.</td>
<td>Choose location carefully and brief leaders of risks.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Activity risk assessment ideas for a youth outdoor meet-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location being used by others.</th>
<th>Transmission risk if having to move meeting location and safety risk if meeting is not in proscribed area</th>
<th>Arrive at location early and check area. Plan communicating to carers and PCC if location needs to be moved.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location recently used by others and/or litter left.</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to government guidelines and/or local infection rates</td>
<td>Higher transmission risk.</td>
<td>Check government website, local authority advice and National Youth Agency alert level shortly before meeting commences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allergic Reactions</strong></td>
<td>Hay fever, grass allergies. Mild allergies can be mistaken for COVID symptoms and vice versa.</td>
<td>Communicating location of meeting to carers and obtaining consent, along with any medical concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hand hygiene</strong></td>
<td>Transmission risk through touching of surfaces.</td>
<td>Limit shared surfaces as far as possible. No passing of materials. No refreshments provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees arriving with Covid19 symptoms</td>
<td>High transmission risk</td>
<td>Obtaining consent and contact details in advance. Checking with carers that young people do not display symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other environment risks from outdoor meeting: sun burn, heat cold.</td>
<td>Risk to young people and leaders. Rain could tempt people to move indoors.</td>
<td>Check weather forecast beforehand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Location:**

**Date of first risk assessment:**

**Date to be reviewed:**

**Time:**

**Name of leader with responsibility:**