

See page two for web links with more info.

Let's look to encourage and support young people where they are. Social media is a great way to do this but requires careful thinking to be safe.



Reviewing your social media policy for youth work.

Think carefully about how your safeguarding policy will work with your interactions with young people online. As each social media channel is different you may need to think through your interactions on each, to ensure you are protected and safe.

The below are some headlines to aid your thinking and we recommend you sit down with your parish safeguarding officer and set clear guidelines for your interactions.

1) Accountable

Log all your interactions with young people online. Risk assess the individual platforms you are thinking about using.

2) Appropriate

Think carefully about when you contact a young person over the phone and web. Think about setting times when no contact should be made, i.e. after 10pm or before 8am. Consider not engaging in long conversations in private messages. Keep conversations focused on ministry and encouragement.

3) Transparent

The rule of thumb in youthwork is never to be alone with a young person. How can you move this policy into your youth work online? Invite another leader into the group chat, copy a second safely recruited leader into an email.

4) Recorded

Many policies that guide work with young people online require interactions be recorded. Using channels that utilise messaging, videos and photos that disappear is therefore problematic. Recording interactions by video however will also require GDPR compliance through consents etc. The current general advice is not to record video conferences.

5) Separate

There should be a distinguishable line between your personal social media activity and your supportive work with young people. A separate Instagram account for instance would be advised.

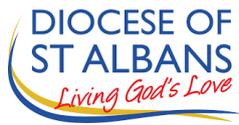
.... And finally, remember ages

Remember that most social media platforms only cater for 13+. Consider a separate strategy to support young people under 13.

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Safety Online. Links to guideline support and ideas for staying safe when ministering with young people online.



St Albans Diocese Safeguarding pages

Updates for new ways of working, guides on required training and good practice. <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding/>



Digital Labs Blog Guide

Comprehensive blog of ideas to think about when planning to safely use social media. [https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/advice-using-social-media-reach-](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/advice-using-social-media-reach-young-people)

[young-people](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/digital-labs/labs-learning-blog/advice-using-social-media-reach-young-people)



Youthscape and Thirtyone:Eight

Authoritative source of information in short, handy guide.

<https://youthscape.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/documents/Guidanc-for-online-youth-work.pdf>



Gov.uk Child Safety Online

Check this governmental guidance as a basis for policy guidelines.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-providers-of-social-media-and-interactive-services/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-providers-of-social-media-and-interactive-services>



National Youth Service

National Youth Agency

Virus response page for youth workers.

<https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Covid-19-Young-people-final.pdf>