

Safe Practices Online

Helpful Hints and Resources for E-Safety whilst in an Online Environment with Children and Young People

*Information for Youth Ministry and all who have role with Children in the
Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide*

During these times where the Government recommends social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19, being online for many is the only way to keep in touch and plays a vital role for communication. Whilst this is very important to stay connected, it's essential that protective practices are implemented when engaging children and young people as part of our role in the Church. Keeping children and young people safe must be prioritised in the online environment in a similar way that we do physically.

Here is some information containing helpful hints and resources that can be shared to assist with E-Safety awareness and to safeguard children and young people.

Before conducting any form of online interaction in your role with children and young people, please read and familiarise yourself with the Archdiocesan Best Practice Guidelines which establishes the framework for protective practices. A copy can be located by visiting the Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide website or clicking on the following link <https://adelaide.catholic.org.au/our-people/child-protection/policies-and-resources>

These guidelines apply in both the physical parish and community environment and any online forum where children and young people are present. This document also acts in accordance with the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct and Child Protection policy and procedures which must be followed at all times.

Anyone with a role in the Church therefore needs to ensure that they apply Best Practice Guidelines to ensure safeguarding children is prioritised and professional standards are maintained. Online interactions with children and young people include social media, video conferencing and email. When using such platforms always ensure you have read and understood the apps/website's key safety links, privacy policies, age restrictions and ways to report abuse.

Please feel free to contact the Child Protection Unit by phoning 8210 8159 or emailing childprotection@adelaide.catholic.org.au for further guidance, information and support.



Key Principles

- When first establishing a social media account ensure that this is a platform approved by the youth group, parish or community. Personal accounts are not permitted
- Ensure all administrators hold a Working with Children Check and have signed a code of conduct
- Always seek parental/caregiver consent before directly engaging with children and young people, state the purpose of communication, frequency and social media platform being used
- Work in pairs, do not be in a one to one private conversation or video conference with a child or young person, ensure all communication is transparent and open
- Where there is video platforms being used ensure the visual environment is appropriate and does not disclose personal information
- Ensure content being shared maintains boundaries and professional integrity
- Make behavioural expectations clear with online forums, establish group norms where appropriate and role model good practice
- Should a young person make direct contact, respond only if another responsible adult can be included or redirect to a shared social media page
- Do not share personal information of others with external organisations without permission, this includes photo images and video recording
- Provide information on E-Safety to both the parent/caregiver and young person
- Provide information on the Archdiocese Safeguarding Children and Young People policy and behavioural standards
- Understand and adhere to mandatory notification responsibilities and procedures if you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person



The **eSafety Commissioner website** has a range of resources for online safety awareness, which we highly recommend you become familiar with to assist in being E-Safety aware. There is currently a direct link to latest information relevant to online safety during COVID-19, available here: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19>

[Look to this website for how to be respectful online, including how to report Cyberbullying](#)

For further information on Zoom and Houseparty, two commonly used social media platforms please follow the links below:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide/zoom>

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide/houseparty>



What you can provide to Parents and Caregivers:

In addition to following Best Practice Guidelines, including all consent protocols (Guideline 3), before commencing any online interaction with children and young people, it is recommended that parents and caregivers are too provided with E-Safety information and resources, such as the following listed below from the E-Safety Commissioner website:

COVID-19: an online safety kit for parents and carers

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-online-safety-kit-parents-and-carers>

Online Safety Advice for parents and carers

[Australian Edition COVID-19 Global ONLINE SAFETY ADVICE for parents and carers](#)

COVID-19: protecting children from online abuse

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/blog/covid-19-protecting-children-online-abuse>

Developing good habits and supporting kids while they are online

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents/skills-advice/good-habits-start-young>

Helpful Tips for Parents and Caregivers

eSafety Commissioner

- **Use Parental Controls** – to monitor and limit what children see and do online
- **Set time limits** – to promote a healthy balance of screen time for children
- **Stay in open areas of the home** - to monitor, manage and have oversight of who children see online
- **Know the apps and games children are using** – to look out for online chat and location sharing
- **Turn on Privacy Settings** – to make sure profiles are turned onto the strictest privacy settings
- **Co-view and Co-play** – to understand what children are doing online and open up communication about the online environment

It is important to ensure all conversations children have are safe, healthy and wanted.



What you can provide to Children and Young People:

It's also important that children and young people have some awareness of E-Safety before engaging in online activities. E-Safety information which is easy to read, understand and age-appropriate is essential.

Helpful Tips for Children and Young People:

- Have your parent/caregiver set up your device to protect your information
- Always seek permission from your parent/caregiver before downloading or installing any social media apps or video conferencing tools on your device. Some apps have age restrictions and guidance ratings and it's important to follow these rules
- When setting up any new or unfamiliar social media programs, ask your parent/caregiver to assist with the privacy settings
- Do not enable your location as this will mean that people who you don't know may be able to locate where you are
- If not required for the app, do not allow access to your contacts and skip this part of the process
- Always use your device in a room where there is adult supervision
- Tell your parent/caregiver if someone you don't know is trying to connect to you and report this behaviour
- Explore safely and tell your parent/caregiver if something makes you feel uncomfortable, remember you can talk to an adult about these feelings
- When online, be respectful to others
- Think twice before sharing information that is personal, particularly if you are in an online public forum. Remember any information you choose to share can be seen and viewed by others, if you are unsure speak to your parent/caregiver first

For useful info to help you stay safe online, children check out <https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids> and young people check out <https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people>

If you would like to talk to someone you can call

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

