



Online Meetings with Young People

Many church groups may hold online or hybrid activities if meeting in person is not possible.

When organising the logistics of such arrangements it is important that safe ministry practices and protocols are not forgotten. Any form of interaction with **a child, young person** or vulnerable person comes with a level of opportunity to expose those people to **abuse**. We must always be doing what we can to ensure the safety of all who partake in our ministry activities.

The advice below will be particularly relevant to youth groups who use video conferencing software to facilitate virtual gatherings. For more detailed guidance, please see the info sheet *BTS: Connecting & Communicating Online*. You can also make use of the permission form templates available on the Resources page of the BTS website.

KEY GUIDELINES:

- Keep Session informed about any alternate arrangements for gatherings.
- Contact parents/carers in advance to let them know the plans for virtual meetings.
- Ask for the parents' preferred way of contacting the **child/young person** (parent's account or child's personal account) and request consent to include the **child/young person** in the meetings.
- Have a clear start and end time so that parents know the limits of the online interaction.
- Ensure that there are always at least 2 leaders included in chats/video conferences. Aim to have all communication with **children/young people** via group communication.
- Where possible, leaders should avoid video streaming from a closed off area and should never stream from a room that is obviously a bedroom in order to maintain transparency and establish clear personal boundaries.
- Practice the same safe ministry practices you would in real life. Be accountable, transparent and wise.