

SO17: Policy Procedure for Conducting Online Ministry

The Diocese of Down and Connor encourages ministry with children and young people online, if it is safe for children and young people and the adults who work with them. Our paramount concern is the safety and welfare of children and young people.

We will put in place all measures to ensure that children and young people are not placed at risk whilst participating in ministry online. We want this ministry to be fruitful and beneficial, not challenging or dangerous. The Church ministry at all times will respect the dignity of children and young people.

Name of the Monitor:

Has been appointed by the Parish Priest on an event basis and has been appointed to oversee this ministry online.

Any intention to engage with children and young people online must be discussed with your Safeguarding Committee and your Parish Priest or delegate, before approval is sought for this event.

The Parish Priest or delegate and the Diocesan Safeguarding Chair will determine if the purpose of the online ministry is safe, and in line with the ethos of the Church body.

In order to create a safe environment online, the following must be adhered to:

- All adults engaging online will have been recruited in line with the Diocesan procedures to meet indicator S.1 of the Church's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- All adults will have read the generic code of behaviour and the "Guidance for Engagement with Children and Young People Through A Digital Platform" understood and agree to follow best practice advice outlined in both these documents for their online ministry with children and young people (e.g., use of language; boundaries; use of personal computers etc).
- Specific consent will be sought in writing from the children and young people and their parents/carers for participating in online ministry; this cannot be general consent but specifically for the purposes of a specified ministry.
- Children and young people will be informed who to talk to if they are worried about anything which they have seen or been exposed to online.
- Personal information about the adults, children and young people who are involved in this ministry will be stored in line with the Church body's data protection policy.
- The Ministry lead, in consultation with the Safeguarding Committee Chairperson, will ensure that content, including photography and imaging, is in line with best child safeguarding advice.
- The Ministry lead will ensure that the location and dress code is appropriate: the online ministry should take place in a location which is private but safe for the children and young people and appropriate clothing is worn; it will not be facilitated in bedrooms or where cameras can see other people who are not part of the ministry.
- In line with the Diocesan risk assessment procedures and data protection procedures, all technology and social media platforms will be assessed prior to their use in online ministry (the Diocese have agreed that the two most appropriate platforms are Zoom and Microsoft Teams).

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- Any allegation, suspicion, concern or knowledge of child abuse will be reported in line with the Diocesan reporting procedures.
- The lead person in the ministry should check on a regular basis that children and young people feel comfortable during the meeting online.
- Upon conclusion of the online ministry, a review should take place to ensure that at all times risks were identified and managed and to evaluate whether the social media platform used, was fit for purpose.

Data Protection This form will be held on file, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, data protection policy of the Diocese of Down and Connor and the Privacy Notice of the Down & Connor Safeguarding Office, which can be found at <http://www.downandconnorsafeguarding.com/privacy-notices/>

The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated on the form and will be held confidentially. The data may only be accessed by those with responsibility for managing records or group activities and will not be shared with external organisations unless there is a need and a lawful reason to do so. The data will be updated when appropriate and destroyed when no longer necessary or relevant.