

Guidance for contacting / communicating with young people

This guidance has been written in line with GDPR, Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Best Practice and will be part of the Social Media Policy which is already in place.

Any parish group and/or parish individual who have ministry with children, such as youth ministry, Children's Choir, Altar servers etc. must follow the guidelines below when communicating with young people (Under 18 years old).

Why are we doing this?

- To ensure the safety and protection of our young people, volunteers and the Church;
- To be fully compliant with legislation, Incl. the Digital Age of Consent;
- To encourage and promote greater communication between children involved in youth ministry and their parents/guardians.
- To maintain an open and transparent relationship with all those involved in any form of parish ministry.

How to Communicate

- All communication is done via a parent or guardian via text message;
- Do not use or set up any Snap chat, messenger, WhatsApp groups or any chatting app which collects and processes the user's information for any young person under 18 years old;
- Have a dedicated Youth Ministry mobile. Young people can have this number and can text directly with queries or questions and you respond to them;
- Clear the numbers from the mobile at the end of each event or term.
- At no time use any Emojis

Promoting events or youth ministries

- If you want to notify people of an upcoming event you can post an announcement on the groups / Diocesan Facebook Like page or Instagram and text parents about it;
- Do not put up dates and times for any closed group meeting or overnight events;
- The key thing is to use appropriate communication channels transparently and openly, so, as to ensure the safety of children.

***Please note your own personal Facebook should be confined to personal friends and not people especially those under 18 that are known from your ministry.**

The Social Media Policy 2.1 states *'Parish / Youth Ministry personnel are not permitted to direct message or accept/send friend requests to young people from their own personal Facebook account unless the young people are known to them personally outside of their role with the Diocese of Killaloe.*