

HSC Online Safety and Acceptable Use of IT Policy

Online Safety Definition

Online safety is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the internet; often referred to as Information Technology (IT).

Policy Guidelines for Church Workers and Volunteers

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and their children.
- Use an appropriate tone: friendly, but not over-familiar or personal.
- Be warm and friendly, but do not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit about information that you need to share; do not abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be circumspect in your communications with children to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.
- Only give personal contact details to children that are within the public domain of the church, including your mobile telephone number.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, e-mail addresses or similar, and communicate with them this way, make sure that their parents know and have agreed.
- Only make contact with children for reasons related to the work of the church and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups including messaging and texting.
- Where possible only use equipment provided by the church to communicate with children.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse/harm is suspected or disclosed.
- Ensure your church domain name/logo appears with every internet post made by a church computer user. Any user may thus be viewed as a representative of your church whilst conducting business on the internet.
- Email should only be used to communicate specific information (for example, times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- Email history should be kept and dated.
- When using email for communication with children, or young people under 16, it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. Where working with children outside normal office hours workers should seek advice from their leader, but there should be no email communication after 9pm.
- Use of Skype, Zoom (or any other web camera or visual communication via the internet or mobile phone) is not permitted on a one-to-one basis with any children, young people or adults as risk of harm.
- Skype, Zoom (or other similar media) may be used for conference calls and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera, Skype, Zoom, or other webchat, in a group environment for project purposes, and has clear aims and objectives for its use. At least two leaders should be present with under 18s, or adults at risk of harm.

- All workers/volunteers should keep their mobile phones out of sight whilst working directly with children and young people. I pads and laptops may be used to teach lesson-specific content only.

Social Media Policy

- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children under 18 shall be limited to monitored/administrated groups.
- Text and any other media posted shall be subject to the acceptable use policy.
- All interaction on social media groups shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any private messages shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes.
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred onto the safeguarding co-ordinator.
- All users of social media must be above the minimum age limit, for example, minimum age of 13 for Facebook, Instagram, What's App, SnapChat, Skype.
- Workers should ensure their privacy settings ensure the highest levels of security in order to restrict children from being able to see any more than what is relevant to communication within the group.
- All social media groups should provide links to statutory authorities such as CEOP, to enable children to report online abuse.

Consent for Photographic Images and Videos Online

- We will not use individual photographs of children on our website.
- Photos are generally not permitted at any time for any group within HSC as an organisation AND
Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed. Images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought for, and how the image will be stored, if not destroyed. If the intention is to use an image on the internet this must be clearly stated and further permission must be acquired if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and where children are involved, permission should be sought in line with the photographic guidelines.

Acceptable Use Policy

- Where access to the internet is provided on our organisation's devices or devices owned by an individual via Wifi, we will exercise our right to monitor usage which includes access to websites, interception and deletion of inappropriate or criminal material or unlawfully copied text, video, images or sound.
- Wifi access will be via a secure password.
- Social media groups must be used in compliance with High Street Chapel's policy on social media, as above.

Children and Workers should not

- Search for or download pornographic, racist or hate motivated content.
- Illegally copy or play copyrighted content where permission has not been given.
- Send, request or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Harass, insult or bully others.
- Access the internet using another person's login details.
- Access, download, send or receive any data (including images), which High Street Chapel considers offensive in any way, including sexually explicit, discriminatory, defamatory or libellous material.

Sanctions for violating the acceptable use policy in the opinion of HSC may result in

- A temporary or permanent ban on internet use.
- Additional disciplinary action in line with existing practice on inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Where applicable, police or local authorities may be involved.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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Parent Carer Agreement

As the parent/guardian of _____ I declare that I have read and understood the Online Safety and Acceptable Use policy for High Street Chapel and that my child will be held accountable for their own actions. I understand that it is my responsibility to set standards for my child when selecting, sharing and exploring online information and media.

Child/Young Person's Agreement

I understand the importance of safety online and the church guidelines on acceptable use.

I will share any concerns where I, or another person may be at risk of harm, with the safeguarding coordinator or a trusted adult.

Child Name (Please print)	Child Signature	Date
Parent/Guardian (Please print)	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date