

OSC Video Conferencing with Young People Policy

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Approved by	OSC Director and Trustees
Next review	September 2026

In supporting and connecting with young people (of Year 6 and secondary school age) through virtual means, an OSC policy has been produced with safeguarding and best practice in mind:

- Avoid the use of Skype / Facetime – these are social media tools and as such share contact details with all users; you may inadvertently connect young people up with other people as an unintended consequence.
- It is recommended to use the video conferencing platform such as Zoom: <https://zoom.us/> Users only need to have an email address for account setup and the platform can be accessed via mobile phone or computer. Parents and carers will need to sign their son/ daughter up for a Zoom account. If young people do not have access to the relevant technology then please contact the OSC Office and Volunteer Administrator or Director to discuss this issue which will be considered on a case by case basis.

Mobile phone numbers will not be visible to other users, with the exception of when young people join the conversation by phoning in (rather than logging in through a Zoom account). **This number can then be blocked by the group leader from being visible to others.** If young people will be entering the Zoom Call by phoning in, ask them to join the call a couple of minutes early and have one adult leader set to delete their phone number from the attendees bar as soon as they enter and re-enter it as their name. There should always be two adult leaders present when a young person is logging in.

- Use of this is beyond the normal running of groups such as CU's and therefore we will seek explicit permission before use in the following ways:

- o Parental consent – set up an email which explains what you are planning to do, with the date and time of the video conference sessions. Ask for a reply as a form of consent and keep these emails in a separate folder.

- o Unless specifically directed otherwise by parents, use parents'/carers' email addresses to send the meeting invite to. This ensures parents/carers are aware that it is happening and can set up the young people to access the session appropriately with any oversight if they want. If parents explicitly contact you asking you to email the young people, ask them to email this in writing to you and file a copy of the email, and cc the parent into future emails with meeting invites so they are kept aware of meetings.

- o Boundaries: We would not usually enter young people's homes, nor would we entertain them in our homes. Parents are to be directed to ensure young people are in an appropriate location of their home with a suitable backdrop or using the green screen function if necessary. We do not want young people to be video calling from their bedrooms; if this occurs **turn off their video feed and use only audio.** Adult leaders will also follow these guidelines. Adult leaders are also to be sensitive to the privacy of those who are in their homes and to take relevant steps towards protecting this privacy.

- ‘Normal’ schools work/youth session rules will apply including with regards to recruitment and safeguarding process – At least two safely recruited adult leaders/youth workers will be present who would support the schools’ work in ‘real time’ contact. **Both leaders will go live before young people arrive.** Ideally use the same or similar time slot as normal CU/youth session meetings. If new youth members want to join the group, their parents will need to be contacted as per the previous guidance. If there are not enough adult leaders to host an online meeting then please contact the OSC Office and Volunteer Administrator or Director to discuss support.

- The aim of the conference calls will be for carrying out youth group/CU sessions, which may include some pastoral support and wellbeing, and OSC wants to ensure the calls will be positive and encouraging experiences for all involved, which includes thinking about how young people will interact together during the session.

- Codes of conduct – appropriate behaviour for leaders should be followed as you would expect in the usual youth group setting. Leaders will hold a discussion before the meeting happens to ensure any issues are thought through.

- Aim to be inclusive and identify any young people from your group who would struggle to participate in this way, and ways that extra support could be put in place for them.

- Use this resource creatively as a means to continue building community.

- Be aware of and sensitive to technical difficulties! There can be issues with speakers and microphones. Aim to ensure you have used the software with all adult leaders/youth workers first to try and sort out any difficulties and offer parents and carers technical support via phone call or Zoom as they set their young person up.

- DO NOT RECORD. Most video conferencing software allows for the session to be recorded – this is an option for the host of the meeting only. Please do not do this, a separate permission for data capture would be required and there are all sorts of issues around storage, GDPR etc.

- **Ensure that the chat facility only allows for public messages, and that private messaging is disabled.** During the session, if students are using the chat facility to discuss ideas, group leaders should nominate the leader who is not leading the discussion to monitor and read out/respond to chat comments, or to deal with any inappropriate responses promptly. It is not appropriate to copy the chat, without the permission to do so from all who are there. Once we have this permission, it may be appropriate occasionally to copy the chat to share and discuss in the evaluation after the group meeting for safeguarding of adult leaders/youth worker purposes.

If a leader notices a child, who may seem upset or unwell, for example, either message them publicly asking if they are Okay or you can contact the meeting organiser, who can contact the student via their parents after the meeting. It may be possible to message an individual student in these circumstances, ensuring that you copy the chat to share in the evaluation after the group meeting for safeguarding of adult leaders/youth worker purposes.

- Should there be any incident of an ‘uninvited guest’ into the meeting, do make sure the host sets the screen sharing to ‘**host only**’. (This is in the event of a meeting where details have been accessed publicly. This could result in a form of trolling. Disturbing imagery could potentially be shared)

- It is also recommended that **'file transfer'** is disabled to prevent any malware being shared (There is an assumption here that this is dependent on what level of subscription is taken out with Zoom. OSC Director to advise group leaders on support available to ensure that you have the correct level of subscription).

- Whilst every care and consideration has been taken to mitigate the risks we can foresee with the knowledge available to us at this time, it may be that new issues or risks arise as we go. It is necessary and advisable for adult leaders/youth workers to maintain a dynamic risk assessment and keep sharing risk assessment information with their contemporaries as it arises.