Archdiocese of Southwark
Safeguarding Guidance for the management of events for children & young people

Youth Ministry Guidance Document
'Be ready to give a reason to the hope that is in them'
(1 Peter 3:15)

This document should be read in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Southwark Safeguarding Policy & Procedures-Children & Adults at Risk-Please see below link (https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/0mfj0vnq/safeguarding-policy-2021.pdf)
The safeguarding team welcome any contact from any Parish or group that is wishing to plan an event or activity involving children and young people for additional support and guidance.

The purpose of this document is to guide **all** adults in planning, organising and attending events or activities for children & young people within the Archdiocese of Southwark. Every youth group, event or activity organised by or for the Archdiocese must recognise their duty to safeguard children & young people, keep them safe and keep this principle central in all planning and participation. It is important that all Clergy, volunteers and staff recognise the position of trust they have been placed in due to their position within the church and always act responsibly and appropriately towards all.
A child is defined as anyone up to the age of 18.

Things to consider

Safer Recruitment
Safer recruitment is a set of practices to help make sure all adults volunteering, working and supporting children & young people are suitable to do so. It is a vital part of creating a safe environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm. Safer recruitment must be an important consideration at the outset of any planning and should be a continuing process of improvement for every event or activity that involves contact with children.
Following safer recruitment procedures ensures everyone who works or volunteers at the event or activity is suitable to do so. This includes our own Clergy, volunteers and staff, as well as anyone who is not directly accountable to Southwark Diocese; such as staff or volunteers from partnership organisations.
Ask any other organisations or individuals involved what their safer recruitment procedures are and make sure they match those here at Southwark. It is important to get written

confirmation that everyone working with children and young people has been recruited safely and has undergone the relevant checks.
No adult wishing to participate in regulated activity can do so without a valid DBS check and met the requirements of the Archdiocesan safer recruitment policy.
Safer recruitment policy (https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/4zylzqwa/safer-recruitment-policy-trustee-docx.pdf)

What is Regulated Activity?
Regulated Activity with children comprises;
• Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instruction, care or supervision of children, provision of advice/guidance on well-being or driving a vehicle only for children.
• Work for a limited range of establishments with an opportunity for contact with children e.g., schools, children's homes, childcare premises.
Frequency is defined as work carried out by the same person more than 3 times a month with children or overnight between 2am and 6am, where there may be face to face contact with children and the work involves teaching, training, supervising, advising, guiding or caring for children.
Supervision means "day to day supervision as is reasonable in all the circumstances for the purpose of protecting any children concerned".
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b92b7f7e5274a424a8ef20b/Regulated_Activity_with_Children_in_England.pdf)
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b92b77ee5274a42733d7230/Regulated_Activity_with_Adults_in_England.pdf)
It is vital that you have the right people working with young people. A trip, event or activity should be cancelled, rather than have unsafe or insufficient people in support. **All concerns regarding the suitability of any adult working/volunteering with young people should be reported to the safeguarding team immediately.**

Creating a safer culture
The commitment to safeguarding children should be an ongoing process and have a high profile within any event or activity. All staff and volunteers involved should feel responsible for helping to make a safer culture and empowered to speak out and report any concerns. They should recognise the importance of avoiding being alone with any child/ren and that they are a role model. To help develop a safe environment, it's important to make safeguarding central to the induction process for new Clergy, staff and volunteers.
For details of CSSA guidance on creating a safer environment, please click on attached link (https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=creating)

Induction
Having a consistent induction process will make sure that all adults fully understand and know how to follow our safeguarding policy and procedures.
Make sure all Clergy, staff and volunteers:

- have read and understand The Archdiocese of Southwark safeguarding policy and procedures
- know how to identify the signs that a child may be experiencing abuse
- know how to respond appropriately if a child makes a disclosure about abuse
- know what to do if they have concerns about a child's wellbeing.
- Agree to sign and adhere to a code of conduct (See Appendix A)

Archdiocese of Southwark
Safeguarding Guidance for the management of events for children & young people

All Clergy, staff and volunteers should complete safeguarding training as part of their induction. Please see link for training and guide.
(https://training.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk)

For information purposes:
Level 1 is intended for casual volunteers and paid staff who don't require a DBS check
Level 2 is for volunteers who require a DBS check but not against the barred lists
Level 3 is mandatory for PSR and volunteers who require a DBS check and against any or one of the barred lists

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
Clergy, staff and volunteers must be briefed so they understand any safeguarding or health and safety risks involved with the event or activity and how to mitigate these. Make sure parents/carers know about all the activities or events that their children will be involved in, any risks that might occur and what steps you've taken to keep children and young people safe. Be clear about parental/carers expectations and their responsibility for their children during any activity or event.
Consider involving children and young people in the planning of any event/activity and explain how you expect them to behave. Getting young people to write their own code of conduct can assist in a greater adherence to any guidance set.
Guidance for Code of Conduct for Children
(https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=code+of+conduct)
Guidance for Code of conduct for volunteers/staff please see Appendix A.

Photography and filming
Children, young people and their families might want to take and share photos or videos of the event or activity. However, it's also important to be aware of safeguarding issues surrounding images of children and put measures in place to keep them safe.
For CSSA guidance, please follow the link and see Sec.9.
(https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=creating)

Sharing information about the event

Share information about the event or activity with parents/carers, Clergy, staff and volunteers to ensure everyone knows how any event/activity will run and what action they need to take to make sure children and young people are safe. Make sure children and young people know what is going to happen and who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Consent
Get written consent from parents/carers for their child being involved.
Where appropriate seek consent from children and young people too. If necessary, make alternative arrangements for those who cannot or do not wish to participate in all activities. Use a separate consent form for each activity or event to ensure information such as emergency contact details and any medical conditions, allergies, disabilities or other vulnerabilities of the child or young person are recorded and can be considered. This means you can make sure nothing has changed and ensure extra support given when required. All consent forms should be stored confidentially.

Online consent forms
If you decide to use online consent forms to record consent for children to take part in activities, these should be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Inform parents and carers about how this information will be stored and used.
Things to consider include:

- how you will verify that forms have been signed by the right person
- how you will keep the forms secure
- how authorised Clergy/volunteers/staff will access and check the forms as necessary
- whether all parents and carers will have access to an online system.

Read more about the Data Protection Act 2018 from the Information Commissioner's Office

Emergency information
Create a list of emergency contact numbers for each child and make sure this is easily available to the Clergy, staff or volunteers who are responsible for the child. Make sure group leaders know your procedures for contacting the emergency services if they need to. Give parents and carers a number they can call if they need to contact the group leader or their child in an emergency.

Inclusivity & Reasonable adjustments
All events & activities for children & young people should aim to be as inclusive as possible. In planning an event consideration must be made of any potential barriers to young people and if there are reasonable steps to be made to remove them. Where possible involve the young person and their parent/carer in any decisions as they will be able to guide you practically on what support or adjustments is required.
Make sure that the appropriate Clergy, staff and volunteers are aware in advance of any additional support needs for each child and any reasonable adjustments that are required. This information should only be shared on a need to know basis and should be managed sensitively.
Reasonable adjustments should, as far as reasonably possible, remove or reduce the disadvantage faced by young people with a disability and support the Church being as

inclusive as possible. Reasonable adjustments should respond to the needs of the individual and remove or reduce any barriers or support access, by making changes to;

- Physical environment (eg. the meeting place)
- The way things are done (eg. age range flexibility, the programme, routines)
- The support provided (eg. equipment, adapting communication, the level of support)

Record keeping

Make sure you keep all written records, such as consent forms, medical information and any records about child protection concerns securely. Please see CSSA guidance on managing personal data by clicking on the link. (https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=creating)
Consider what form a register of those in attendance will take and how this will be stored and access at a future date.

Health and safety

Make sure you have all the necessary health and safety measures in place. For example:

- make sure appropriate first aid cover is available
- make everyone aware of fire safety procedures
- find out as much as you can about external venues including visiting in advance wherever possible
- talk to any third-party providers directly and make sure they are fully compliant with the law
- carry out comprehensive risk assessments in advance
- check that any organisations you are subcontracting to run activities comply with safety standards.
- Consider the level of ability and stage of development of the children who will be involved and think about any support they need.

More information about health and safety at events is available from the Health and Safety Executive (https://www.hse.gov.uk/). You should also make sure you have adequate insurance if required.

Risk Assessment

Completing a risk assessment can improve the safeguarding and health & safety provisions of any event. The assessment can identify areas of concern or hazards and mitigate, reduce or eliminate the risks they may pose. Please follow link for the Archdiocese of Southwark Risk Assessment-(**safeguarding-risk-assessment.pdf (rcsouthwark.co.uk)**

Ratio's

Make sure you provide the right number of adults to supervise the children and young people participating, depending on their age, group size, the activity they are involved in and any specific needs or vulnerabilities that the children may have.
Consider what would happen if a member of staff or volunteer had to leave to accompany a child to hospital.
Never allow anyone under the age of 18 to be in sole charge of other children. Any under 18, can volunteer, but should still be considered as a young person throughout any event/activity and should not be included within the Ratio numbers. Under 18's should

never be asked to do anything that they are not comfortable with. Please see Appendix B for further details of Ratio's

Who's who
Make it clear which adults are involved in the event (whether Clergy, staff or volunteers) and which are spectators etc. For example, you could issue your staff and volunteers with badges or t-shirts. This is important in case of emergency. It also helps children and young people recognise trusted adults they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Registration & Collection

- Is pre-booking required
- What to do if a child attends that has not pre-booked
- What to do if a child attends without written consent from parent/carer or incomplete contact details
- Is a register of children & young people required?
- What procedures in are in place at the end of an event to ensure all children are collected?
- What plans are in place if child is not collected?
- Should children leave an event without parental/carers supervision?
- Consider the safety of children when leave an event (time of day/location/transportation etc)

Overnight stays
If you are taking children and young people on an overnight stay, there are some additional matters for consideration;

Overnight accommodation
Make sure there are separate sleeping, washing and toilet areas for:

- adults and children
- older and younger children
- boys and girls.

Overnight trips for mixed groups should include at least one female and one male supervising adult. Although accommodation for adults should be separate from children, it should be nearby. If possible, arrange to have exclusive use of the accommodation. If this isn't possible, try to negotiate the use of a whole floor and keep all the children's rooms close together. If children's rooms are on different floors, adults should be available on each floor. Make sure children know what to do if they need help in the night and if there is an emergency, for example a fire alarm. (**https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=overnight**)

Preparing parents, carers and children
Communicate with parents/carers in advance with detailed arrangements for any trip and answer any questions they may have in advance. Specify the steps you are taking to keep their children safe.
Ensure parents/carers know the address of where you will be staying and have an emergency telephone number they can call if they need to.

Talk to children & young people about keeping themselves safe while they are away. Give them the address of your accommodation and an emergency contact number, and make sure they know what to do if they get lost.
Make sure children & young people know who to talk to if they are unhappy or worried about anything, eg, if they are being bullied, feel frightened or are homesick. Make sure all staff and volunteers know how to respond to any safeguarding concern that may arise and to escalate any concerns appropriately.

Sharing information and resources
The activity or event leader should familiarise themselves when attending a new premise or location. They should then share relevant safety information, for example where the fire exits and fire extinguishers are located and where the toilets are and any particular areas of concern or mitigation required. This information should be recorded in the Risk Assessment.
If you're hiring out different rooms or areas to more than one group at the same time, extra measures should be taken to make sure children are safe. This would particularly include how, if required, the groups should be kept separate, particularly considering areas where children may be alone-eg toilets or outside spaces.
For further details please see attached link
(https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=overnight)

Pilgrimages
All plans for pilgrimages involving young people must be discussed fully with the Head of Safeguarding.
CSSA have guidance on Pilgrimages-(https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/?s=Pilgrimages)

Toilets/quiet Spaces.
Toilets and other quiet places can pose a risk when planning events. These areas frequently prevent supervision and are where children can be vulnerable. Therefore, careful consideration must be taken when planning an event/activity. The environment may prevent separate toilets for adults & children, therefore creativity is required in planning events, to minimise and mitigate risk.

Lost or missing children
Think about what measures you can put in place to prevent children getting lost and make sure you have clear procedures to follow if children go missing during your event or activity. Things you should consider include:

- whether you will have a designated meeting point for lost children, where this will be, how you will make sure children know about it and how it will be supervised
- how you will contact parents or carers to inform them that their child is lost or has been found
- how you will verify that adults coming forward to collect a missing child are the child's parents or carers
- whether any of the children you are working with might need extra supervision to prevent them going missing or if a learning disability means they get confused in unfamiliar places
- who will co-ordinate the initial search for a missing child

- who is responsible for contacting the police if necessary, and when this should happen.

Social media
While recognising the benefits of social media and electronic communication, all contact between adults and young people must strictly adhere to the Archdiocese social media policy. In general, the guidance states;

- There must be **no** individual electronic/Social Media communication between an adult and a young person.
- All such communication should be within a group, age appropriate and with more than one adult engaged within the communication.
- If young people are to create a social media group for your activity-ensure the age restrictions of the platform (See Appendix C)
- That all reasonable efforts are made to ensure that the Internet or social media is not used for the viewing or transmission of inappropriate images on Church property.
- Any possession, distribution or manufacturing of indecent images of children, will be immediately reported to the Police and the Archdiocese safeguarding team.
- The taking of and/or posting/display of photographs of children must only occur with the written consent of parents/carers.
- Children should not be identified by their full name in photographs and all must be mindful of the "Jigsaw" effect in regards to children's identity. This is the method for identifying a piece of information from two or more different sources where the information's release was not intentional.
- An individual's home address/phone number must not be posted publicly.

Peer on Peer concerns
It is important to recognise that children & young people can also be abusers of other children, usually through bullying, sexual abuse, physical abuse, issues online, youth produced sexual images or any form of indecent image. All adults working with children & Young People, must be vigilant for any concerns and take seriously any reports or disclosures regarding peer on peer abuse. For further information please click on the attached link for NSPCC advice.
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/managing-allegations-made-against-a-child

What to do
Nominate a key member of staff or volunteer to take overall responsibility for organising the event or activity. There should also be a nominated person who will manage any safeguarding concerns who has a clear understanding of their role and responsibility and the confidence to report matters when meet the threshold.

Young Adults & Young people
Special consideration is required if you have groups of young people and young adults together (over & under 18's). While the individuals may view themselves as peers, safeguarding guidance & legislation makes clear distinctions and these must be adhered to when planning any event. Issues such as consent, social media, an adult not being alone with a child and potential power imbalance are important factors for consideration. An

under 18 must **NOT** share a room or be transported on their own with any over 18. Please contact the safeguarding office for advice.

Free time
As a general rule, under 11s should not have unsupervised free time.
If older children and young people are allowed unsupervised time, they should be in groups of at least three. Make sure they know where and how to contact a member of staff, what time they should reconvene with the group and where. It's good practice for two adults to stay in one place, so that they are easily available and young people can check in with them regularly.

Transport
You may need to provide transport to get children and young people to and from the event or activity. If you're using a bus, coach or taxi company, make sure they are reputable, have the right insurance and that their drivers are fully vetted. Ensure children and young people are adequately supervised on the journey and take the necessary safety precautions depending on what kind of transport you're using. Avoid using private cars to transport children and young people, unless this involves parents/carers making private transport arrangements with each other. This is a private arrangement and therefore not something the group has set up. Make sure parents/carers know what time and where to drop off and pick up their children. Make sure they tell you in advance who will be picking up their children if they aren't doing so themselves.

After the event or activity
Make time after the event or activity to review what happened and identify any improvements you can make to your future practice.

Reporting all safeguarding concerns
For large groups there should be a nominated safeguarding lead who will be the initial point of contact if there are any safeguarding concerns, disclosures or incidents. For Parish events this maybe the Parish Safeguarding Representative or nominated person. If any child is at immediate risk of harm, then the Police must be contacted, dialling 999. The child's parents should not be informed until advice has been gained by the Police, as this may put the child/young person at greater risk. All other matters should be reported to the Archdiocesan safeguarding team, either directly or via the leader of the activity, Parish Safeguarding Representative (PSR) or Parish Priest. This includes low level concerns, which may not reach the threshold of a safeguarding concern presently. (For further information please see Appendix D)
All information should be treated confidentially and depending on your role, you may not receive feedback or an outcome.

For further information on recognising and responding to a safeguarding concern, please see below link from the NSPCC.
https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/recognising-and-responding-to-abuse

For further information or advice, please contact the Archdiocesan safeguarding team on **safeguardingoffice@rcaos.org.uk**

Appendices

Appendix A

Code of Conduct for staff or volunteers working with or alongside children, young people and Adults at Risk, within or representing the Archdiocese of Southwark

Purpose

This behaviour code outlines the conduct the Archdiocese of Southwark expects from all staff and volunteers when working with children, young people or Adults at Risk, within or representing the Archdiocese. This includes trustees, agency staff, interns, students on work placement and anyone who is undertaking duties for the Archdiocese, whether paid or unpaid. The behaviour code aims to help protect children, young people and Adults at Risk from abuse and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made. The Archdiocese of Southwark is committed to ensuring everyone working or volunteering with children, young children or Adults at Risk have seen, understood and agreed to follow this code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of staff and volunteers within the Archdiocese of Southwark

In your role within Archdiocese of Southwark you are acting in a position of trust and have a duty of care towards the children, young people and Adults at Risk, you work with or support. You are likely to be seen as a role model and are expected to act appropriately.

When working or supporting children, young people or Adults at Risk, you are responsible for:

- *prioritising the welfare of children, young people and Adults at Risk*
- *providing a safe environment for children, young people and Adults at Risk*
- *following the Archdiocese Mission, policies and processes-including our safeguarding, whistleblowing and safer recruitment policies and staying within the law at all times*
- *modelling good behaviour for children, young people and Adults at Risk to follow*
- *challenging all unacceptable behaviour and reporting any breaches of this code of conduct or policies to the Archdiocese of Southwark Safeguarding team, your PSR or Parish Priest*
- *reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, being displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.*
- *treating children, young people and Adults at Risk, fairly and without prejudice or discrimination and challenging behaviour that falls below this standard*
- *understanding that children, young people and Adults at Risk, are individuals with individual needs*
- *respecting differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems-appreciating that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation and avoid favouritism*
- *promoting relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect*
- *exercising caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with children, young people & Adults at Risk and listening to and respecting them at all times*
- *ensuring your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the work or project you are involved in*

• *ensuring that there is more than one adult present during all planned activities with children, young people and Adults at Risk (if your work requires lone working with Adults at Risk, you must follow the guidance within our safeguarding policy. Anyone planning to complete lone working with children* ***must contact*** *the safeguarding team.) If a situation arises where you are alone with a child, young person or Adult at Risk, ensure that you are within sight or hearing of other adults.*
• *respecting a child's, young person or Adults at Risk's right to personal privacy as far as possible- if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow safeguarding procedures, it is important to explain this to the child, young person or Adult at Risk at the earliest opportunity.*
Ensure that all financial expenditure and expenses are made in a transparent and honest way, in-line with any Archdiocese guidance or policy.

Unacceptable behaviour
When working with or supporting children, young people or Adult at Risk, ***you must not****:*
• *allow concerns, disclosures or allegations to go unreported*
• *take unnecessary risks*
• *smoke or consume alcohol when responsible for their care or use illegal substances*
• *develop inappropriate relationships with children, young people or Adults at Risk*
• *make inappropriate comments or promises to children and young people*
• *engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive-including having any form of sexual contact with a child, young person or Adult at Risk, including on-line.*
• *let children and young people have your personal contact details (Eg-mobile number, email) or have contact with them via a personal social media account*
• *make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children, young people or Adults at Risk or act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive*

Upholding this code of behaviour
You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of the Archdiocese of Southwark to protect you. Depending on the seriousness of the situation if you have behaved inappropriately you may be subject to our disciplinary procedures or requested to stop volunteering within the Archdiocese of Southwark. A referral may also be made to statutory agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), police and/or the social care. If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to the Archdiocese safeguarding team or via your PSR or Parish Priest.
……..

I have read and understood the Archdiocese of Southwark's Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers working with or alongside children, young people and Adults at Risk and agree to abide by them.

Name…… Date……

Signature……Signature of line manager……

Appendix B

Supervision and adult: child ratios

Supervision should be active and continuous for the duration of the activity, including during periods outside of structured activities as well as during the activities themselves. Participants might not need to be watched always but leaders should consider the types of supervision required according to the activity.

Providing an adequate ratio of adult supervisors to children contributes to the physical and emotional safety and wellbeing of children and young people and is essential to ensuring that appropriate and safe levels of supervision are maintained. Appropriate supervision ratios also serve to support those supervising.

Factors to take into consideration when considering supervision and child: adult ratios include:

- the gender, age and ability of the group;
- additional support or medical needs;
- the duration and nature of the activities;
- the experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- the type of any accommodation;
- the competence of staff;
- the requirements of the organisation or location to be visited;
- the competence and behaviour of participants.

Any meeting with children, young people or adults at risk should take place in an area which is either visually accessible or is frequented by other people and there must always be a minimum of two adults linked to every group for all activities. For specific guidance relating to the Sacrament of Reconciliation see 'Sacrament of Reconciliation' in the national safeguarding procedures manual.

A general guide for minimum supervision ratios provided by the Department for Education (DfE) is:

- one adult leader for every 3 children aged 0-2 years;
- one adult leader for every 4 children aged 2-3 years;
- one adult leader for every 6 children aged 4-8 years;
- one adult leader for every 8 children aged 9-12 years;
- one adult leader for every 10 children aged 13-18 years.

When children and young people are identified as having additional needs that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist care or support, this must be discussed with the child's parent or carer and the child if appropriate.

Following the discussions and risk assessment, the group leader should consider increasing the levels of supervision to meet the assessed needs.

There must always be enough leaders on duty to supervise the activity and appropriate cover available to supervise children and young people should the leaders on duty be called away in an emergency e.g. to take a child to hospital. Consideration must be given to unforeseen circumstances arising (e.g. an accident) whereby it is not always possible to

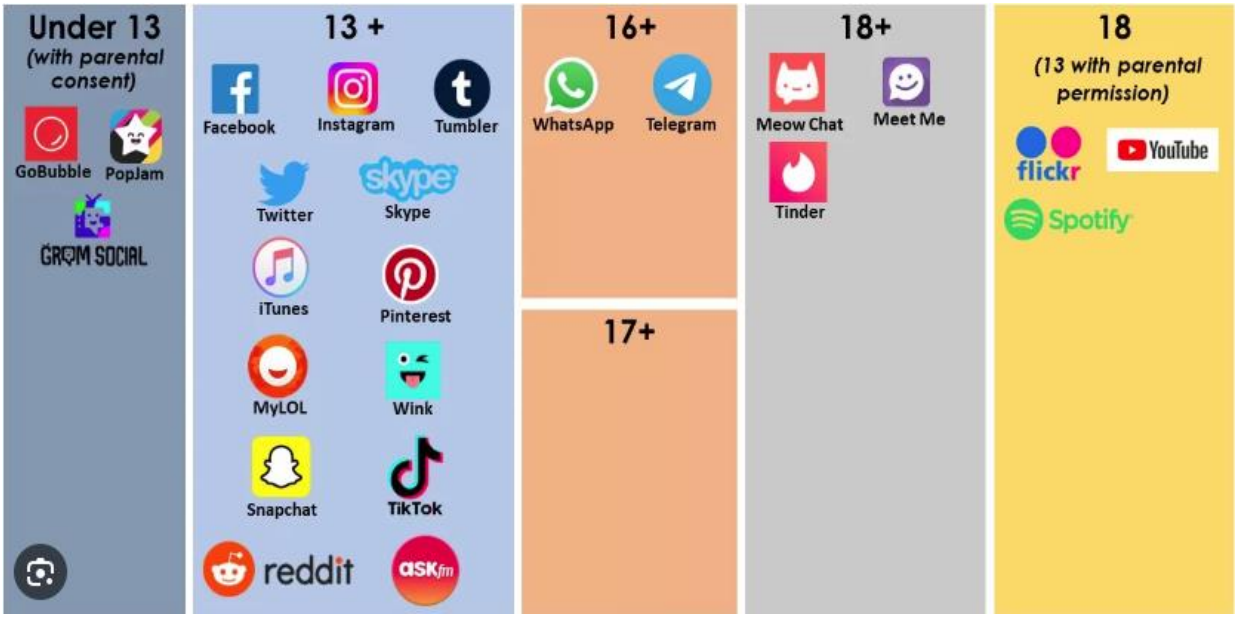
maintain the presence of two adults. For this reason, care needs to be taken in the planning stage when selecting an adequate number of leaders and the venue for activity.
If a group is left with only one adult supervisor, the situation must be reported to another leader (where applicable the group leader) and be recorded to safeguard the interests of both the children and adults concerned.
Additional leaders should be assigned to assist with supervision on the first and last night and at other times as identified in the risk assessment.

Support ratios for adults should be based on the assessment of need. For example, the required level of support with mobility might necessitate a minimum ratio of one to one.

Young people under eighteen should be welcomed and encouraged to assist with activities but their involvement must be monitored so that they do not have the responsibility of a group leader or are used to meet the adult: child ratio requirements.

Depending on the overall size of the group participating, it should be considered as good practice for the main group to split into smaller sections to facilitate better group supervision. These sub groups should always remain near each other, to permit adult leaders being able to support each other while safeguarding the interests of all.

Appendix C


Under 13
(with parental consent)
GoBubble
PopJam
GROM SOCIAL
13 +
Facebook
Instagram
Tumbler
Twitter
Skype
iTunes
Pinterest
MyLOL
Wink
Snapchat
TikTok
reddit
ask.fm
16+
WhatsApp
Telegram
17+
18+
Meow Chat
Meet Me
Tinder
18
(13 with parental permission)
flickr
YouTube
Spotify

Appendices D

Managing & Responding to low level concerns

What is a low-level concern?
A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the safeguarding policy, code of conduct, Caring Safely for others document or the mission of the Catholic Church, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough for a referral to Police or social care to the local authority.

Low-level concerns are part of a spectrum of behaviour.
This may include;

- inadvertent or thoughtless behaviour
- behaviour that might be considered inappropriate depending on the circumstances
- behaviour which is intended to enable abuse.
- Behaviour that is a direct breach of the Archdiocesan code of conduct or safeguarding policy

Examples of such behaviour could include:

- being over friendly with children
- having favourites
- adults taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Why do we need to respond to low-level concerns?
Having clear procedures for responding to low-level concerns is part of creating a culture of openness and trust. It helps ensure that adults consistently model the Catholic Church's values and helps keep children safe. It will also protect adults working or volunteering with young people from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

What do we need to do?
We have a clear policy of reporting low-level concerns. It is closely linked to the code of conduct for staff and volunteers.

There is a clear process in place for sharing and responding to any concerns about an adult's behaviour, no matter how small. All concerns should be reported to the Archdiocesan Safeguarding team as they can still be significant even if it does not meet the threshold of harm.

All activities, events and groups involving young people must ensure that all adults working or volunteering, understand:

- what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- what a low-level concern is
- the importance of sharing low-level concerns
- how to report any concerns
- the process for recording, reviewing and responding to concerns.

This must be included in your planning, risk assessment and training.