



New Generation Church: E-safety and Social Media Policy

This E-safety, Mobile Phone, and Social Media policy was updated:

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New Generation Church: E-Safety and Social Media Policy

New Generation Church has a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people they come into contact with. The need for guidelines and procedures is important to ensure that this is done with understanding and clarity. The Leadership & Trustees of New Generation Church fully endorse and support the safeguarding policies for children, and adults at risk, that are implemented across all activities of the church and associated activities.

The definition of a child for this policy is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

Our commitment

As a Leadership we recognise the need to provide a safe and caring environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. We acknowledge that children, young people and vulnerable adults can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect. We accept the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Human Rights, which states that everyone is entitled to "all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".

We also concur with the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children should be able to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. They have a right to be protected from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has care of the child." As a Leadership we have therefore adopted the procedures set out in this safeguarding policy in accordance with statutory guidance. We are committed to build constructive links with statutory and voluntary agencies involved in safeguarding.

“Safeguarding is a priority here”

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1 Introduction and Aims

At New Generation Church, we are committed to supporting children, young people and adults with e-safety and safeguarding themselves effectively. We are aware of the immensely positive contribution that the internet, social media and mobile technology have made to our lives, but also that we need to promote safe use of each of these technologies.

This policy has been written with the aim of providing practical advice from the NSPCC and from a Thirtyone: eight:

- [Social media | NSPCC](#)
- [Online Safety | Thirtyone:eight \(thirtyoneeight.org\)](http://thirtyoneeight.org)

This policy should be read in accordance with our Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Adult's Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and our code of conduct.

2 Why use it? (NSPCC)

Children and young people use many different social media apps and sites. The most popular are Facebook and Instagram, with many others such as Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter.

There are lots of benefits to social networking. They can allow users to stay connected with friends and family. They can also learn many different things, from make-up or gaming tutorials to making slime, or how to create their own videos.

Like most things, there can be negatives too. For children and young people there are risks that you should be aware of, to help keep your child safe on social media.

3 Key Issues (thirtyoneeight.org)

Key issues

There are a number of key issues that we need to be aware of when considering online safety for children and young people:

Cyber bullying

Children can be subjected to a range of online bullying and can feel isolated as a result of it. Be aware of changes in your child's mood or behaviour. Talk to them if you're concerned and ask about their online activity.

Online grooming

People can create any identity they like online. Online groomers build up a relationship to the point where they ask for inappropriate things or to meet in person. Over a third of children admit to adding people they don't know to their social media contacts.

Sexting

Similar to online grooming, sexting is where someone asks for a picture of a sexual nature to be sent via MMS or through social media.

Inappropriate content

A great deal of content is age restricted for a good reason. More and more children are exposed to unsuitable content for their age. This can be damaging to a child's development. Pornographic content can warp a young person's expectations when it comes to relationships.

Addiction

Constant exposure to gaming and social media can become addictive and damaging. It can lead to poor decision making in both life and finances.

Radicalisation

Extremist ideology is often spread online. Any content which encourages racism, terrorism or other radical acts must be reported.

Social media

Social media sites and apps can be a great tool for networking and keeping in touch. However, there are inherent dangers for children and young people when not used safely.

4 Risks ([Social media](#) | [NSPCC](#))

Oversharing

Children and young people can sometimes feel pressure to overshare online. Remind them that they shouldn't share private things, such as:

- personal information, like names, phone numbers, links to other social media accounts or their school
- live or frequent locations
- other people's personal information
- links to join private group chats
- photos of themselves
- photos of their body, such as sexual photos or videos.
- Explain to your child that, if someone starts asking them other questions, or suggests that they speak on a different messaging platform, then they should come and tell you.

Sharing their location

Many apps and games give you the option to share your location. You should help children think about how and when they're sharing it. Some of the ways they may be likely to share location include:

- tagging photos with the geo-location
- checking into venues
- sharing journeys

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- location settings on your child's device
- sharing images or videos that contain street names etc.
- If shared publicly, their location could be seen by someone they don't know. People could find out where they live or go to school, allowing an accurate picture of their daily routine to be built up.

All these things increase risk to children, of cyberbullying, stalking or unwanted contact (from friends or others) or becoming a target.

Talking to people they don't know

Some social networking such as Omegle and Kidschat.net promote connecting you to chat with people you don't know.

This puts young people at risk of grooming or online forms of abuse, along with the risk of moving the conversation to other platforms or meeting up offline. You should be aware of this across all social media.

Sending or receiving inappropriate content

Young people can feel pressured into sharing content that could be harmful to themselves or others. This could be in the form of sexting or sharing nudes, or it might be sharing memes and images of others without their consent – which can be a form of cyberbullying.

DMs (direct messages) can be used to share very quickly and they have no control over how the image is shared further. Some social platforms have features such as disappearing messages – where an image or text will only show for a certain amount of time for the recipient before deleting. This might make users feel they can share more, but the recipient can still screenshot and forward the content to others.

Unrealistic sense of body image or reality

With so many influencers and users sharing photos, children can feel under pressure to conform to the 'ideal' body and lifestyle. It's important to talk about positive body image and help children see that what others post is a curated version of their life, and to question what they see online.

Obsessive focus on likes and comments

Children may be very focused on how many likes or comments their posts get, which can leave them feeling that they aren't good enough, or not as popular as someone else.

Try to help them remember that likes aren't everything. Instagram has an option to turn off likes on posts – that may help to ease the pressure.

5 Hints and tips (thirtyoneeight.org)

1. Be involved in your child setting up and using social media accounts. This includes chat rooms available through children's toys such as Moshi Monsters etc.

2. Ensure privacy settings are correct.

These can include photo permissions, location tags, who can see their comments. Every device and app has options for privacy.

3. Tell them not to add people they do not know.

Online identities can be created by anyone.

4. Tell them not to share any personal data whether voluntarily or at someone's request.

This includes where they live, school, age etc.

5. Explain that anything they put online is permanent.

They won't be able to take something back if they post it by mistake, even if they delete the post off their own profile.

6. Set boundaries for limited use.

Use the parental controls listed below to set appropriate boundaries on time and access.

7. Agree access to their device or computer to be able to see their activity.

8. Ensure they know how to report any unwanted activity.

See our points on how to respond and make sure you discuss these with your children.

6 Parental controls (thirtyoneeight.org)

Parental controls aren't just about blocking inappropriate content, it's also about managing how and when your children go online. For more detailed information visit www.internetmatters.org

1. Home broadband restrictions

Many internet providers have facilities on the routers they provide. These allow you to set passwords for accessing the wi-fi, blocking unsuitable content and time restrictions on using the internet.

2. Devices and Computers

Tablets and computers have varying levels of parental controls that can be set. Some tablets have time restrictions and computers have username permissions which grant different abilities to different users.

3. Apps and programmes

As well as the device, individual apps and programmes require parental controls setting separately. For example, BBC iPlayer allows you to set a 4 digit pin for content age 16 and over. Also, controls to prevent purchase of apps and 'in-app purchases' can be set also.

Remember that parental controls aren't just digital. Having house rules such as not allowing phones at the dinner table are really useful!

Restricting your child's time on gaming devices can also prevent them from becoming isolated or addicted.

7 Mental Health and social media ([Social media](#) | [NSPCC](#))

Some young people may find it easier talking online, including to people they've not met in person, or they might want to find others who are going through the same things as them. It is important to support children to think about who they're talking to and if it's helping them to feel better. Ask them to think about the following:

- Does talking to them make you feel like things will never change, or do they give you hope that you'll feel better, and things will improve?
- Do they stop you seeking support from other people, or encourage you to talk to others too?
- Do you feel better or worse after talking to them?

Just as in the offline world, bullying can happen online on social networking sites too. Watch out for the signs and make sure that they know what to do if it happens to them. Please refer to our Anti-Bullying policy for more information.

Childline has lots of information about feeling good on social media that might be useful for your child to look at.

8 Useful links and contacts (thirtyoneeight.org)

Here are some useful websites and resources when dealing with the area of Online safety:

A really useful website with detailed information on e-safety issues and how to manage them.

www.internetmatters.org

The national police platform for reporting online abuse.

www.ceop.police.uk

A useful website teaching safety for child on a range of issues including the internet.

www.safetynetkids.org.uk

An advice site and phone service that children and young people can use to talk through their problems.

www.childline.org.uk

08001111

Thinkuknow is Ceop's online resource for educating different age and people groups.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

The naked truth project is a resource to help educate about the damaging impact of pornography.

www.thenakedtruthproject.com

9 Child Protection

The DSLs should be aware of e-safety issues and in particular of the implications that may arise from:

- sharing of personal data
- access to illegal/inappropriate materials
- inappropriate contact online with adults/strangers
- potential or actual incidents of grooming – sexual exploitation
- cyber-bullying
- exposure to radicalisation

10 Staff and volunteer taking photos

Permission must be obtained of both children and adults before a photograph is taken or film footage recorded. However, it is perfectly acceptable to ask parents/carers to let the organisation know if they do NOT want their child photographed or filmed. The worker should write to parents or carers to explain what is happening and leave the onus on the parent/carer to contact them if they have any objections. In addition to this:

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- It must be made clear why the image(s) or film is being used, what it will be used for and who might want to look at the pictures.
- When using photographs of children and young people, use group pictures and never identify them by name or other personal details. These details include e-mail or postal addresses, telephone numbers.
- Obtain written and specific consent from parents or carers before using photographs on a website.
- Image use consent to be part of a registration form.

Staff/volunteer use of social media

All team members must use social media with discretion and wisdom. Photos of children, young people or vulnerable adults (where their faces are recognisable) **MUST NOT** be posted on social media by team members.

Only photos which are anonymous and do not show recognisable individuals can be posted on social media and used for publicity. Children and young people should never be named or “tagged” in team members’ posts on social media.

For their own protection, volunteers’ mobile phones should not be seen during an event where they are functioning ‘loco parentis’. The team should be explicit with the children or young people as to how and why they may use their phones during a session.

11 Appendix

Appendix one: Safeguarding contacts

DSL: Daniel Rouse

DDSL: Paula Weston

DDSL: Simon Dubbey

Appendix two: Safeguarding Concern Form

E-safety and Social Media policy: Updated September 2024

New Gen Church Cause for Concern Form: Safeguarding Disclosure

NB: The sending of a form does not remove your obligation of safeguarding a child. Please assess risk and take action to escalate as needed.

YOU MUST ALSO TELL A DSL IN PERSON OR OVER THE PHONE IF YOU HAVE SENT A SAFEGUARDING FORM.

BEXLEY CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE DUTY TEAM: Telephone: Daytime hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm) 020 3045 5440.

Out of hours (5pm to 9am Monday to Friday and 24 hour cover at weekends) 020 8303 7777 or 020 8303 7171.

Name :			
DOB :			
Address:			
Male/Female :	Ethnic Origin :	Disability Y/N :	
Date and time of <u>concern</u> :			
Your account of the concern: (what was said, observed, reported and by whom)			

Additional information: (context of concern/disclosure)	
Your response: (what did you do/say following the concern)	
Your name:	Your signature:
Your role:	Date and time of this <u>recording</u>:

<p><u>FOR DSL USE ONLY</u></p> <p>Are there identifying risks related to;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CSE PREVENT FGM</p> <p>“honour” based violence</p> <p>(Please circle)</p> <p>Remember to consider specific recording procedures for these risks.</p>	<p>Is there a history of safeguarding concerns (NB: check electronic and hard copy files)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">YES NO</p>
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DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING RECORD OF ACTION / CONTACTS/CHRONOLOGY OF INCIDENT

NAME:		
DATE	DETAILS	SIGNATURE