



## Resource: Digital and Social Media Age Guidelines

C/2.2.1.3

Mode of communication	Playgroup/ pre-school	Prep to Grade 6	Grades 6–9	Grades 10–12	Post school/under 18
<b>Video calls</b>	Group video calls are suitable for playgroup interactions, as each child will have their parent in attendance.	Primary aged children with two leaders and parents present as well.	Grades 6–9 is limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group call to be held in public space in family home.	Limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.	Limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.
<b>Streaming calls, chat rooms</b>	Group video calls are suitable for playgroup interactions, as each child will have their parent in attendance.	Primary aged children with two leaders and parents present as well. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.	Grades 6–9 is limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.	Limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.	Limited to a group setting with two leaders present, parental permission required; with ground rules and purpose of the session communicated to parents beforehand. Group chat to be held in public space in family home.
<b>Phone calls</b>	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Only after gaining permission from the parent/guardian to speak with the child. Stay brief, on point. Consider the leadership requirement to have another adult present during this call, to meet the ratio requirements for all leaders working with children.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Long conversations should be avoided—stay focused on the ministry purpose for the call.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Long conversations should be avoided—stay focused on the ministry purpose for the call.



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<b>Text messaging</b>	Not appropriate— communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate— communicate directly to the parent/guardian. .	For logistical purposes only (e.g. mass communication about upcoming program), the parent/guardian should be included. Use of church mobile phone, rather than personal mobile phone is preferred.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Logistics; encouragement; remain transparent. Use of church mobile phone, rather than personal mobile phone is preferred.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Logistics; encouragement; remain transparent. Use of church mobile phone, rather than personal mobile phone is preferred.
<b>Email</b>	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	For logistical purposes only (e.g. mass communication about upcoming program), the parent/guardian should be included; remain transparent. Use of church email, rather than personal email is preferred.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Logistics; encouragement; remain transparent. Use of church email, rather than personal email is preferred.	Parental permission should be obtained, and the parent should be advised at the outset that contact may occur and what the contact may look like. Logistics; encouragement; remain transparent. Use of church email, rather than personal email is preferred.
<b>Gaming</b>	Not appropriate. Do not engage.	Not appropriate. Do not engage.	Not appropriate. Do not engage. <i>However, may be possible, only under the circumstances where there is a group activity, then a parent MUST be present and participating online with the child AT ALL TIMES. There must be prior written parental permission, ground rules, purpose and reasons for the child participating in the session with their parent.</i>	Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the session should be communicated to parents beforehand, with explicit parental permission obtained. Ensure that there is more than one leader present, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained. Be cautious and consider the appropriateness of engaging with young people in this medium.	Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the session should be communicated to parents beforehand, with explicit parental permission obtained. Ensure that there is more than one leader present, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained. Be cautious and consider the appropriateness of engaging with young people in this medium.



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<b>Facebook</b> Facebook is one of the most popular social media channels with a diverse reach across genders and age divides. When using Facebook for your church set up a brand page, not a profile. Has moderation functions. 13+ age restrictions.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of Page or community group in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the session/account/page should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the page, account or group, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of Page or community group in a transparent shared space. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the session/account/page should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the page, account or group, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of Page or community group in a transparent shared space. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the session/account/page should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the page, account or group, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.
<b>Instagram,</b> Instagram has the highest usage by those aged 18-29, followed by those in the 30-39 age bracket. Instagram is best for church youth groups and young adults. Has moderation functions. 13+ age restrictions.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.



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<b>SnapChat</b> SnapChat, like Instagram, has a younger audience. The photos and videos posted disappear after they've been viewed. 13+ age restrictions.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation channel in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the channel should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the channel, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation channel in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the channel should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the channel, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation channel in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the channel should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the channel, to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.
<b>Twitter,</b> Twitter is most popular for males aged 30-39 The 280-character limit keeps messages succinct and to the point, making sure you only share the most important information. 13+ age restrictions.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.



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<b>YouTube</b> YouTube is a free video platform and is very popular, thus has the potential to reach a larger audience. YouTube is free to upload videos but has ads. 13+ age restrictions. Best use for broadcast/ live stream of worship. 13+ age restrictions.	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian. <b>YouTube Kids</b> - Parents can create an account according to age group: pre-school (4 and under)	Not appropriate — communicate directly to the parent/guardian. <b>YouTube Kids</b> - Parents can create an account according to age group: younger (5 to 7), and older (8 to 12)	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.	Do not engage with personal accounts. Use of business or organisation account in a transparent shared space with explicit parental permission may be considered for this age group. Use caution. Ground rules and purpose and reasons for the child having membership or participating in the account should be communicated to parents beforehand. Ensure that there is more than one administrator for the account to ensure that the leader to child ratios are maintained.
<b>Tik Tok</b> Tik Tok has extremely low usage by churches due to the nature of the content. Has moderation functions. 13+ age restrictions — however there are no age verification tools when signing up.	Not appropriate	Not appropriate	Not appropriate to engage young people with a Tik Tok account.	Not appropriate to engage young people with a Tik Tok account.	Not appropriate to engage young people with a Tik Tok account.

## Information and support

Information and support can be obtained from the Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer on 07 3377 9833 or [safechurch@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:safechurch@ucaqld.com.au)

For information or support to access online training, please contact the Learning and Development Team: 07 3377 9734 or [learning@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:learning@ucaqld.com.au)

For concerns relating to any social or digital media application ('app'), search the name of the app (eg 'SnapChat') on the [eSafety Commissioner's website](#).

## Mandatory Reporting Process and Reporting Links

Follow the [Mandatory Reporting Process](#), and:

Report online abuse or exploitation - <https://www.accce.gov.au/report>

Report cyberbullying or have inappropriate material removed from online - <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>

Make an anonymous report to crime stoppers - <https://crimestoppers.com.au/#report>

## Revisions

Document number		C/2.2.1.3			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
3.1	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	16.01.2024	Strategic Risk Manager	Safe Church Assurance and Support Officer
Next scheduled review		02.08.2027			