



## Fact Sheet: Diocesan Employees and Volunteers (Workers) Engaging in Online Forums with Children (under 18 years old)

With the shift to more activities and communications taking place online, one must ensure that any communication with children in this setting adopts the following safeguarding measures:

- Expected behaviours to be announced at the start of the communication by workers (Diocesan employees/volunteers). Consequences of inappropriate behaviour should also be explained.
- Communication with children should be held in appropriate hours that have been approved by the supervisor and parent/guardian.
- Communication with children must be conducted from an appropriate location. Appropriate locations are living rooms, kitchens and home office areas. Inappropriate locations are private places like bedrooms and bathrooms.
- Appropriate clothing must be worn by all during communication.
- Participants must not share any inappropriate text, images, videos, backgrounds or other inappropriate content. Screen sharing must therefore be disabled with only the host allowed to share the screen on an online platform.
- Parent and/or guardians should be informed of the communication details between workers and child prior to taking place. Written parental/guardian consent needs to be obtained prior to communication where a parent/guardian is not attending the online communication.
- Online communication with children must be initiated by Diocesan workers and with the approval of their supervisor.
- Workers must ensure that the background during video calls is appropriate. Wherever possible use a virtual background as this will ensure participants can't see what is happening in the workers home.
- If the communication service has a waiting room like feature it should be enabled. Workers should only admit children into the chat who have permission from their parent/guardian or who have a parent/guardian attending with them.
- No worker is to communicate with a child on a 1 to 1 basis.
- All communication with children should be noted in workers and supervisor's calendar, for example, the inclusion within the calendar of the date and time of an online activity.
- Two workers must be present at all times when communicating with children.
- A parent or guardian should be in line of sight of child when they are communicating in a group.
- Private chats must be disabled. This will prevent inappropriate conversations.
- File transfers must be disabled. This will prevent inappropriate content being posted.
- Screen sharing must be disabled. Only the host should be allowed to share screens.
- Communication is not to be recorded.



Office for  
Safeguarding  
(CHANCERY)

CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF  
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## More Information

If you have any concerns regarding this topic or wish to clarify any information, contact the Safeguarding Office (Chancery and Parishes) at

[safeguarding@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@bbcatholic.org.au) or  
phone **02 8379 1605**.

## References

National Catholic Safeguarding Standards (Edition 2) 2022 [https://www.acsltd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/National-Catholic-Safeguarding-Standards-Edition-2\\_FINAL\\_December2022.pdf](https://www.acsltd.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/National-Catholic-Safeguarding-Standards-Edition-2_FINAL_December2022.pdf)

NCSS Internet Guidance  
[8.2-NCSS-Internet-Guidance.pdf](#)  
([acsltd.org.au](http://acsltd.org.au))