



## Online and Digital Communications Policy

Safeguarding is at the very heart of all that we do in The Campaigners.

Every Campaigner Leader has a responsibility to protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of every child, young person and adult, so that their experience within The Campaigners leaves happy memories that will last a lifetime.

As online interaction and communication has become more widespread, it is the expectation that Campaigner Leaders, helpers and third-party providers will demonstrate best safeguarding practice in a digital environment. This expectation is no different to the safeguarding principles that apply when we meet together in person and it is our commitment to apply the same resolve to safeguarding in any situation.

The Campaigners, advised by Thirtyone:Eight, will maintain and circulate *Online and Digital Communication Guidelines*.

All Campaigner Leaders, helpers and members have the responsibility to raise any safeguarding concern as outlined in The Campaigners Safeguarding Policy and the associated flowchart.

Robert Slade

*Chairman of the Board of Trustees*

*Safeguarding Lead*

1<sup>st</sup> July 2020



## Online and Digital Communications Guidelines

All Campaigner leaders, helpers and members have the responsibility to raise any safeguarding concern as outlined in The Campaigner Safeguarding Policy.

### What does the online and digital communications policy cover?

*Online and Digital safety* is the collective term for safeguarding involving the use of electronic devices and applications to communicate and access the Internet. This includes Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok and Instagram, email communications, video programs such as Facetime and Zoom, phone calls and text messaging.

These guidelines specifically apply to communications between Campaigner Leaders or helpers and children and young people under 18 years of age.

### Guidelines for all Campaigner Leaders and Volunteer Helpers

*These guidelines are given to promote positive, safe (for children, for young people and for adults) digital interactions that can take place from time to time as part of Campaigner activities.*

### How we should act and behave in your communications with young people

- Generally, maintain good and open relationships with parents and carers regarding communication with them and with their children.
- Use an appropriate tone, be warm and be friendly. Neither be over-familiar or personal nor suggest or offer a kind of special relationship.
- Be clear and explicit with the information that you need to share; do not abbreviate or short-cut your communications.
- Be aware, in your communications with children, to avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming.
- Do not share any personal information with children, or request or respond to any personal information from a child other than that which might be appropriate as part of your role.
- Only give personal contact details to children if that information is also openly available in the public domain. This includes your mobile telephone number or email address.
- Respect a child's right to confidentiality unless abuse or harm is suspected or disclosed.

### Practical Guidance and what records should be kept

- When using email/internet for communication with children, it is advised that this should take place during the daytime. There should never be any communications after 9 p.m.
- If children want you to have their mobile phone numbers, email addresses or similar, and wish for you to communicate with them in this way, you should ensure that their parents are aware of this and that their consent is on record.
- Contact children only for reasons related to the work of the Campaigners and maintain a log of all electronic contact with individuals or groups, including messaging and texting.

- Ensure that the name of The Campaigners or the identity of the relevant local group appears wherever possible on emails etc. that you send, or in comments that you post on social media in your capacity as a Campaigner Leader. This ensures that any viewer would see that you are acting, making comment or conducting business as a representative of The Campaigners.
- Email should only be used to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events). It should not be used as a relationship building tool.
- The email history of your communications with children should be kept and dated.
- You should never use any web camera or visual communication media (e.g. Facetime, Skype etc.) on a one-to-one basis with a young person, as the interaction usually cannot be recorded. This is no different from being on your own in a room or car with a child or young person.
- Zoom and the like can be used for conference calls and are considered appropriate if a project or group uses a web camera in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use. Where possible, access to the meeting should be by means of a password known only by the invited participants. Leaders who host meetings should familiarise themselves with the security settings and know how to lock the meeting, use the waiting room and remove participants. Consequently, there should be at least two adults in any conference-style meeting.  
(See 'Promoting a Safer church' published by the CofE National Safeguarding Team, 20/4/2020)
- There is an option to record meetings in Zoom but we recommend that you turn this option off when using Zoom for meetings involving young people (and with regards to most meetings in Church). Recording meetings requires explicit consent and under GDPR that consent can be withdrawn at any time, meaning that a recorded meeting would have to stop and the recording would have to be erased; this causes unnecessary complication and we recommend that recording is avoided unless absolutely essential.
- Video must only be used in an appropriate environment (e.g. no participant should be in their bedroom but rather should be in a common area in their home where parents can supervise). All the participants should be properly attired.

### **Social Media Policy**

- Social media groups within The Campaigners must be used in compliance with this policy.
- All social media interaction between workers, paid or voluntary, and children under 18 are to be limited to monitored/administrated groups.
- Text messages, Twitter, blogs any other media posted shall be subject to this policy.
- All interaction on social media groups shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes (e.g. by screenshot),
- Any private messages shall be recorded for safeguarding purposes (e.g. by screenshot).
- Any safeguarding concerns/allegations arising from social media shall be referred on to the relevant safeguarding co-ordinator.
- All users of social media must be above the minimum age limit e.g. age 13 for Facebook.
- Organisers should ensure that their privacy setting is at the highest levels of security, in order to restrict children from being able to see any more than what is relevant to communication within the group.
- All social media groups should provide links to statutory authorities such as Thirtyone:Eight, to enable children to report online abuse.

## Consent for photographic images and videos to be published online

Photographs and videos that include children and young people will be selected carefully and holders will endeavour to prevent easy identification of children and young people.

- Children's full names will not be used on a website in association with any photograph or video.
- Permission will be sought before any images are taken or displayed, and images will only be used for the specific purpose for which permission was sought; it will be specified how the image will be stored if it is not destroyed. Further permission must be obtained if an image is to be used in a way not originally stated.
- Use of images will reflect diversity of age, ethnicity and gender of the activity.
- Live streaming of events must be clearly advertised in advance and, where children or young people are involved, permission should be sought in line with the Campaigner photographic guidelines.

## Disclosure and advice

Safeguarding concerns or queries should be directed to The Campaigner's Safeguarding Officer (Bob Slade) or the Deputy Safeguarding Officer (Iris Challis), both of whom can be contacted on [safeguarding@campaignersew.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@campaignersew.org.uk).

The Campaigners is a member of Thirtyone:Eight, with whom we consult for Safeguarding advice, and other Campaigner Leaders enjoy that same level of access for advice.

Helpline	0303 003 1111
Website	<a href="https://thirtyoneeight.org">https://thirtyoneeight.org</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:info@thirtyoneeight.org">info@thirtyoneeight.org</a>

## Examples of questions that might arise

I am hearing different stories, or reading different policies, from other organisations or from my Church about what we should or must do to keep children and young people safe online. Can I choose the policy that best suits us?

It is true that guidance from different sources may vary because the implementation of changes announced by the Government still require adherence to other existing legislation and best practice including GDPR, Health & Safety and Safeguarding. Reference to your church policies and Campaigner policies will inform how you assess the risk for the way you need to run your activity in the unique environment in which you operate. It's not a matter of choosing the easiest option, but rather you must arrange what you do to provide the safest possible environment that will keep children in your care and your fellow leaders safe.

Do I have to set up a specific email address to use for any Campaigner business?

There is no need to have a Campaigner email address unless you have a national role within The Campaigners. However, in messages and texts it is best practice to create a signature (i.e. a line or two after you type your name) which links you with the Campaigner Group at your church.

Do I really have to log every digital encounter with young people? What do I need to record and how long do I have to keep this information for?

Yes, you do; but this need only be a simple register of who took part, including the leaders, and the date and time. This is no different to the register you would keep of those who attend a normal Campaigner gathering. The requirement for retaining regular group attendance records is for a period of 3 years after a child leaves the Campaigner group, unless there's a legal reason to keep them for a longer period.

How should I respond if I learn that an inappropriate or indecent image has been sent to a young person in my group?

It is a criminal offence to send or look at indecent images of children and you must therefore refer what you know to the police. You must not attempt to investigate or look at any indecent image yourself.

What do I have to do to get the consent of parents for children and young people aged under 18 to engage online or by mobile phone / text with a Campaigner group? How long should I keep the consent for and who should sign that consent is given?

Below is a template provided by Thirtyone:Eight of a Parent carer agreement and a Child/young person agreement together with an acceptable use statement. You must obtain explicit consent from a parent and also from the young person.

How can I keep in touch with group members who have not given their consent to be contacted by digital media online?

You will have to find another way if you can, either via the parents, another member of the group or by post. It might be informative to contact the parents in order to understand what their concerns are.

**Parent Carer Agreement**

As the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ I declare that I have read and understood the Online Safety acceptable use policy below for The Campaigners and that my child will be held accountable for their own actions. I understand that it is my responsibility to set standards for my child when selecting, sharing and exploring online information and media.

I confirm my consent for the Campaigner leaders to have and use my child's Email address, phone number or similar contact details

**Child / Young Person Agreement**

I understand the importance of safety online and the guidelines below on acceptable use.

I will share any concerns, where I or another person may be at risk of harm with the safeguarding coordinator or a trusted adult.

<b>Child Name</b> (Please print)	<b>Child Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian</b> (Please print)	<b>Parent/Guardian Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

**Acceptable use:**

- Individual contact will be limited to communicating practical details or enquiry concerning the activities and membership of the Campaigner group at ..... ;
- Group meetings online will be held at previously notified start and end times and dates;
- We will never share contact information with a third party;
- Social Media groups will always be established in the name of the local Campaigner group and access will only be allowed to group members who are old enough to join.

**Contact:**

Add your name and contact details as group leader and the name and contact details of your Church Safeguarding Officer as a point of contact to report any concern.