URC online engagment with children and young people RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

Online risk can be classified in four ways:

- Content risk: children receiving mass-distributed content. This may expose them to age-inappropriate material such as pornography, extreme violence, or content involving hate speech and radicalisation.
- Conduct risk: children participating in an interactive situation. This includes bullying, sexting, harassing, being aggressive or stalking; or promoting harmful behaviour such as self-harm, suicide, pro-anorexia, bulimia, illegal drug use or imitating dangerous behaviour. A child's own conduct online can also make them vulnerable - for example, by over-sharing their personal information or by harassing or bullying themselves.
- Contact risk: children being victims of interactive situations. This includes being bullied, harassed or stalked; meeting strangers; threats to privacy, identity and reputation (for example, through embarrassing photos shared without permission, a house location being identified, someone impersonating a user, users sharing information with strangers); and violence, threats and abuse directly aimed at individual users and/or groups of users.
- Grooming risk: children being victims of grooming through engaging with interactive situations, sharing information and building contact with predatory others who then move the relationship to another context in order to exploit the child.

Please see the URC Good Practice 5 Policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk:
https://urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/SafeguardingDocuments/GP5-Safeguarding-Pack-2020-web.pdf

These Appendices to Good Practice 5 are particularly relevant:

[link to urc code of conduct for working with children and young people when available]

https://urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP5/Appendix_C_Model_church_online_safety_policy.pdf

https://urc.org.uk/images/safeguarding/GP5/Appendix_V_Safeguarding_and_digital_communications.pdf

More detailed information can be found here:

Detailed guidance for online youth work of all typeps:
https://thirtyoneeight.org/media/2602/guidance-for-online-youth-work_v2.pdf (which includes a helpful flow chart for responding to online safety incidents)

General child online safety guide:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-providers-of-social-media-and-interactive-services/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-providers-of-social-media-and-interactive-services?fbclid=IwAR06nt60AkC-hmtEMDuAxJ1IT3VMDpDsncYt_INtRs0RwmuuIj3Ig6-grfo

Child Development Chart
(from Child Safety Online: a practical guide for providers of social media and interactive services by UK Council for Internet Safety)

How children and their attitude to risks evolve throughout childhood.

This chart summarises the development of children at various ages from 3 to 18: how they see themselves, their priorities, their behaviour online and their attitude towards risk.

Source: Dr. Angharad Rudkin, Chartered Clinical Psychologist, University of Southampton

3 – 5 year olds

Overall development	Key online activities	Attitudes to risk
They can put themselves in others' shoes, but they are still quite fooled by appearances. Beginning to learn that there are social rules to follow. Starting to build up friendships but peer pressure remains low.	Entertainment, particularly games and TV.	They may be unaware of risks.

6 – 9 year olds

Overall development	Key online activities	Attitudes to risk
Play is mainly pretend/role-play, moving towards greater rule-based reality play. Becoming socially more sophisticated; the need to fit in and be accepted by the peer group becomes more important. Learning how to manage their thinking and their emotions. Learning about the complexities of relationships; if they can't manage these it can lead to alienation, bullying and loneliness. At around 7, they undergo a significant shift in thinking to more order and logic. They are now frequent users of the internet but with limited information on staying safe online, which may make them vulnerable.	Entertainment and fun – games, films, TV, video. Communications largely with family only	Children largely compliant with messages from school/home – although if risks aren't explained clearly, they imagine their own explanations.

10 – 13 year olds

Overall development	Key online activities	Attitudes to risk
Moving towards more adult ways of thinking but still not making decisions the way adults would. Very aware of social pressure and expectations; will change aspects of themselves in order to fit in and be accepted by peers. Friends are becoming more important. More aware of what's 'cool' or not, including brands. Girls show a decrease in self-esteem as they compare themselves to others around them.	Communications with friends; games (for boys), gossip, TV/films, shopping. Open communication across a range of sites. Visual communication becomes key. Development and honing of self-image.	Developmentally, the strong desire for immediate rewards triggers risk-taking behaviour.

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14 – 18 year olds

Overall development	Key online activities	Attitudes to risk
Underdoing significant neuro-psychological changes, leading to differences in the way they perceive emotions and make decisions. Developments in the pre-frontal cortex may contribute to the increase in risk-taking behaviour seen during adolescence. Mental health difficulties such as anxiety and depression can intensify. Still have difficulties realising that others can have a different perspective, so may find it hard to work out interpersonal problems. Adolescence is a time characterised by idealism, with a tendency towards all-or-nothing thinking. Highly dependent on peers for a sense of well-being. They need to feel as if they are part of a group - yet also want to be viewed as unique. Can appear to shun adult influence but still require clear boundaries and support from parents and teachers.	Communications with friends; games (for boys), gossip, TV/films, shopping. Open communication across a range of sites. Visual communication now vital and the 'currency' of likes and ratings is very important.	More settled within peer groups. Beginning to get better at the risk/reward equation.

Risk Assessment: Online engagement with children and young people
CHURCH:

Activity: Online communication

Location: Online

Name of leader with responsibility:

Date of first risk assessment:

Time/frequency:

Date to be reviewed: Fortnightly until DATE

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to manage this risk?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Risk of unsafe contact between adults and children/young people eg. grooming	*Children and young people*	*Training: all adults have completed the URC safeguarding training offered by the Synod within the last 3 years* *Access: a limited number of adults will have access to the accounts* *Checks: all adults have been safely recruited via our policy, including an Enhanced DBS check* *Consent: all communication will occur with parental consent* *Guidelines: all online communication will occur in compliance with URC best practice guidelines* *Code of conduct: adults sign code of conduct (see GP5 code of conduct for URC updated version)*	*Maintain an up to date register of all online communication* *NAME to regularly review all online communication logs* *Ensure parental consent obtained specifically for online contact* *Code of conduct: adults sign URC online code of conduct in addition to general code for children's and youth work*			
Risk of miscommunication eg. when communicating in written form, the meaning may be unclear	Children and young people Adult leaders	Guidelines and training: this risk is addressed in our training and best practice guidelines Adult leaders are informed of the risk and given examples of how to avoid it	NAME to regularly review online communication			

Adapted from Diocese of Ely Resource, Church of England

Risk Assessment: Online engagement with children and young people

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Time/frequency:

Date to be reviewed: Fortnightly until DATE

Risk of children and young people contacting adults on their private profiles	Children and young people Adult leaders	Guidelines and training: adult leaders informed of the risk and given examples of how to avoid it. Code of conduct: adult leaders sign a code of conduct agreeing not to allow contact via personal accounts Adults required to implement adequate privacy settings on all profiles	Adults to notify NAME if any contact occurs and log it in the safeguarding register			
Risk of cyberbullying or inappropriate content being shared	Children and young people Adult leaders	Guidelines and training: adult leaders informed of the risk and given examples of how to avoid it Code of conduct: adult leaders sign a code of conduct Youth code of conduct: young people to agree to an online code of conduct Children and parent/guardians to agree to an online code of conduct All adults to be up to date with their safeguarding training	NAME to regularly review accounts Any concerns to be immediately logged with safeguarding officer and acted upon appropriately Young people to be reminded of the code of conduct at the beginning of communications Children and parents/guardians to be reminded of the code of conduct at the beginning of communications (and ensure parental presence)			
Risk of contact information being shared publicly	Children and young people Adult leaders	Guidelines and training: adult leaders informed of risk and given examples of how to avoid it	NAME to be responsible for monitoring training NAME to be informed as GDPR officer			

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Risk Assessment: Online engagement with children and young people
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Date to be reviewed: Fortnightly until DATE

		Information to be stored in SECURE ONLINE PLACE with limited access GIVE ADDRESS Code of conduct to be shared with young people Code of conduct to be shared with children and parent/guardians				
Risk of children and young people being harmed when participating in remote activities eg. milkshake challenge at home	Children and young people Adult leaders	Verbal risk assessment: inform children and young people of risks at beginning of instructions Written guidance: post guidelines in public forums Inform parents: make the schedule of activities public and inform parents of risks	Activity leader to complete risk assessment for each activity Activities to be logged and reviewed by team leader Any activities with risks beyond those regularly involved to have specific parental informed consent as appropriate			
Risk of home working: sensitive information being heard by others,	Adults	Code of conduct: adults to sign code of conduct, including guidance for home working Use earphones where possible Verbally remind children, parents/guardians and young people of risk	Team leader to contact leaders at least once a week for pastoral catch up			
Risk of overworking eg. children, young people and parents/guardians contacting out of hours	Adults	Guidelines and code of conduct: adults trained and supported with appropriate boundaries	Team leader to provide pastoral support regularly			

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Risk Assessment: Online engagement with children and young people
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Date of first risk assessment:

Time/frequency:

Date to be reviewed: Fortnightly until DATE

		Team leader to check in regularly to support staff				
ADD ANY ADDITIONAL RISKS APPROPRIATE TO YOUR CONTEXT/ONLINE PLATFORMS BEING USED ETC						

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