

Leaders Info Sheet

ONLINE SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT HILLSONG CHURCH



Hillsong Online programs for children and young people seek to provide a positive and safe online environment for all participants. This info sheet will provide leaders with information on interacting with children, young people and families within the Hillsong Working With Children and Young People Guidelines.

Everyone in Hillsong Church is responsible for the online safety of children and young people.

Seasons of increased online activity create potential for heightened levels of risk to the safety of children and young people. It's important to be aware of issues children and young people may face in online environments such as:

- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Peer to peer harms (e.g. bullying, online abuse)
- Unwanted contact, live streaming
- Potential for inappropriate relationships with adults, even those in a position of trust.

Safe Church policy, procedures, code of conduct and training applies to physical and online environments, with special considerations for online safety during seasons of increased online interactions.

In line with the existing Hillsong Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People and Hillsong Safe Church Training, these guidelines are provided to assist those who deliver online programs and services to provide a safe and positive online environment.

NOT ALL HOMES ARE SAFE PLACES

During times of increased online interaction children and young people may face heightened vulnerability. Not all homes are safe places and the risk of abuse or neglect may be increased, supervision of children and young people's online activity is varied and access to support services may be limited. Children and young people may experience an increased mental health and wellbeing issues.

Online Programs

Online programs must be provided with considerations to the safety of children and young people.

Service Streaming

- Services are streamed through the Hillsong Kids and Hillsong Youth official YouTube channels.
- Chat feature is disabled for primary school age and younger.
- Chat moderation is in place for high-school age students.
- Services are streamed only at advertised times.
- YouTube advertisements or follow on videos are restricted.

Small group and other online programs and activities

- The Hillsong Zoom Platform has been created to provide a safe way for children and young people to connect with their Hillsong Kids and Youth leaders and peers.
- Meeting links should not be shared public, and for children primary school aged and younger meeting links should be provided to parents/carers only.
- Only approved leaders who have completed screening processes, hold valid state based working with children checks and have completed Safe Church Training will be involved in Zoom Meetings.
- Leaders must agree to safety guidelines to participate in the Hillsong Zoom platform.
- See 'Hillsong Zoom Info Sheet' for more information and instructions on using Zoom.

Online Communication and Personal Interaction

Those who work with children and young people have a duty of care to ensure their interactions with children and young people are acceptable at all times, including online communication.

Personal Interaction

- Do not personally communicate electronically with children (primary school aged or younger). Personal electronic communication should not take place with children primary school aged or younger. All communication with children of this age should take place via the parent or carer. Workers should not 'friend' or 'follow' children on any form of social media.
- Communication with high-school aged students should maintain transparency and accountability by communicating in a group where all individuals can see the messages. This may be achieved by group messaging apps, group emails, group texts or facebook groups.
- Communication directly with high-school aged students should be transparent and only take place with parent/carers permission. Leaders should not arrange personal contact, including online contact, with Young People they are working with for a purpose unrelated to Hillsong Church activities. Be mindful to use language that is not overly personal. Rather, use phrases that represent the team or group as a whole.
- Photos should only be taken by Hillsong approved photographers and only shared with permission. Photos of children and young people should only be shared on official church social media or websites with parent/carers permission for the purpose of promotions and marketing. Photos and/or captions should not include the child or young person's personal details such as full name, address, phone number, social media profile names, or the name of the school they attend, as these may pose a risk to their personal safety.

Safety for Online Programs

- ✓ Supervised by at least two approved leaders.
- ✓ Let parents and carers know about programs.
- ✓ Follow Hillsong Zoom Info Sheet.
- ✓ Be aware of age-restrictions for different platforms.



Tips for Leaders

- ✓ Leaders, children and young people should participate in online programs from an open environment (e.g. kitchen or living rooms, not in bedrooms), appropriate clothing should be worn and communication take place at appropriate times of day.
- ✓ Be a good example. Those that we lead can observe our interactions online, such as what we post, 'like' or follow on social media. Set a good example for those you lead in all areas, including your online activity.

Child Safe Online Behaviours

Online communication should remain within appropriate boundaries.

Child Safe Online Behaviours respect the rights of children and young people, place a priority on their welfare and promote a safe environment. Child safe online behaviours act in the best interests of children and young people and are within our organisation's policies, codes of conduct and guidelines. For example, facilitating a positive and supportive online small group within approved boundaries.

Inappropriate Online behaviours may cross boundaries with children or young people and disregard their right to personal safety. Inappropriate behaviour may be the result of poor judgment in a specific situation or fall short of expected behaviour, as outlined in the codes of conduct and guidelines. If inappropriate behaviours are allowed to continue and are repetitive they may escalate into unacceptable behaviour or abuse, and potentially criminal behaviour. An example of inappropriate behaviour is conducting an online social activity where discussion includes inappropriate topics and language.

Unacceptable Online behaviours are in breach of the Hillsong Safe Church Policy and Codes of Conduct. These behaviours may fall short of criminal behaviour or the legal definitions of abuse yet are unacceptable, and if allowed to continue may escalate into abuse or criminal behaviour. An example of unacceptable online behaviour is; a leader contacting a young person late at night via a direct message, seeking to form a close bond with that particular young person outside of the group.

Abusive/Illegal Online behaviours have significant and long term adverse impacts for children and young people. Abusive and illegal behaviours not only breach Hillsong Safe Church Policy and Codes of Conduct, they are illegal and will result in criminal prosecution. For example, perpetrating abuse, crossing boundaries that should never be crossed, breaching code of conduct and the law. It's important to remember that sexual abuse may occur online including; encouraging a child or young person to do, watch, or hear something sexually explicit, exposure to pornographic material or conversations of a sexual nature.

Responding to Concerns

During times of increased online interaction children and young people may face heightened vulnerability as not all homes are safe places and instances of unsafe online contact is more likely to occur.

Leaders should:

- Report to Campus Pastoral Care and Safe Church any incidents of inappropriate contact between adults and children or young people, online abuse, bullying, sharing of intimate images, Image-based abuse, online grooming, online exploitation and abuse or unwanted online contact.
- Always respond to concerns or disclosures of harm. Follow Safe Church procedures and training when indicators of harm to a child or young person are observed when a child or young person discloses harm to you. Report to Safe Church who will assist you with response and reporting to relevant authorities.
- Report to Safe Church any breaches of the Hillsong Guidelines for Working with Children and Young People, Hillsong Volunteers and Leaders Codes of Conduct or any inappropriate behaviour by those working with children and young people
- Listen to and respond to feedback or concerns raised by parents and carers and respond appropriately or direct them to the program oversight, Pastoral Care or Safe Church.

ONLINE GAMING

Online gaming can be a great way to build positive connections with children and young people, but also comes with risks of negative experiences. To minimise risks and promote positive online interactions leaders who connect with children and young people through online gaming must observe some safety guidelines. For more information and to read the safety guidelines for online gaming please see the 'Online Gaming' Info sheet.

Listen to and take children and young people seriously when they give feedback or raise concerns. The individual rights of each child or young person should be respected allowing them to participate in activities without feeling forced to do so by leaders or other program participants.

QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP?

- If you have concerns contact Safe Church safechurch@hillsong.com or 1800 557 264
- For help with zoom meetings email hillsongkids@hillsong.com or youth@hillsong.com
- If a person is in immediate danger or their personal safety is at risk contact 000
- If a child or young person discloses harm or you have concerns contact Safe Church safechurch@hillsong.com or 1800 557 264