

Parents & Carers 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 parents and carers with information about safe online interactions for their children and young people to connect with their peers and Hillsong Kids and Youth leaders.

Online Safety

Seasons of increased online activity pose a heightened risk to the safety of children and young people. It's important to be aware of ways you can help your child to have safe and positive experiences online. Parents and carers should also understand the potential for negative online experiences including:

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

To learn about the latest games, apps and social media, including how to protect your information and report inappropriate content, see the eSafety Commission's eSafety Guide

[esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide](https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide)

Tips for Parents & Carers

- ✓ Be aware of your child or young person's safety online. It can be helpful to reach a family agreement about rules on using the internet at home and encourage an open dialogue about online activity.
- ✓ Check device privacy settings and be mindful of geo-tagging and metadata. Consider installing software to block access to certain sites.
- ✓ Where possible, limit the use of devices in bedrooms.
- ✓ Be careful who you share sensitive information with online, such as address, date of birth or the school your children attend.
- ✓ Check out the resources for parents and carers at [esafety.gov.au/parents](https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents)
- ✓ Encourage young people to learn about online safety at [esafety.gov.au/young-people](https://www.esafety.gov.au/young-people)
- ✓ Help children to learn about online safety at Kids [esafety.gov.au/kids](https://www.esafety.gov.au/kids)

Online Programs

Online programs are hosted by Hillsong Kids and Youth teams to deliver the church experience at home. These programs are designed with specific considerations to safety.

Service Streaming

- Services are streamed through the Hillsong Church Service Platform or Hillsong Kids and Youth official social media 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 are not shared publicly.
- For children primary school aged and younger meeting links are 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 on using Zoom.

Online Communication and Personal Interaction

Safe Church recommends transparent communication between leaders and young people, ensuring that communication is within appropriate boundaries.

Personal Interaction

- Leaders should not personally communicate electronically with children (primary school aged or younger). All communication with children of this age should take place via the parent or carer. Leaders 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 for a purpose unrelated to Hillsong Church activities.

Safety for Online Programs

- ✓ Online programs are supervised by at least two approved leaders.
- ✓ Parents and carers should be informed about programs. Connect with leaders from your campus and follow your local campus social media.
- ✓ See the Zoom Info Sheet for more information on Zoom safety for small groups and other online activities.



Tips for Parents

- ✓ Find out who your child or young person's leaders are.
- ✓ If you're concerned about who is contacting your young person or what type of communication they're receiving please contact safe church.
- ✓ Photos of children and young people should only be shared with parent/carers permission and on official church social media and websites. 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. Sharing this information may pose a risk to their personal safety.

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.

Child Safe Online Behaviours

Online communication should remain within appropriate boundaries. It's important for parents and carers to be aware of these boundaries and what they can expect from Hillsong programs and leaders.

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.

If a parent of carer observes or has concerns about any behaviour that is not child safe, they should contact Safe Church via email safechurch@hillsong.com or call 1800 557 264

Helping your child or young person to be safe online

Here are some resources and tips on helping your child or young person to be safe online, use the discussion points below to 'start the chat' about online safety. For more resources visit esafety.gov.au



Be Safe

- ✓ Talk with your child about the positive experiences they can have online connecting with friends.
- ✓ Remind them that not everyone online is nice and people can also pretend to be someone else.
- ✓ Teach your child that personal information is like the key to your house. When you're online, information like your full name, date of birth, phone number and where you live is information you need to be careful with.
- ✓ Enable security and privacy settings on your child's device and encourage them that privacy and security settings on devices and apps help to keep personal information, and them, safe.
- ✓ Tell your child that messages that make them feel uncomfortable, unsafe, scared or a bit weird are not right for them and they should let you know.



Be Kind

- ✓ Encourage your child to be kind to others and explain that being mean online is not ok.
- ✓ Help your child to understand that not everyone online is kind and if someone is being mean or makes them feel uncomfortable they should let you know.



Ask for Help

- ✓ Remind your child that it's good to stay in an open area or nearby to you when they're online so they can easily ask you for help if they need to.
- ✓ Tell your child that if they see something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or if someone sends them an image or video that makes them feel yuck they should let you know.



Make good choices

- ✓ Encourage your child to make good choices when online.
- ✓ Tell them that not everything is always as it seems. Some things online can trick us. It could be a fake news story, information that is not true or a fake website. Or someone could pretend to be another person online.

Help your children safely navigate their digital world and educate them to avoid harmful online experiences. Explore websites, games, apps and social media together and set some rules. Your support and guidance can give your children the confidence to make sound decisions online and ask for help when they need it.
esafety.gov.au