

s

## **BCV Youth Ministry**

Temporary Communication  
Policy (COVID-19)

March 2020- March 2021  
(updated January 2021)

Belfast City  
Vineyard

## **COMMUNICATION**

**At Belfast City Vineyard, we are committed to providing an environment that values our children and young people by promoting their welfare and protecting them from harm.**

### **COVID-19**

During our time in self-isolation/ schools and gathering being shut we want to ensure the mental, spiritual and social wellbeing of our young people is protected and nurtured throughout this uncertain time.

In order for us to effectively care and pastor our Youth during COVID-19 the following policies are in place to help ensure safe practise for all involved.

**These will be in effect from March 2020 and will be revisited and amended according to UK government recommendations and guidelines during this uncertain time.**

For information on how we communicate to parents/ leaders please see "Parents' Manual" or "Leaders' Training Manual".

## **Currently BCV Youth have the following Social Media accounts:**

Facebook- Belfast City Vineyard Youth  
Primarily used to communicate information to parents.

Instagram-@bcvyouth  
Primarily used to communicate information to young people.

YouTube- Belfast City Vineyard Youth  
TikTok- @bcvyouth  
Spotify- bcvyouth  
X-BOX Live- BCVYOUTH

## **BCV Church have the following accounts:**

Facebook- Belfast City Vineyard

Instagram- @bcvchurch & @bcvyoungadults

**When using social media, BCV have adopted the following policy in order to protect staff/leaders and young people engaging with this method of communication:**

1. The page/profile must be password protected and the password will be held by the nominated officers (Appendix B) as well as the leader in charge of that particular ministry.
2. The nominated officers will act as supervisors for social media sites and will monitor its content on a regular basis.
3. Any inappropriate posts by children/young people/leaders should be removed by the designated supervisor. Reasons for its removal should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible the settings on the profiles should be set so that posts can be reviewed before being made public.
4. The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers should be avoided at all times.
5. The identity of the young people should not be disclosed (ie- no tagging photos, no use of handles/profile names to be used in social media posts.)
6. Content of all postings should be consistent with the aims of the organization. In cases of doubt, leaders should seek advice from the nominated officers.
7. Leaders should only communicate to young people in public/open forums (for example group messages, conversation threads on public profiles.) In the event of sending an email, another leader should be cc'd into the conversation (can be bcc'd if necessary.)
8. Leaders should avoid communicating with young people late at night/ early in the morning.  
Unless it is an emergency communication should only happen between the hours of 8am-9pm.
9. In signing off posts/emails leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient e.g.: "xoxo". Simply sign your name.
10. If you are using emojis, they should reflect the information you are communicating. For example music notes can be used if you are communicating about worship. Never use emojis which could be mis-interpreted (hearts, lips etc). If in doubt- do not use.

**11.** Parental permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online. This is given when parents fill out our parental consent form.

If the young person is over 13, permission is also required in writing from them. This is obtained via section 5 on Parental Consent form. (For a copy of our parental consent form, please email Lynne, [lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com)).

Regardless of age, before posting on social media the photo should be shown to the young people to gain their permission for their photo to be on the site.

**12.** Photos should not disclose personal information about the child/young people (ie- school uniforms, address/location or names etc.)

### **Additional notes when using Instagram/Facebook.**

**1.** When advertising events only disclose time and date of event (not relevant for COVID-19).

**2.** When posting “Stories” on Instagram/Facebook, always highlight the story and bookmark it in the relevant section. This is so that all information that has been posted can be accessed at any time (not just for 24 hours).

**USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

Those leading in our youth rooms will now need to communicate with youth using mobile phones.

The following apps will be used to help us communicate and pastor our young people:

**Telegram**  
**Zoom**  
**YouTube**  
**Spotify**  
**Facebook**  
**Instagram**

Below is our amended policy when using these apps between March-September 2020.  
For our online strategy using these platforms please contact Lynne  
([lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com)).

## **COMMUNICATING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE VIA SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS ON MOBILE PHONE DEVICES**

### **TELEGRAM**

Telegram is like WhatsApp, but it doesn't share phone numbers or personal data with leaders or young people. (See Appendix A for information on Telegram and why we use it).

From Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020, young people will be assigned group chats (assigned according to their Sunday morning age groups). The relevant youth leaders will be moderators of these groups.

#### **Contacting young people in group chats will be to:**

1. Communicate information about what is happening online which they can connect with. For example: Dates, times of YouTube videos, weekly challenges etc.
2. Texts by means of encouragement to young people (as a group). For example: "Hope you aren't worrying too much" or "We know it's hard to get motivated for home school, but we have Instagram content going live at 4pm which will cheer you up!" When texting messages like these, keep them general, light-hearted and within a group chat context.

On occasions when you are unable to include another leader, please let Lynne (Youth pastor know that you have contacted them).

#### **Where possible if a female leader messages a male young person, a male leader should be included in the message and vice-versa.**

3. Leaders working with young people should only have a young person's number in the following circumstances:

- a. if the young person is over the age of 16 and has given prior consent for us to hold their data (this is in compliance with GDPR) and nature of their involvement requires it (for example: a young person is serving within one of our children's rooms.)
- b. The leader has been issued a BCV work phone and parental/child consent has been given.
- c. If a leader has a young person's phone number, it should only be used for the purposes given. (The leader should not share the number.)

**When using Telegram, phone numbers are not required/ disclosed when communicating with others.**

## **ZOOM**

During self-isolation, we will be using zoom as our primary means to pastor, connect and check-in with our young people.

Zoom is a free video chat app which is widely used by children and adults throughout UK and Ireland. For information on how to set up/use zoom please see BCV “how to do a zoom call” document.

### **The following policy when using zoom will be adhered to:**

1. Where possible, zoom calls should be carried out with more than one young person or more than one leader.
2. When this is not possible, the BCV 1-2-1 policy should be followed (email [lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com) for this policy).
3. When scheduling a zoom send the link to young people (over 16) and their parents (under 16) and let everyone know the date and time.
4. Inform parents of the leader(s) and young people who will be present on the call
5. Hosts are to activate a “waiting room” and individually accept young people into the chat as they sign-in.
6. Leaders and young people must use the name they are known by as their username (not a gaming name). This allows leaders to identify young people quickly.
7. Recommend young people to keep the door open of the room they are in whilst on the call
8. Audio and video should be switched on by both leader and young person
9. Appropriate clothing should be worn by both leaders and young people (no pyjamas, vest tops or revealing clothing).
10. Plan questions for young people (where possible) ahead of time and place these in the chat section. Any follow-up to these questions should be placed within the chat.
11. If you have a prophetic word for a young person, please record the section using the record tab on zoom. See ‘communicating prophetic words’ section for more information.
12. All leaders are required to fill out a “zoom evaluation” after each chat and pass on any concerns to Lynne as soon after the call as possible (see section 5 and 6 in BCV Child Protection Policy for more information).

## **INSTAGRAM & FACEBOOK**

Facebook and Instagram will be a useful means of communicating information to our young people and parents during COVID-19. However, it needs to be used safely and carefully.

Staff of BCV will communicate information via Facebook and Instagram and will use these platforms as “Notice-boards” to sign post and communicate the support available each week.

### **The following policy will be adhered to:**

- 1.** Staff of BCV will not be ‘friends/followers’ with anyone under the age of 18 who attends our church. It is also our policy that our kid’s and youth leaders will not be friends/followers on social networking sites with any of the young people in the group that they lead.
- 2.** We do allow young people to follow leaders on social media as this allows them to see how we live our lives for Jesus/ lets them see how to use social media in a healthy way. If you are a leader who chooses to allow young people to follow you, please let Lynne/nominated person know (See Appendix B).
- 3.** If Young people want to engage with ministries via social media, they will be encouraged to follow our church profiles to stay up to date with information about individual ministries.



## **COMMUNICATING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE VIA POST**

During COVID-19 it may be appropriate when we may write to a young person to encourage them or to send them resources specific to their needs, for example, study packs, mindfulness resources, cheer-up gift, books etc. When writing to a young person who is under 18 the following policy should be followed.

1. Where possible, write your message on a postcard, so that the message is not perceived as private. BCV Youth postcards are available to use. (See Appendix D)
2. On occasions when you need to send something in a sealed envelope; For Example, “back to school packs” or mentoring information, please use the BCV Stamp to clearly mark the envelope before posting. It is also our strong recommendation that you send an email to the parents letting them know that you have posted something to their child so that they know to expect it.

## **COMMUNICATING PROPHETIC WORDS TO YOUNG PEOPLE**

More information regarding prayer ministry is detailed in our “Youth Leaders’ Manual”  
As a church, we value and encourage and train our young people to hear from God and to exercise and lean into the prophetic. When a leader/adult has a prophetic word for a young person the following policy should be followed.

1. Where possible, pray with another leader present (this will most likely be done using zoom).
2. On occasions where this is not possible; for example, 1-2-1 meeting over zoom. Communicate your word to Lynne or a nominated officer (Appendix B).
3. Where possible, write the word on the chat section of zoom so that the young person and you have a written record of it. This not only helps the young person remember what you have said, but also ensures that what you have said can not be misinterpreted.
4. If the young person is under 16, inform the parent that you have prayed for their child. You do not need to disclose what you said but do let the parent know that it has been written down and is with the young person.

## **ONLINE GAMING**

**From June 2020 we will host a “Minecraft” Pod. This game can be played cross-platform.**

For a BCV YOUTH leader to engage in online gaming the following policy must be adhered to:

1. As with all Pods- parents will be asked to sign-up their child for this group. We ask all parents to read our online gaming policy when signing up.
2. All young people who sign-up for the group require access to the following: Telegram group chat, x-box live/PlayStation plus account, a headset with microphone (air pods or equivalent are suitable). They also need to access to a zoom account.
3. Young people must be willing dial into a zoom call at the beginning of each session. When they do this, they will be given the code to access the “Minecraft world”.
4. Young people are required to be dialled into the zoom call for the duration of the Minecraft pod as this is our primary means of communicating throughout the session.
5. To gain access to the “world”, they need to be “friends” with BCVYOUTH account. During this time two leaders will be present.
6. The leader-in-charge will use the BCVYOUTH account. The other leader will use their personal account. Leaders of this group will be communicated to parents when sign-up is open.
7. Leaders must not all/accept/invite young people as friends or to another world. They are only allowed to interact with the young people at the time of the pod and within the zoom call.
8. Only young people who have signed up for the pod will be accepted into the BCV world. For those who are not part of BCV who want to join, they will have to submit a parental consent form before being accepted.
9. All young people part of the group must agree to “Gaming Etiquette” before logging in for the first time (see Appendix F).

10. Once the leader-in-charge ends the party, access to the “world” and to communication will end. Young people are unable to access the world apart from the scheduled “pod” time.
11. Leaders who are part of this pod must complete a debrief form and send to Lynne after each session (this is the same form as all pods).
12. Due to age restrictions on online games. The only game our youth will be encouraged to play as a group is Minecraft (age restriction 7+).
13. When playing Minecraft in the BCV world, a reporting system will be activated for young people to report behaviour to a leader.
14. If YP are confirmed to have engaged in inappropriate behaviour, the parent of this individual will be informed.

All leaders and parents considering signing up to this pod are recommended to read Appendix E “Online Gaming” before their first session.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **TELEGRAM MESSAGING SERVICE.**

With the change in GDPR legislation (2018), it is now against BCV policy to hold personal data of an individual if:

1. They are under 13 and we do not have parental consent
2. They are over 13 and we do not have their personal consent as well as their parent.

We are also not permitted to share their contact details with anyone else.

Messaging through the telegram app works similarly to other group messaging apps (for example WhatsApp), but uses unique usernames rather than phone numbers to communicate with others. This means that the only information being shared is the young person's name.

According to Telegram's terms of use, the app can only be used by over 16s.

As of April 2019, there is no alternative messaging app which will allow us to effectively communicate with young people which complies with our church's GDPR and Child Protection policy. With this in mind, the following steps have been taken.

1. Parents have been notified of the change of age. (When we began using the app the minimum age was 4).
2. We have explained to parents how we use the app and the importance of having a way to communicate with young people.
3. We have recommended that for those who are under 16 that parents could download the app themselves and allow young people to access it for youth purposes- this means that they can monitor all communication via the app.

**APPENDIX B**

**NOMINATED OFFICERS**

**COMMUNICATION:**

David Kernaghan:

[david@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:david@belfastcityvineyard.com)

Richard Charles:

[richard@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:richard@belfastcityvineyard.com)

Lynne Gibson:

[lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com)

Alan Carson:

[alan@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:alan@belfastcityvineyard.com)

**CHILD PROTECTION:**

Katie Wilson:

[katie@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:katie@belfastcityvineyard.com)

Lynne Gibson:

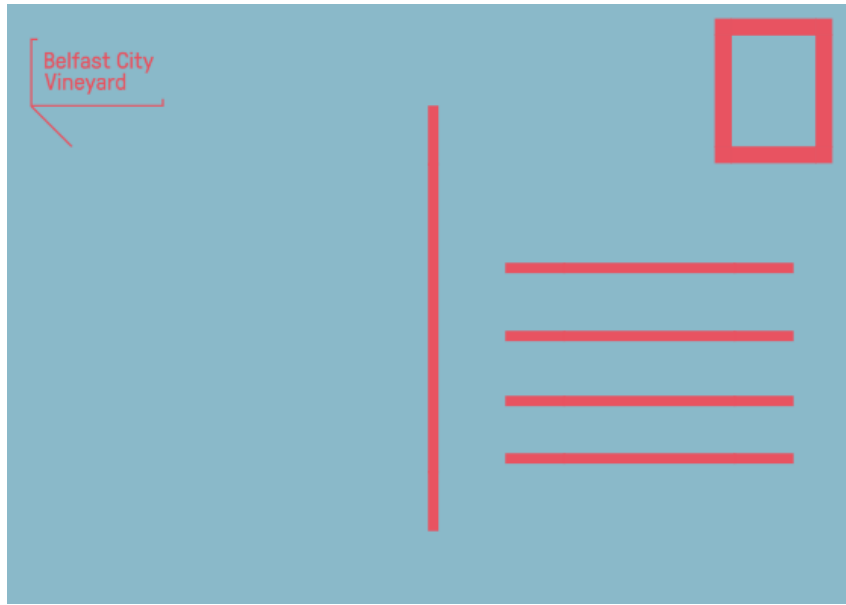
[lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com](mailto:lynne@belfastcityvineyard.com)

**APPENDIX D**

**SAMPLE POSTCARDS**



BCV



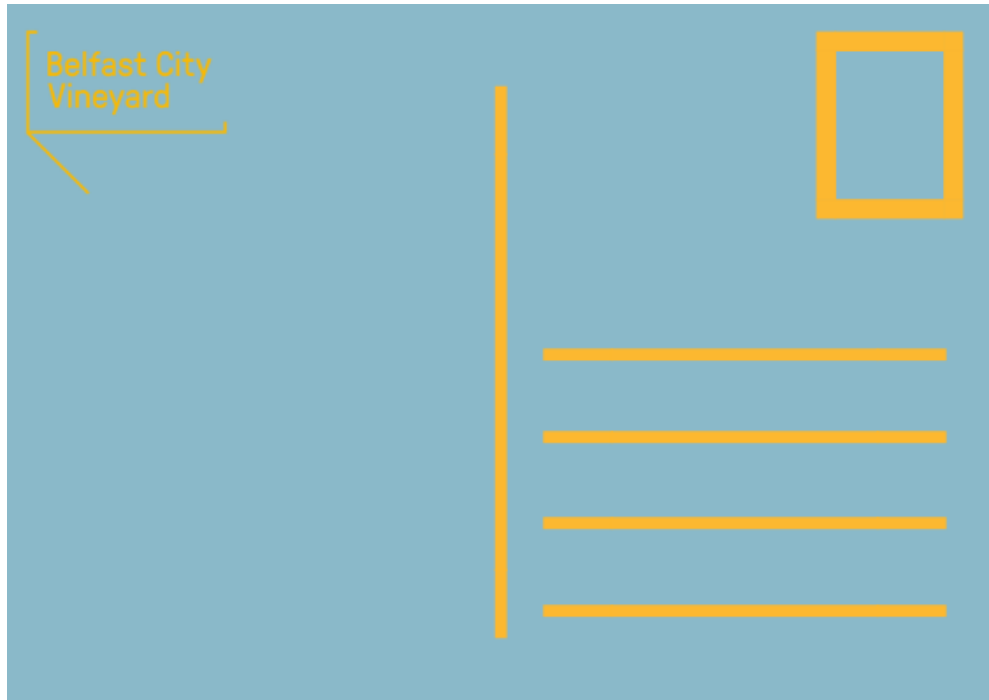
Belfast City  
Vineyard



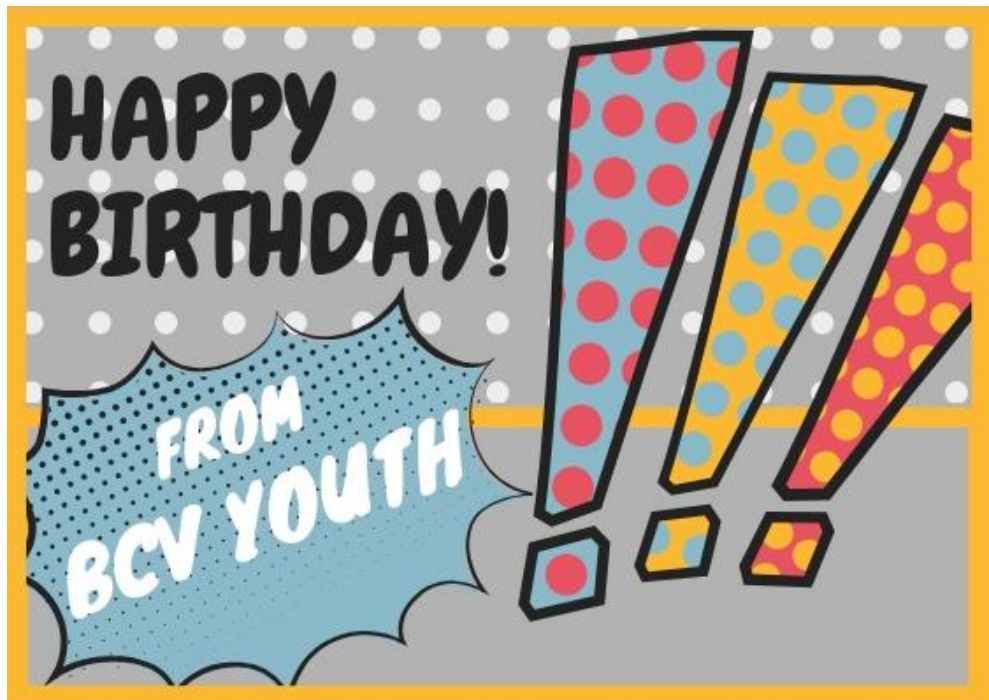


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**Be Strong & Courageous**

**For The Lord Your God Is With You**

**Wherever You Go**

**Joshua 1 v 9**

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## APPENDIX E ONLINE GAMING

(From NSPCC Website <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-games/>)

**Gaming is a great way for young people to relax, socialise with their friends and have fun. Children can play on games consoles, apps or websites, mobiles, tablets, PCs, or through smart speakers and virtual reality headsets. They can also chat to other players using messaging platforms for gamers, or watch livestreams of well-known gamers.**

Some of these reasons young people like to play games online include:

- socialising with friends. When gaming children can play together on the same team, or play against each other.
- games based on location, such as Pokémon Go and Wizards Unite, encourage players to go outside and explore.
- watching videos and livestreams of other people playing, or share tips with other players to develop their own gaming skills.
- games are designed to be entertaining and can be fun and engaging for young people.
- watching their favourite gamers on YouTube or livestreaming on Twitch. They may also want to livestream themselves playing games.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF ONLINE GAMING?

**For more details on the below please see**

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-games/>

- Bullying
- Trolling, Griefing, Scammers
- In-Game Purchasing
- Talking to someone they don't know

## **APPENDIX F ONLINE GAMING ETTIQUETTE (Minecraft)**

All leaders and young people who are part of an online gaming youth with BCV are required to agreed to the following etiquette. Repeated failure to do so will result in suspension from the game and parents being notified.

1. No inappropriate language or name calling.
2. Do not build anything offensive or of an inappropriate nature
3. Do not interfere with anyone else's build without their permission
4. Work as a group, only communicate within the group chat

If young people are found not complying with etiquette, the following procedure will be implemented.

1. Warning
2. Second warning with immediate dismissal from the current session
3. Third warning, with suspension of one week. Parents will also be notified.
4. Forth warning. Young person will be recommended to join another pod.