

HOW TO KEEP CHILDREN, YOUTH & CAREGIVERS SAFE WHEN USING ONLINE PLATFORMS: GUIDANCE NOTE FOR ALL WAR CHILD REPRESENTATIVES¹

Measures to keep communities safe and connected during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an exponential rise in the amount of time children and young people are spending online. Physical distancing measures, the closure of schools, youth centres and recreational areas have meant that we have all increased our internet usage including social media, gaming, and instant messaging platforms.

Whilst keeping in contact with friends and family is crucial for wellbeing, and the internet provides a wealth of information for children to learn and play, online platforms can also present significant risks. In contexts where online platforms have rarely been used to deliver Protection, Education and Psychosocial Support (PSS) activities, the risks are further exacerbated by a lack of awareness, as well as a lack of established protection measures.

In light of the COVID-19 response, and in order to continue to access and deliver programmes to children, young people and their caregivers, War Child has adapted some of its programming – we are now using online platforms for delivery and implementation. Whilst this enables us to continue to reach children with much needed programmes, allowing them to continue to learn and develop, and provide them with routine and normalcy during the crisis, we must also recognise that online platforms can pose significant risk to children and their families, including NGO staff themselves. It is therefore paramount that War Child ensures that the use of online platforms for programme delivery and communications by War Child representatives are safe, effective, and based on need.

No person – child or adult – should come to harm as a result of their engagement with a humanitarian organisation or programme, regardless of the delivery mechanism. We know that pandemics such as COVID-19 can increase, as well as present new opportunities for exploitation and abuse. For example, internet usage is up by 50% in some countries. Whilst older children may be familiar with navigating the internet and social media, COVID-19 has exposed younger children with no knowledge of the internet to social media platforms which may not be age appropriate. There is also an increased expectation for parents and carers to understand platforms and apps, and to supervise children when they are online - which may be challenging if they are working, and not aware of the risks (or safety controls) themselves.

This guidance had been designed to enable War Child staff and representatives to recognise risks related to the use of online platforms. It aims to provide practical knowledge, tools, and tips to mitigate against harm and safeguard all those that we are working with.

It is recommended that all War Child Staff and representatives attend a refresher training during the COVID-19 response. All newly recruited staff must receive a Child Safeguarding briefing within two weeks of joining the organisation and a full training within three months of beginning their employment.

¹ War Child Representative - All employees, interns, volunteers, members of the management team and supervisory board, consultants, service providers, partner organizations and their (staff) members, ambassadors, accompanying family members, as well as anyone representing War Child in any capacity

WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH WHEN ONLINE²?

The internet, and social media platforms provide a wealth of opportunity for learning, socialising, and keeping in contact with friends and family. We know that these activities are vital for the wellbeing of all during COVID-19. However, increased time online can also expose children – and their families – to risks, in particular to online sexual abuse and cyber-bullying.

Lack of safeguards to protect children, and adults, from harm

Due to the rate at which programmes have had to adapt, it is likely that some safeguards will not have been implemented thoroughly- we need to be aware that the adults in children’s lives, who would usually protect the child from physical risks, may not have the knowledge or be aware of online risks to children. As a child protection agency, we must ensure that when we communicate via social media we have put in place safeguarding - not only for children but also for parents / carers - and that we actively engage adults to increase their capacity and knowledge, so they are able to keep children safe online.

Risk to children, and young people, can broadly be defined under three separate categories:

1. Predators	2. Fears	3. Peers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Child Sexual Exploitation •Online scams •Grooming •Hacking •Threatening behaviour •Accessing data without permission •Indecent images •Identity theft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accessing inappropriate and indecent content •Dark web •Over exposure to distressing and harmful content •Fake news •Rumours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cyber bullying •Risk taking behaviour due to anonymity •Peer-on-peer online sexual abuse •Sexual images

1. Predators

Child Sexual Exploitation – *sexual abuse of a person below the age of 18, as well as the production of images of such abuse and the sharing of those images online.*

In 2019, The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) published its annual report on child sexual abuse content that is hosted anywhere in the world. Findings showed that in 2019 the IWF received 260,426 reports of webpages in the UK suspected to contain child sexual abuse imagery, of which 132,676 were confirmed to contain images and videos of child sexual abuse.

The IWF also reports that social-distancing and self-isolation rules implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19, have cut the number of staff able to flag and respond to reports of illegal content, resulting in it taking longer for child abuse images to be

² This content has been adapted from “COVID-19 and its implications for protecting children online April 2020” UNICEF, pg. 1-2

removed. Figures show that 1,498 URLs were deleted between 16 March and 15 April 2020, compared with 14,947 in the previous four weeks.³

As a result of spending more time online, children may become increasingly exposed to indecent images, as well as online sexual predators specifically targeting children. If parents / carers and staff are not made aware of such risks, or the controls available to stop children from being 'groomed', this risk of abuse can increase exponentially.

Access

For online sexual predators, children having increased access to social media platforms, chat rooms and instant messaging, give a significantly increases to the number of children who they are able to exploit. Moreover, it is likely that due to constraints created by COVID-19, there will be limited supervision for children whilst online, not least because parents / carers will be attempting to balance work and caring responsibilities. Child sex offenders who may be employed as aid workers can take advantage of the increased access they have to children's data, contact information and lack of oversight of their activities online by colleagues and staff, thus increasing their ability to exploit.

Personal data sharing and privacy concerns

The more social media platforms or virtual groups (e.g. WhatsApp) we become part of, the higher the likelihood that our personal information can be shared. We have limited control over other members of those groups, and once we have shared photos, messages, or content in groups we have little control over where and with whom that data is shared. Consequently, our personal data, including names and contact information, and photographs can be distributed without our knowledge or permission.

Although you are able to increase privacy settings on multiple online platforms - including YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook - not all users are aware of how to do this, thus leaving themselves vulnerable to cyber hacking and identity theft.

2. Fears

Potentially harmful content

As we spend more time online, searching web pages etc, the more likely we are to be exposed to upsetting, indecent and harmful content. This could include content of a sexual, violent, discriminatory, and extreme political nature. This can have a very negative impact on wellbeing, especially as it is not always clear how to report the content. Staff should be made aware of how they can block pages and report content.

3. Peers

Cyber Bullying – *the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.*

Cyber bullying is a well-known issue amongst children - especially adolescents - who often communicate with friends over social media and can have long lasting, negative impacts on wellbeing and health. It is likely that more children are speaking in chat rooms, spending more time on gaming sites with instant messenger, and taking part in group

³ https://www.iwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/reports/2020-04/IWF_Annual_Report_2020_Low-res-Digital_AW_6mb.pdf

conversations. This exposes children and young people to cyber-bullying by their peers and individual's unknown to them, which can be humiliating, upsetting and have severe consequences (including suicide). Children from minority groups, those with disabilities, and adolescent girls are at particular risk of cyber-bullying - and this can be exacerbated by rumour and assumptions associated with COVID-19.



Online Risk-taking behaviour




Being online can leave someone with a false sense of anonymity and thus they are more likely to take risks and share photos and personal information. This can lead to bullying, extortion, threats, and humiliation.

Caregivers / adults may also increase their online risk-taking behaviour, especially as COVID-19 and lockdown measures continue to limit economic opportunities, in order to provide for their families as they feel increasingly forced to resort to negative / harmful coping mechanisms to survive.

RISKS AND BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Whilst the risks above can be applied to general use of the internet, online social media platforms, and communication channels below you will find details on the potential risks and benefits of specific platforms.

Platform	Age Group	Risks	Benefits	Possible Uses	Mitigations
 WhatsApp	Legal age 16+	The admin / facilitator can be identified by all as you cannot hide your number / profile picture Sharing location & tracking a child Sharing personal photos and videos Unable to report content that is inappropriate Inability to know if others have shared your contact details Fake user profiles can be created with no verifications for proof of identification	Set up small groups, / class groups that existed before Broadcast message function Create two or more admins per group Universal usage – already well-established platform Possible to send 'broadcast message' to a group without sharing the contact details of the participants End-to-end encryption of messages Block sender function	Remote Case Management Remote PSS activities Remote education Sharing PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) & Safeguarding messages Feedback and complaints	See risk prevention protocols below
 Facebook	Legal age 13+	Not anonymous for staff or user Ability to see profiles of all users Used by perpetrators to groom and exploit	Ability to create a page for communications on COVID-19 messaging and PSEA Parents / carers have access (open)	Comms for COVID-19 – prevention messages to parents / carers and community groups	Do not use messenger – only use as static one-way channel of comms.

		<p>due to anonymity of user's profiles</p> <p>Fake user profiles can be created with no verifications or proof of identification</p> <p>Few controls over the content which can be violence, illicit, indecent, and extreme.</p>	Report and block illicit / violent content		
<p>TikTok</p> 	<p>We strongly discourage the use of TikTok for programming purposes <i>(for details, please see the rationale below)</i></p>				
<p>Facebook Messenger</p> 	<p>We strongly discourage the use of Facebook messages for programming purposes. <i>(for details, please see the rationale below)</i></p>				
<p>YouTube</p> 	<p>We strongly encourage the usage of YouTube as a one way of communication channel. To send messages, upload educational and awareness materials to reach project participants. <i>(for details, please see the rationale below)</i></p>				

HOW TO USE ONLINE PLATFORMS SAFELY

In accordance with the Child Safeguarding Policy, when staff communicate with children and young people as part of programme delivery via email, text message, or social media, this should always be within the context of a planned and supervised piece of work. All

War Child representatives and managers must ensure that any use of digital technology is approved as part of planned project / programme work in the country context and that a risk assessment and mitigation measures have been put in place. The use of online platforms in service delivery should always be consistent with War Child's Child Safeguarding Policy and the War Child Code of Conduct.

It is recommended by War Child that as an agency we use WhatsApp as the preferred mechanism for contacting and delivering programmes to children and youth. We strongly discourage the use of Facebook messenger, TikTok and Instagram as a method of communicating with children and young people. TikTok is a relatively new platform and therefore the risks and risk mitigations are not yet fully understood. When signing up for TikTok, your account is public by default, thus anyone can see your videos, send you direct messages and use your location information. This therefore increases the risk of online harm and abuse significantly, as participants can be easily located and identified. Although you can change account to private, which means you can only receive direct messages and comments from, pre-approved 'followers', any TikTok user can still see the username, profile picture and bio.

Facebook messenger requires users to set up profiles in order to use the messenger platform. Profiles often contain sensitive information including pictures and location. Anyone can access profiles on Facebook and send messages. Because of the ease at which alias can be created on Facebook, and the high risk for online abuse, exploitation and grooming we strongly discourage programme participants from using the platform.

YouTube is another platform highly used in the last decade to communicate in various ways. Creating a YouTube account requires an email account and knowledge and training on safe settings for users and yet remain risky even for adults. Despite restrictions and filters that YouTube placed on violent and upsetting images, still contains inappropriate material that's easily accessible to kids: profanity, sexual content, drugs, and alcohol. We do not want to create channels that place any child at any risk. Contrary we want to do all we can to prevent and mitigate risks online.

Neither TikTok, Facebook messenger or YouTube provide suitable platforms for programme requirements. Facebook requires setting up of profiles, which can include sensitive information. If Facebook is required, we recommend that you only use the 'group' page setting and you must disable instant messaging on your community page. This page should be used for sharing messages to the community, rather than individual children. If you are unsure as to which platform is the most appropriate discuss this with your Child Safeguarding Advisor.

Before adapting any programme for online, a risk assessment must be completed considering all the mitigations options and risks for child, staff, and caregivers. Consideration must be given to which online platform is the most appropriate. Use the risks outlined above to guide your assessment. Below you will find guidance on safe usage of WhatsApp.

For children under the age of 16, WhatsApp groups should be set up using the number of the parent / carer. **Direct communication with a child using their own phone is strongly discouraged.**

If the child is above the age of 16, you can communicate directly with the young person using an online platform, with the prior consent of the child and parent / caregiver. You must ensure that the communication is contextually appropriate – for example, it may not be suitable for a male facilitator to contact an adolescent girl directly. Please discuss with your line manager and in country Child Protection team.

When establishing an online group consider age and cultural appropriateness. Older children (adolescents) should not be in the same online groups as younger children. Mixing ages (and sometimes genders) may increase the risk of peer-on-peer bullying and online sexual abuse. For projects with large or mixed cohorts, consider having one group for male participants and one group for female participants as well as one group for children aged 7-11 years, another for 12-18 years and another for over 18 years. This will help to reduce the risk of peer-on-peer abuse as it reduces the actual / perceived power or authority between youth.

RISK PREVENTION PROTOCOLS

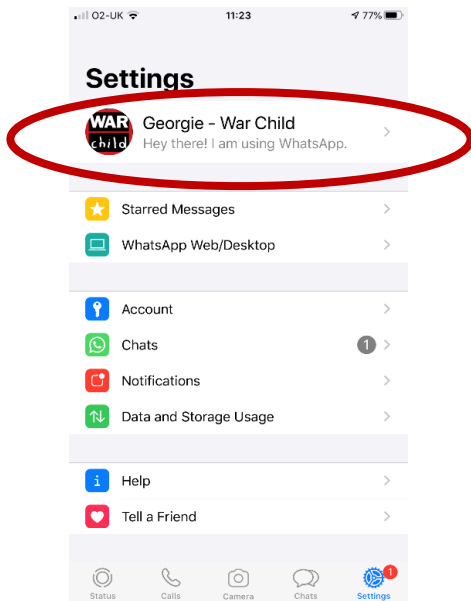
DO	DO NOT
Always use a War Child owned device and sim card when contacting project participants**	Contact a programme participant or their parent / carer from your personal phone, unless you are a case manager and approval has been given**
Use your personal mobile and sim only when agreed with your work as an interim solution until a mobile phone and sim will be provided. Speak to your Safeguarding Focal Point on the situation and settings	Do not create a WhatsApp group using your personal mobile and sim without formal approval of your manager and agreed settings as per this guideline.
Ensure that you have consent evidenced by an Informed Consent form from the child and their parent / carer to contact them via online mechanism.	Do not use a picture of yourself or any family members as your profile picture.
Always use the War Child logo as your profile picture	Do not share the contact details of any project participants with others (unless you are reporting a Child Safeguarding / Protection concern).
Share the list of group rules with every WhatsApp group. These should be concise -. Four to five bullet points based on this document will be sufficient (see Annex 1 for examples)	Do not have a long list of rules for users – they should be clear, concise and aim to keep everyone (staff and children) safe.
Regularly remind participants in the group of the rules including not sharing personal data, personal photos and/or videos of themselves or others [children and adults], within or outside the groups. If photos are required for comms and media purposes this should be requested separately, to parents /carers only, with all necessary approvals and consent.	Do not request or encourage the sharing of photos or videos to see how parents/caregivers are applying the knowledge, activities, and messages you are sharing via the WhatsApp group.
Share with group participants the Safeguarding Focal Points agreed (work) contact details; explain their role and remind them to store their contact.	Do not share the personal number of the Safeguarding / Integrity focal point or their photo (unless mutually agreed by the focal point and their line manager)
Establish times for communicating—for Education in Emergencies activities, these can be the same times as the children were attending lesson prior to COVID-19	Do not contact a project participant outside of the group for personal reasons
Treat everyone with respect and use appropriate, professional language at all times	Do not make discriminatory, degrading, sexist or derogatory comments to participants or parents/carers
Always have two War Child staff members in any online groups / communication you have with project participants.	Do not give your location, address, personal phone number or disclose any confidential or personal details about yourself, or your family members

If you are video calling, ensure that you do this from a safe space and that there is nothing identifiable in the background	Do not share personal photos – any videos, or photos which are shared should be associated with programme activities only
When you communicate with project participants via online platforms always ensure that this is in the context of planned and supervised work	Do not be online 24/7 – you need to take some time for yourself too!
If you are concerned about any child that you are communicating with, or if a child discloses an incident to you, report this to your Child Safeguarding focal point within 24-hours.	Do not accept a friend request from any project participant, or their parent / carer on social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)
Encourage the participants to ask questions and be active in the group!	Do not force a child to be part of a WhatsApp group. Be mindful that families may not be able to afford data / additional data for their child/ren's participation and this should not be prioritised over basic needs.
Actively discourage the spreading of rumours and misinformation about COVID-19, and share facts to counter any myths or stigmatising statements being shared by others	Do not spread rumours or misinformation about COVID-19. Remind the participants that unless the information is verified, they should not spread rumours
Always save the name of the child as a code / do not save their whole name / use initials only	Do not save the name of the child in your phone – use a code / initials only
Report any inappropriate messages you receive from a child / colleague / parent / carer to your Child Safeguarding focal point. These need to be logged and responded to - doing so can protect you!	Do not investigate any concerns you have about the welfare of a child or the behaviour of staff and do not ask probing questions. Report your concerns to the focal point within 24 hours.
Use a strong password for your computer and mobile phone	Do not leave your devices 'unlocked' as others may gain access to sensitive data and beneficiary details
Create age appropriate groups. Cluster them with a difference of one to three years maximum.	It is not recommended to group children (even in online platforms) with a big difference in age like, for example, having in 12 and 17-years olds in the same group.
When you have completed the programme cycle, archive the conversations and deleted contact information of participants	Do not store unrequired information on your devices. If no longer needed delete participant contact details from your device

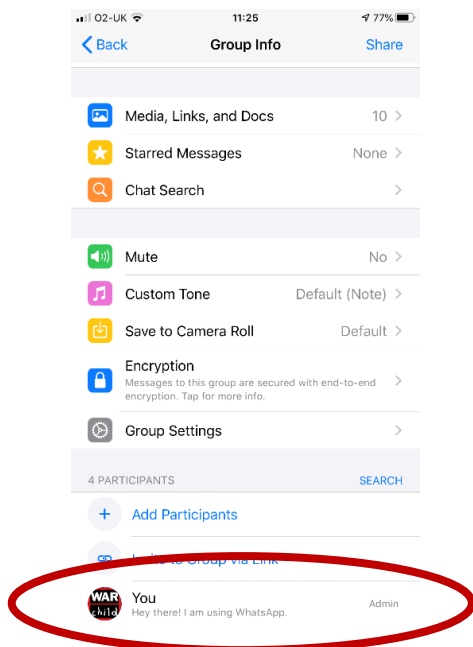
We strongly recommend that staff do not contact programme participants or their parents / carers using their own device. This is to protect both staff and participants from harm and abuse. However, where this is not possible, we recognise that staff may have to contact participants and parents from a personal device – but this should be a temporary measure only, and with the permission and knowledge of their line manager.

GUIDANCE FOR USING WHATSAPP

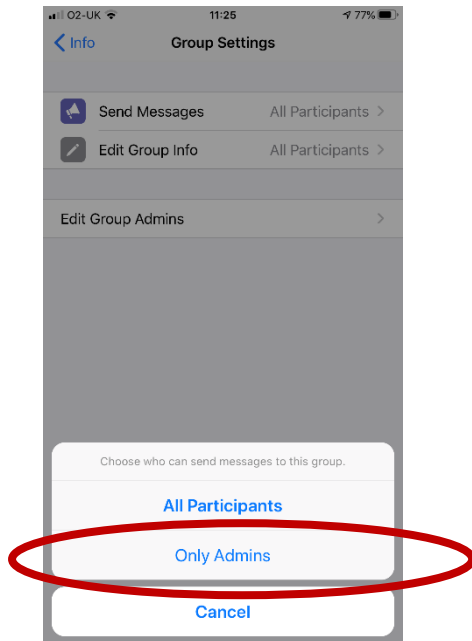
1. Use the War Child logo and your first name, followed by War Child when setting up your profile:



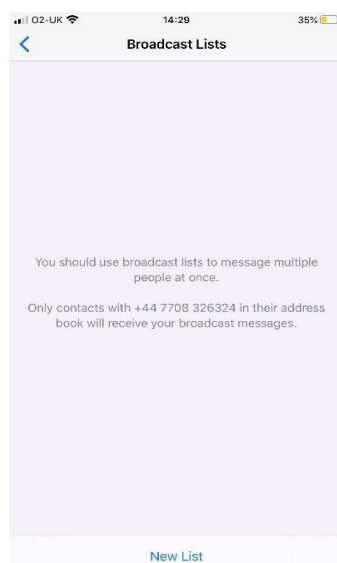
2. Ensure that only the facilitators are 'group admins', not the participants:



When your session is not running, set the group so that only admins can send messages to the group:



3. **Using Group controls.** Where possible use the admin only message. The group admin can decide if all participants or only group admins can send messages within the group and when. Using this feature can help cut down unwanted messages in groups.
4. **Consider using the WhatsApp Broadcast feature.** Broadcast lists are saved lists of message recipients that you can repeatedly send broadcast messages to without having to select them each time. These can be especially useful if you want to send messages to all participants such a safeguarding / PSEA messages, awareness messages or communicate timing for sessions.



When you send a message to the broadcast list, it will be sent to all recipients in the list who have your number saved in their phones' address book. Recipients will receive the message as a normal message. When they reply, it will appear as a normal message in the sender's chats screen. **Their reply will not be sent to other recipients in the broadcast list.** Recipients will also not see the other recipients. More info on broadcasts: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/android/23130793/>.

Remember! Most of the privacy settings on WhatsApp have to be set by users themselves and the privacy settings are limited so be extra vigilant to protect yourself and others.

5. Always apply the **Two Admin Rule**. The Admin of the group has to be more than one person. Discuss with your line manager and Safeguarding or Integrity focal point who can be the co-Admin, including the focal points or the line manager themselves.

GUIDANCE FOR THE PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Facilitators should discuss the rules with the group before commencing any activity. Participants must agree to the rules of the group if they want to participate. The rules must be discussed with parents / carers when obtaining consent. Parents / carers must also agree to adhere to the rules.

It is advisable that facilitators allow the group an opportunity to set their own 'rules' for the group too, in addition to the below. There may be context specific concerns. Having an open discussion will allow participants to feel that they have ownership over the activities.

Communication in the group will only be possible during the specified lesson time. Do not contact students/facilitators outside these hours.

DO	DO NOT
Use a logo, picture of an animal, flower, or anything else unidentifiable as your profile picture.	Do not use a picture of yourself or your family as profile picture
Stay in touch with your class/group, during the time allocated for it.	Do not share other people's contact details or other personal information in the WhatsApp group or to anyone outside the group.
Respect other people's privacy and confidentiality	Do not call other group participants names or make fun of other group members.
Be polite to each other and use appropriate language.	Do not share rumours or information you have not verified
Ask questions but give admin 24-48 hour to reply – they may need to research the answer!	Do not demotivate anyone who might not manage to attend each session, or do an activity, etc.
Motivate, support, and help each other! This is a difficult time for everyone - be patient and kind.	
Use a strong password for your mobile phone	

INAPPROPRIATE MESSAGES

Inappropriate messages are messages that you may receive from a parent / carer, a colleague, partner, or a child that makes you feel uncomfortable and is not related to War Child programming. These may include messages of a sexual or threatening nature which may ask staff to compromise their position. You may also be asked for goods, financial assistance, additional aid or help with securing a job in the organisation. In these circumstances you must report this to your Child Safeguarding/ Integrity focal point and your line manager who can log these in order to protect you. Your line manager can assess the message and decide who to address this.

Other forms of unwanted messages include receiving photographs and video of children within the online group. Photos and videos shared in large groups without a request and consent do not respect the dignity of a child and they may have been shared without consent. If you receive images / videos of the children in the group send a kind reminder to the group on the rules agreed, which included not sharing photos of images. If safe to do so, you may also want to send a reminder to the parent / carer of the child.

Delete all child related content immediately from the group and report it to your Child Safeguarding advisor.

If you receive any indecent images of child sexual exploitation, block the sender and report this immediately to your Safeguarding Advisor and your line manager. **DO NOT SEND THE CONTENT ON TO ANYONE** as this constitutes illegal activity. If the indecent content is sent via Facebook, report the sender and the image to Facebook.

If you receive content of a sexual nature relating to adults, report this to your line manager / Integrity focal point (WC Holland) / Safeguarding focal point (WCUK). Do not forward the content - this would contravene your Code of Conduct. You can also send a polite reminder to the sender that this is not an appropriate use of the online platform.

WHERE CAN YOU VERIFY INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19?

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, we recommend checking the World Health Organisation website: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

For national guidance speak with your Senior Management, contact your Health cluster.

CONSENT

Consent must be obtained from both the parent/ carer and the child before you contact them via any online platform. You can obtain consent from the parent / carer and child either in person (if possible) or via recorded video message sent to the War Child staff member via online platform. The voice of the parent/carer in the video message should include mention of:

- The name of the parent / carer
- Name of the child for whom they are giving consent
- Clear agreement by the parent /carer to use of the online platform
- Acknowledgment of the activities to which they are agreeing to

The consent form should inform the user clearly which social media platform will be used, the purpose and clearly state the rules when using the online platform including agreement that they will not share the contact details of any other participant.

Consent must always be opt-in meaning it requires an explicit act by the consent giver. Never design tools where consent is opt-out or assumed (e.g. 'by using this product you agree to...' or a pre-ticked box).

See Annex 1 for an example of a consent form.

KEY MESSAGES TO BE SHARED WITH PARENTS

- Talk to your child/ren about online safety and that it is important to stay safe online.
- Have open and honest conversations with your children – ask them regularly if they have discovered anything new or exciting online, or anything which concerned them.
- Try to limit screen time and only let children visit age appropriate websites.
- Explain to your child/ren that it is not safe to put their personal details online because people who they do not know may get access to them – if you would not give the information face-to-face, don't put it online.
- Avoid posting pictures or other personal information of your children online to protect their identity.
- If a member of staff from War Child contacts you, or your child outside of the WhatsApp group or they ask you to do something which makes you feel uncomfortable you should report this in confidence to our Child Safeguarding focal point – they will listen to you and respond to your concern.
- At War Child, we have Child Safeguarding focal points – their job is to listen to any concerns that you might have about our staff and how they behave towards children. You should save their contact details in your phone / somewhere safe so that you can report any concerns you might have.
- Use devices in open areas of the home.
- Check the privacy settings on the games and apps your child is using and make sure their profiles are turned on to the strictest privacy setting.
- Use available technologies to set up parental controls on devices.
- Co-view and co-play with your child online.
- Build good habits and help your child to develop digital intelligence and social and emotional skills.

Helpful advice for parents can be found here: www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19/international-advice-for-parents.

KEY MESSAGES TO BE SHARED WITH CHILDREN

- Now that you cannot go out as much or go to school you will probably be spending more time online playing games and chatting to friends. Your schoolwork might also be online. That is exciting but there are some dangers too and we need you to stay safe!
- Never give out your personal information or anyone else's that you know online – this includes your full name, your picture and where you live. You should also avoid telling people how old you are.
- Talk to your parents / carers about your time online – tell them about all the new things you learnt or found, but also tell them if something made you feel worried or uncomfortable.

- Not everyone online is who they say they are – do not make friends with people you do not know. If you're not sure about someone, speak to your parents / carers and they can help you decide.
- If you see something that makes you feel sad, worried, or uncomfortable leave the webpage or the WhatsApp group and tell a trusted adult straight away.
- If a member of staff from War Child makes you feel sad or asks you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable like sending a picture, or talking to you outside your class group, tell your parents / carer or speak to our focal point – they will help to keep you safe.
- Tell your friends about staying safe online! You can be the champion of online safety!
- If you are concerned about the behaviour of a War Child staff member then you should tell an adult you trust, or someone who works at War Child. You can also save the phone number / email of the Child Safeguarding focal point – it is their job to listen to you and to help you if you do not feel safe.

STAFF WELFARE

It is important that staff also protect themselves when using online platform as we do not want any person to come to harm. We also recognise that staff need their own 'downtime' and should not be expected to be online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

No one is immune from online abuse – we all have access to online platforms and use social media as part of our daily routines, become less aware, assume they are safe, assume there are no risks. Language that we use online can cause offence – both intentionally and unintentionally. Often, instant messages can be misinterpreted because the person is not able to clarify, or the tone of the message may be misunderstood by the receiver. As a sender, we must always be mindful that we are using clear, appropriate language.

If you receive any content via an online platform – text, images, or video – which causes you to feel upset or distressed, you can contact the following for support:

WAR CHILD HOLLAND

If you witness or experience any situation that violates the principles and standards set by WCH on communicating safely online please report:

- Internal Non-Anonymous: Country Office Integrity and/or Child Safeguarding Focal Point ([click here](#)), War Child Management (line manager etc.), HR Focal point, Global Integrity Advisor Romee Pameijer or Child Safeguarding Global Advisor Ridiona Stana.
- Internal Anonymous: www.warchildholland.org/speakup

If you would like to consult someone completely External, Anonymous and Confidential please contact our external advisor:

- Ruben Reinders
Tel: +31 6 3816 72 71 / E-mail: r.reinders@gimd.nl

If you have a question or need an advice from experts within War Child please contact us through: www.warchildholland.org/speakup

WAR CHILD UK

Internal Non-Anonymous:

War Child Management (line manager) or HR Advisors

External Anonymous Counselling Service: 'Counselling in Companies (CiC)'

- Email: warchi@cic-eap.co.uk
- Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7938 0963 (outside the UK) 0800 085 1376 (inside the UK)
- Website: www.well-online.co.uk
- Username: warchild
- Password: wellbeing

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person you should report this, within 24-hours, to your Child Safeguarding Focal point or email:

- War Child UK: safeguarding@warchild.org.uk Phone: +44 (0) 7708 326 324
- War Child Holland: speakup@warchild.nl Phone: +31 (0) 639275291

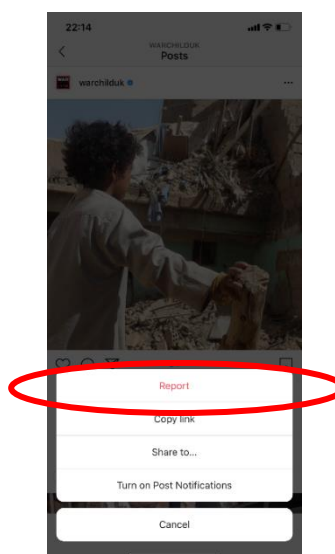
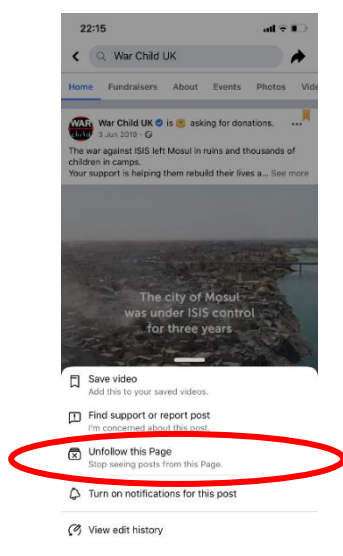
REPORTING ONLINE CONTENT OF CONCERN

During the COVID-19 pandemic you are likely to be spending more time online. If you have seen any online content that has caused you to be concerned about the welfare of the child, then you must report this. DO NOT forward any indecent images of children to anyone, as this is considered illegal activity.

You can report the content via the following mechanisms:

- 1) Your local police station (if you have received an image on a personal / work device)
- 2) CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) <https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- 3) NSPCC <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- 4) Internet Watch foundation <https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

If the content is on Facebook / Instagram, you should report the post to the platform as inappropriate and ask that it is taken down:



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFO:

Girl Affect, Tips and Guidance for Digital Safeguarding:

<https://www.girleffect.org/stories/digital-safeguarding/>

UNICEF, COVID-19 and its implications for keeping children safe online:

<https://www.unicef.org/media/67396/file/COVID-19%20and%20Its%20Implications%20for%20Protecting%20Children%20Online.pdf>

COVID-19 Global Online Advice for parents and carers:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/covid-19/international-advice-for-parents>

Protecting children online and offline:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Advocacy Briefing: Prioritizing the safety of children online during the COVID-19 pandemic:

https://www.alliancecpha.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/acpha_cat-team_pager_online_safety_final_revised_draft_20200717.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=39469

ANNEXES

1. Consent form template
2. Rules for using WhatsApp

Annex 1: Temple for consent form: using online platforms to contact children

This consent must be contextualised for your country programme and activity. Replace the 'XXX' as appropriate.

Dear Parents / Carers / Legal Guardians:

War Child UK / Holland is a global Child Protection organisation. Our mission is to protect, educate and stand up for the rights of children. . We have been working in XXX since XXX delivering programmes designed to protect children and help them to access education and livelihood opportunities.

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic we have decided to adapt our programmes and start using online platforms such as WhatsApp to engage with children. This will help us to continue delivering programmes to children, even when we cannot meet with them, in person or in our community centres.

We would like to obtain your consent to allow us to contact your child/ren using online platforms. We will use WhatsApp to share with you, and your child/ren activities and ideas for play during lockdown. These activities will help them in cognitive development, physical and social emotional development. If you consent, we will contact your child using your WhatsApp account.

Each activity will take approximated XX hours to complete. We will send you activities such as XXX

To ensure everyone's safety and the best interest of your child/ren and our staff we will need you to follow the following instructions when you are taking part of the online programme:

1. If your child/ren are feeling worried, anxious, or stressed you should not force them to take part in the activity – they will enjoy it a lot more if they are willing to participate
2. Set a time for doing the activity during the day – routines really help children especially when they are anxious
3. Try to engage the other siblings if possible, and it is safe to do so
4. Pay close attention to the environment of the room / where you will do the activities – make sure there are no hazards that could harm your child such as sharp edges or hard surfaces.
5. If the video instruction is not clear call the mentioned contact below and they will help to explain
6. Let the child lead the game but make sure that you join in too!
7. As a parent/ caregiver we encourage you to play with your children but do not take over - let the child lead the game
8. Make sure play time / learning is fun – it's the child doesn't want to take part, that is ok. You should not punish them for this

9. If you are concerned about War Child and how we are conducting ourselves, you should report this to our Child Safeguarding Focal Point XXX
10. Please do not share the contact details of any other person in the online group that your child/ren will belong to
11. Always be kind, helpful and polite to others in the group

In order to keep your child safe whilst engaging with War Child on online platforms, we will:

1. Keep your contact details and the details of your child safe – we will not share these with anyone else
2. Ensure that the activities are age appropriate, informative, safe, and fun
3. Be available to answer questions or queries that you might have on the activities within a reasonable time frame
4. Always behave in a safe, appropriate manner that does not put you or your child at risk of harm
5. Keep your child/ren data safe including your contact phone number, address, location.

I (Name of Parent / Carer).....consent to the use and storing of my mobile phone number by War Child so that they are able to do online activities with my child/ren, as mentioned above. I consent to my child/ren being contacted by War Child UK / War Child Holland for this.

Parent / Carer Signature:

Date :

Name (s) of Children:

Project Officer details

Name:

Contact Number:

ANNEX 2: Rules for using WhatsApp

When communicating with children, young people, parents / carers and other staff members it is important that you adhere to the 'rules' of the group. This helps to ensure that everyone who is a member of the WhatsApp group' (including the facilitators) are kept safe from harm. The rules can apply to both staff communicating with staff, and staff communicating with project participants.

For further guidance, refer to the 'How to keep children safe when using Online Platforms' documents.

Top tips on using WhatsApp groups effectively:

- Clearly define the objective of the group and agree to the rules before you begin communicating. These will need to be appropriate for the purpose i.e. if the group is for learning (Education) or communicating (staff groups). Refer to the do's and do not's in the communication guidance for best practice on how to keep everyone safe when using online platforms to communicate!
- Always have a minimum of two administrators per group / two facilitators – this is mandatory for any group that has been set up for delivering programmes / communicating with children (unless otherwise agreed by a line manager for Child Protection Case Management purposes)
- Keep your language professional
- Know and respect your audience! If you are speaking with younger children adapt your language accordingly – keep it clear, simple, and concise
- Do not send anything that is inappropriate and not relevant to the group – always be professional
- If you are communicating with programme participants, always use the War Child logo for your profile and add War Child to your name e.g. 'Sam-War Child'

Suggestions for your WhatsApp Group rules – select the most relevant to your group:

You should always discuss the rules with the group. The members may want to add their own rules in addition to those you suggest – ask the group if they have any rule to add. You must get agreement from the members of the group that they will comply with the rules at all times.

- We will not spam the group with memes, adverts, deals or irrelevant pictures or messages of topic
- When asked to reply, I will post my message in one single chunk of text – I won't post every word or sentence in a new message.
- I will not have one-on-one conversations in the group.
- I will not have one-on-one conversations with project participants outside of the group, unless it is necessary for case management purposes. If I do this, I will inform my line manager.

- I will not contact other group members outside of this group. Just because I have their phone number from being in the same group, does not mean I have their permission to call or message them, even if they are my friend.
- I will not circulate photos and videos of our own children or other children unless requested and we have informed consent. Photos and videos sent by the group Admins are all with approval.
- We will not ask children to share photos of themselves undertaking programme activities within the group. If photos / videos are required for comms & media, we will approach children and their parents / carers individually and ensure that we have informed consent.
- We will not send in a hundred "thank you" messages. If the groups feel gratitude towards someone – the group administrator will express that gratitude.
- If someone asks a question of a personal nature (like asking for advice) don't respond if someone else has already answered with the same /similar answer that you would give. It is ok to share a second piece of advice e.g. an alternative place they could get advice or information.
- No arguing, no heated opinions, no fear mongering, no hyped-up drama, no fake news. Check your sources before you share.
- Never EVER use a group to berate someone else or air grievances. If you have an issue address it one-on-one with the relevant person.
- Don't send data-insensitive messages - most people have limited access to the internet / 3G, and it is unfair to force someone to use it on unwanted memes / pictures / videos.
- If the group is between staff / adults then it is ok not to respond to every conversation – radio silence for a few hours is fine. You don't need to have an opinion about everything that someone posts to the group.
- Don't be offensive. This refers to jokes as well. Just because you might find it funny, that doesn't mean the rest of the group will. Do not send any jokes which have sexual innuendo, religious, political, racial, or sexual orientation connotations.
- Never share the contact details of others in the group – it is the choice of the individual if they want to share their own personal details.
- Do not take screenshots of conversations with the intention to share with others.
- Politely excuse yourself before you leave a WhatsApp group.
- If I am concerned about the welfare of a child or young person in the WhatsApp group, I will report this to my Child Safeguarding Focal Point within 24-hours.

Suggestions for staff rules:

- If the group has been set up for programme delivery (education / PSS) then be clear with all group members what time you will be available online and able to answer their questions. You do not need to be available 24/7 – remember to 'mute' the group when you are not online.
- Inform the group members when you are online and when you are not so that you can manage their expectations around response rates to questions e.g. 'Hi, it's Sam – I am going to be online from 2pm-4pm'; 'Thanks for taking part in today's session. I am going offline now but I will be back online tomorrow at 2pm'.
- If the group has been set up for online learning (Education in Emergencies / Psychosocial Support etc) you should respond to questions as soon as you are able and encourage the group to ask questions when they don't understand the task etc.
- WhatsApp Groups are not political or religious platforms (unless you have specifically set it up for this purpose).

