DIGITAL YOUTHWORK & SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE: COVID19
This is a working document and will be regularly updated
as we progress through the current crisis.
April 2020

Context:

Given the digital workspace in which we all find ourselves with regards COVID-19, working remotely and communicating with young people through using a variety of communication tools & apps has become the new norm. The following guidelines reflect best practice and work towards maintaining the safety of young people and KDYS youthwork professionals alike:

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures:

In brief, the same basic rules and recommendations apply to operating in the digital workspace as they would in regular work environments.

As a starting point, please refer to KDYS' Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, 2019, which apply equally in the online space as they do in our usual youth work activities.

Please revisit and familiarise yourself with the following:

- Child Safeguarding which includes:
    - Code of behaviour
    - Social Media Policy
    - Mandatory Reporting
    - Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Please ensure you have completed Tusla's online e-learning Child Protection Course.

With respect to digital youthwork & social media, please ensure the following:

- All KDYS staff should use only official KDYS social media and app accounts to communicate with a Young Person. Do not use a personal account to make contact with a Young Person.
- Cover the use of social media sites and apps within the youth group and discuss safe use of those sites/apps within youth projects, both prior to and during contact times.
- Use 'About' or 'Group Information' sections to declare group rules and promote safe usage.
- Do not require any users of the youth groups' social media sites to disclose personal information. Do not tag or provide contact details for members on social media sites.
- A named youth worker should moderate the content of all social media sites, monitoring posts, removing inappropriate content and liaising with the Designated Liaison Person on any instances of bullying or harassment.
- Make yourself aware of the safest and most appropriate settings on each social media site/app to safeguard young people, and use accordingly.

Child Protection:

If you note any Child Protection concerns while online working with young people, adhere to the guidelines and reporting procedures as per KDYS policy and/or statutory reporting requirements.

KDYS Internal Child Protection Report Form is available in Appendix 5 of the KDYS' Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, 2019.

Tusla's Child Protection and Welfare Report Form can be found in Appendix 6 of KDYS' Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, 2019 and online (which may be more useful when remote working).

> https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/
> https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/publications-and-forms/

Contact numbers for Tusla offices nationwide are available on the Tusla website (www.tusla.ie) or through the Tusla National Office (Tel. 01-7718500).

Kerry Duty and Intake Social Work Dept; 066-7184501.

Managing video meetings.

Among the many Apps available to both youthwork professionals and young people alike, the following points can guide all parties to safe usage:

- Young people can be attending meetings as invited participants via an email link, and not via their own accounts. Young people can also attend meetings where invites are sent on by phone.
- Meetings should be hosted from an account held and managed by KDYS and not from a youth worker's personal account. More than one KDYS staff member or volunteer should have access to the account details.
- Ensure that meetings are password protected and can only be joined by invitees.
- Never invite anyone to join a meeting unless they are a member or leader with the youth group .
- There may be a situation whereby a youth worker needs to record a group or meeting, due to youth worker:particpants ratio difficulties. If you are using an app which records the meeting, store the recording securely on KDYS equipment for a specified period of time. It is essential that you inform participants and their parents and guardians that you will be recording the meeting, and get their permission to do so in line with KDYS policy.
- Make yourself familiar with the features of the chosen app in advance, and provide clear guidance for young people on safe use of the app prior to working online.

- Time-limit meetings and be clear on the planned duration of the online interaction in advance. Sessions of between 30 minutes and a maximum of one hour are recommended for safe usage.
- Be clear on the code of conduct for participants. Set expectations for dressing appropriately, participating fully and working together etc. KDYS code of conduct applies.
- Check with the Young Person that they are comfortable with using the app and whether they are experiencing any barriers to participation (e.g. no broadband access or access to equipment; a disability that impacts their ability to interact via screen such as visual impairment etc.) Make accommodations as appropriate.
- Reconsider working online if it leads to the significant exclusion of members.
- As per online guidelines from YWI, it is recommended not to use Tik Tok or Houseparty Apps due to possible security breach risks.

Group calls.

Group chat/zoom should be treated in the same manner as face to face work and subject to the KDYS code of conduct.

- All groups/projects should develop a clear set of rules/code of practice for their group. This should be done through a process of consultation and include the issues raised in KDYS Code of Practice.
- All negative behaviour needs to be addressed by the worker in a consistent manner.
- As convener, the youthworker has the right to terminate (hang up) on any individual from the group chat if deemed necessary. Negative behaviour will need to be addressed as per code of conduct.

Steps 1 – 4 in approaching different Behaviours

i.   **Using a participative process explore the reasons for and the consequences of negative behaviour for the individual/group.**

ii.   **State clearly the behaviour that's expected in the group.**

iii. **State clearly the behaviour that is not acceptable in any group.**

iv.   **Always expect and affirm positive changes in behaviour.**

Notes specific to WhatsApp:

WhatsApp should only be used by KDYS staff to receive video calls from service users, to video call back a service user who has called or messaged them, or, to monitor a safety network group they were invited to attend.

In not allowing WhatsApp to access the phone contacts address book, a youth worker cannot make new outgoing video calls but instead can receive video calls or call back a Young Person, who has called or messaged them.

KDYS official work phones to be used at all times. Location and Visibility settings should be changed for WhatsApp on work phones.

WhatsApp provide a data privacy statement that confirms it provides end-to-end encryption of messages and calls, and that once messages (including your chats, photos, videos, voice messages, files, and share location information) are delivered; they are deleted from the WhatsApp servers.

If it is a parent who initiated the WhatApp calls by calling the youthwork professional, then it is a reasonably assumed that parents as the call initiators are consenting to the call.

If a contract of engagement is not already in place (family support agreement, consent form) that specifically mentions phone/online contact then a text message from a parents phone will suffice as consent as opposed to assuming.

Working With Parents/ Guardians

As we navigate virtual workspaces and employ creative means through which we can organise online youth work activities, or respond to a Young Person's needs at a time of crisis, the opportunity may arise where you can connect with parents / guardians and explain why, how and when you intend to facilitate that activity or response. In doing so, KDYS staff should:

- Acknowledge that different families will have different rules and approaches to screen-time, therefore clarity on the purpose and value of online activity or response becomes all the more important.
- Review the parental permissions in place in respect of your members. Even if the existing permissions cover online communications and working, it is worth reviewing if this covers the downloading and use of apps that you may be using for online working.
- The digital age of consent is 16 so if working with anyone online under that age permission will especially need to be sought from a parent/ guardian for use of each individual app / social media site. However, it is best practice to have relevant parental permissions in place for all members aged 18 and younger.

Online Safety Resources

- https://www.webwise.ie/category/parents/explainers/
- https://www.webwise.ie/parents/explained-image-sharing-app-instagram/
- https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/web-safety-in-youth-work/
- https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/CMT-AD-23-2020_-_Covid_19_Interim_measures_with_regard_to_use_of_WhatsApp.pdf
- https://youngharrowfoundation.org/images/downloads/ypfWebsite/LGBT-Digital-Youth-Work-Suite-of-Resources-Produced-by-The-Proud-Trust.pdf

Child Protection

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children [DCYA 2017]
- https://www.youth.ie/documents/child-protection-during-covid-19/?utm_source=Stay+in+touch+with+NYCI&utm_campaign=1306c618a7-Safeguarding+infographic-Child+Protection-17.&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c5e3fd8386-1306c618a7-390931973&mc_cid=1306c618a7&mc_eid=6b463d4978

Other Useful Websites :

https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/tips-for-online-youth-work-when-youth-centres-are-closed/
https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine/smart-and-digital-youth-work-resources-where-to-find-more#
www.hotline.ie
www.spunout.ie
www.watchyourspace.ie
www.mentalhealthireland.ie
www.jigsaw.ie
 https://jigsawonline.ie
 www.belongto.org
www.bodywhys.ie
www.hse.ie/CAMHS/HSE