



# Safeguarding information for parents during the Covid 19 Pandemic



Protecting Children in the  
Catholic Church



## Safeguarding Information for Parents during the Covid 19 Pandemic

**The Safeguarding Office is responsible for ensuring the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults within the confines of the Catholic Church across the Archdiocese of Perth, educating the Catholic community on child protection.**

**During this time of COVID 19 we are committed to keeping children and young people safe and helping parents to do the same both online and offline.**

**How to stay connected online**

Ways in which our parishes and agencies have continued to connect with young people is through the use of online technology and as such the Communications Office, Catholic Youth Ministry and the Safeguarding Office have been working together to increase safety and to ensure we are doing all we can for everyone during this time to keep children and young people safe. The Archdiocese's Social Media Policy has been updated and **clear guidelines on the use of online gatherings** have been drafted and provided to all staff and volunteers. A copy of this policy is available on the Safeguarding website.

**Parents are being directed or encouraged to keep their children home from school,** to help curb the spread of COVID-19 and this means that children will be turning to social media, online entertainment and the internet more often than normal.



**Safeguarding Office . Catholic Archdiocese of Perth**

**a.** 29 Victoria Square . Perth . WA . 6000  
**p.** 08 9221 7763 **e.** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)



Protecting Children in the  
Catholic Church



## There has never been a greater need for parent /carer vigilance when it comes to our children’s online use.

Of primary concern is the danger of online grooming . Grooming occurs when a person (child or adult) makes contact with a child or young person with the intention of sexually abusing them.

This abuse can and does occur in a physical form, but it increasingly occurs online – and will no doubt continue given current circumstances – when young people are tricked or persuaded into sexual activity on webcams or into sending or posting sexual images known as “nudes”.

**Here is a link to an article on the ABC News website that we encourage parents to read and watch:**

[www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-12/self-generated-child-abuse-material-on-the-increase/8895634](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-12/self-generated-child-abuse-material-on-the-increase/8895634)

## 6 Tips to help parents manage their children’s increasing use of tech at home.

The following pages contain **6 tips to help parents manage** their children’s increasing use of tech at home and keep them safe online.

Tips provided by the eSafety Commission and a direct link to their website is provided on the final page of this document.



**Safeguarding Office . Catholic Archdiocese of Perth**

**a.** 29 Victoria Square . Perth . WA . 6000  
**p.** 08 9221 7763 **e.** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)



Protecting Children in the  
Catholic Church



## 1. Use parental controls

Parental controls are **software tools that allow you to monitor and limit what your child sees and does online**. They can be set up to block your child from accessing specific websites, apps or functions (like using a device's camera), filter different kinds of content – such as 'adult' or sexual content, monitor your child's use of connected devices, with reports on the sites they visit and the apps they use, and set time limits, blocking access after a set time.

While parental controls can be effective tools to help control and limit what your child does online, it's important to remember they are **not foolproof** – there is no substitute for active parental engagement and oversight of a child's online activities.

See Taming the Technology for more information on how to set up parental controls on the home wi-fi network, devices, through third-party software, or in apps and programs.

## 2. Set time limits

With most school-aged children using online platforms or programs for schoolwork, ensuring a healthy balance between non-school related online activities and offline time is more important than ever.

**During non-school hours** at home, it's a good idea to **establish time limits** around when and for how long your child can be online. For example, your child can play their favourite online game for one hour per night, once schoolwork is complete and dinner is finished. Rather than simply imposing these rules, talk to your children about them first and why they are important.

Depending on your child's age, you can also look at establishing a family tech agreement or **family plan that balances time spent in front of screens** with offline activities. While extra curricula activities like sport or drama may be limited right now, look to include 'offline' activities in your routine at home – this can include family exercise, reading time or a fun activity like a board game.

**And don't forget to reduce your own time online to model positive behaviour!**



**Safeguarding Office . Catholic Archdiocese of Perth**

**a.** 29 Victoria Square . Perth . WA . 6000  
**p.** 08 9221 7763 **e.** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)





### 3. Stay in open areas of the home

**Device-free zones** in the home can help you monitor and manage who your child interacts with online. For example, you can establish rules like:

- no devices in the bedroom or bathroom
- all screens off at least one hour before planned bedtime
- all family members switch off their devices at dinner time
- devices charged overnight in a place your child cannot access.

While we know you can't physically monitor your child's online activities 24/7, **establishing rules** around using technology and devices in common areas of the home, like the kitchen or family room, **helps limit the risk** of them being groomed into taking or sharing sexual images or videos with predators.

### 4. Know the apps and games your kids are using

Check that apps, games and social media sites are age-appropriate for your child.

**Look out for messaging or online chat** as well as location-sharing within apps, games or social media accounts – these can expose your child to unwanted contact and reveal their physical location. There may be an option to **switch these features off** or limit chats to friends-only.

The eSafety Guide includes information to help parents and carers choose safer apps and report and block unwanted contact and sexual approaches.



**Safeguarding Office . Catholic Archdiocese of Perth**

**a.** 29 Victoria Square . Perth . WA . 6000  
**p.** 08 9221 7763 **e.** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)



Protecting Children in the  
Catholic Church





## 5. Turn on privacy settings

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. Restricting who can contact your child or making it friends-only helps to limit unwanted contact.

Talk to your child about accepting friend requests from people **they may not know** but have friends in common with. People are not always who they say they are online – a determined predator will befriend several children from the same school to gain the group's trust.

## A free online Cyber Safety Parent Webinar

The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth Safeguarding Office will be hosting an online workshop for parents.

### Webinar Date

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020 7:00pm - 9:00pm

 See accompanying PDF flyer to find out more.



Safeguarding Office . Catholic Archdiocese of Perth

a. 29 Victoria Square . Perth . WA . 6000  
p. 08 9221 7763 e. [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)

## 6. Co-view and co-play

Most importantly, remember to **take time to co-view and co-play with your children online**. Engaging in their online lives is the best way to understand what they are doing online and why they enjoy an app or game. It also provides the perfect opportunity to start conversations about online safety. You might even enjoy it and learn a thing or two!

### Source

Julie Inman Grant  
eSafety Commissioner  
The eSafety Commission Website  
[www.esafety.gov.au/parents](http://www.esafety.gov.au/parents)

**Head to the eSafety Parents for more strategies and advice to help keep children safe online.**

Are you also trying to help an older relative or friend stay connected online? Check out the eSafety COVID-19 related advice.

## To register for this free event please contact

Mary Mantle  
**email** [safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@perthcatholic.org.au)  
or  
**Phone** 9221 7762

