



Youth Work Ireland

Press Release  
Youth Work Ireland  
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### **Youth Workers Deploy Digital Methods to Engage with Young People during School Closures**

Youth organisations who have also had to close some of their physical spaces due to the Covid 19 situation have been adopting their practice and utilising a number of digital methods to engage with young people who are currently out of school. Youth groups have been deploying applications such as Zoom and Google Hangouts to ensure they can stay in touch with young people virtually particularly those who are vulnerable or may find time out of school difficult.

The idea is to maintain a safe space for young people and maintain the trusted relationship which often exists between the youth service and young people. Local services will apply similar methodologies in their work and ensure proper consents are in place and all safeguarding issues are dealt with according to Youth Work Ireland.

*“The current situation puts it up to everyone to play their part in slowing down any spread of the virus, social distancing is clearly needed, and schools and colleges have to close. Young people will still have to engage with education providers, but it is also important that other aspects of their lives are catered for and that the challenges of been out of the familiar environment of education and the normal routine are recognised. The local youth service can be an important normalisation focus for many young people particularly the more vulnerable ones and digital methods may be of great assistance to some”* said Michael Mc Loughlin from Youth Work Ireland

*“Guidelines for Youth Work Staff have been developed by Youth Work Ireland in Laois and are being shared around the country. Google Hang Outs or Zoom groups may be created for all current groups except after schools, all Hangouts or Zoom groups should be private and invite only operating Hours for Hangouts are being established. All staff must ensure that Hangouts or Zoom guidelines developed are implemented. All staff must ensure to follow best practice and child protection procedures and in the event of a child protection issue staff should report to the relevant DLP, all staff should fill out an online evaluation form after every Hangout or Zoom group. Young people are only allowed to contact during the times listed. Any contact outside of that will not be replied to until the next scheduled slot. Young people will be invited into their Hangouts or Zoom groups by Youth Work Staff. Young People should only use during operating hours for Hangouts or Zoom. Young people should be informed of Hangouts or Zoom guidelines”* Mr. Mc Loughlin explained

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