Young Leaders' Community App - SPOND

Overview
An app for Sheffield Diocese's **Young Leaders' Community**. To enable communication between leaders and young people (10-18s) in organising and planning events, presenting opportunities across the diocese, arranging meetings, discussing ideas and building faith and relationships.

Spond (www.spond.com) is a free 'team management' app. Children from 10yrs may use the app with a parent/carer's consent. The app allows youth leaders and / or diocesan staff (Advisers, Senior Staff etc) to communicate directly with young people across the diocese in a safe way. It will enable us to hear the voices of our young people and children regularly through conversation groups and polls. We will be able to ask questions of them, and they of us. They will be encouraged to voice opinions and think creatively about mission and ministry. Our senior staff team commit to listening well and inviting our children and young people to play an active part in shaping our diocese, setting strategy and influencing plans. This app will enable us to place our children and young people instinctively at the heart of all our mission and ministry.

The app doesn't allow private or direct messages to be sent or received by any under 18s. This is in order to follow diocesan safeguarding guidelines and protect our young people from unwanted harassment. Only young people known to us, with local church support will be admitted to the app, and they will be encouraged to connect with other young leaders across the diocese. Adult youth leaders alongside some of our central diocesan staff will ensure the app remains a safe and secure environment for our young people to grow in leadership together.

With this app, we will be able to:

- Arrange meetings for members of the YLC (for training, discipleship, worship, learning, planning and socialising). These meetings may be in person, or on Zoom. Separate consent forms will be used for any meetings.
- Offer leadership opportunities around the diocese
- Gain parental / carer consent for activities and opportunities
- Communicate with young people, children, leaders and parents through one app
- Encourage faith and discipleship
- Hear young people's opinions and engage in conversation
- Connect our senior staff (including bishops) and young people in decision-making conversations
- Share ideas of how young people can serve in local and diocesan leadership
- Plan events, activities, communication and strategy

Adult leaders and parents/carers will be able to see every message posted in safeguarding-compliant chat groups based around different themes.

Under 18-year olds are not able to send or receive private / direct messages or initiate new private conversations. All messages from under 18-year olds are posted in chat groups with adult leaders (DBS checked) and parents/carers able to observe. Adult leaders can message other adult leaders but cannot message any under 18s unless part of a conversation initiated by the YLC group managers. Guardians (youth leader or parent or both) will be able to see these chats, and youth leaders are able to take part in them. Private messages can be exchanged between over 18s (parents, leaders or senior staff

and young people who are 18), however, parents who are not leaders (full members) on the app cannot message other parents.

When a young person turns 18, they will be able to message and be messaged directly by other over 18-year-olds (youth leaders and senior staff.) They will not be able to directly message under 18s although they may be included in group chats with under-18s and their youth leaders.

For 10-12 year olds, it will be a requirement that at least one parent / carer and the local youth leader are registered on the app and connected to the child as 'guardians' to observe interactions. (A parent or youth leader can be guardian to multiple children.) Parents / carers can vote in polls or respond to event invitations on behalf of their child, or the child can also respond. A child can have multiple 'guardians' assigned to them if there are several youth leaders in the local church, or parents/carers who wish to supervise activity.

For 13 – 18 year olds, it is recommended that parents / carers drop out of the supervisory role that they have been playing, and leave the youth leader(s) to continue this supervision, in line with safeguarding practice.

There will be instructions for how to register on the app for young people, parents/carers, leaders and senior staff. Parents/carers will need to register with or before their children are accepted onto the app.

There will be at least two top level admins overseeing the app community to ensure safe practice and GDPR compliance is adhered to (the Children and Young People's Adviser, and the Young Leaders' Community Enabler or similar).

If a young person / child wants to start a new post / conversation, they can ask their leader (guardian) or another leader on the app to do this through an existing post.

Parents (guardians) can only see subgroups (conversations) that their child or children are part of. Parents cannot see personal information of other children, but can edit information about their own child(ren). Children cannot change their own name or date of birth in order to pretend to be someone else or message others (it will appear as if they can change these things, but the changes are not reflected in the YLC group). Only admins and guardians can make these changes. A child can, however, change the email address that is registered on their account if they can validate it.

There is a **code of conduct** that all registered users will agree to before being granted access to the YLC group on the app.

Downloading the app

Online tutorial for setting up the app: www.youtube.com/watch?v=j02x7ICOamM

- Download the Spond app on your phone, or visit www.spond.com to create an account.
- Young people and adult leaders should register as a 'member', and when prompted for a Group Code, please enter: **RTABT**
- Parents / carers should register as a 'guardian', include your child(ren) names(s) and when prompted for a Group Code, please enter: **RTABT**
- This will connect your account to the Young Leaders' Community. You will need to wait to be granted access before proceeding. Please ensure parents / carers have completed a Registration and Consent form for each child (found at sheffdio.org/ylc) as young people will only gain access to the YLC group on Spond when their registration form is received and processed.

September 2024