

LSY Contact Guidelines

This policy outlines the guidelines for appropriate and safe communication between youth leaders and teenagers under our care. The goal is to maintain healthy boundaries, ensure transparency, and protect the well-being of all involved.

Under 16s:

1. **Parent Permission:**
    a. Parental consent **must** be obtained before contacting a teenager under the age of 16. This consent is reflected on your contact sheet once the parent has completed the required consent form.
    b. Until parental consent is obtained, **all communication should go through the parent**.
2. **Communication Guidelines (Once Permission is Obtained):**
    a. **Text Messaging:** Allowed only between **same-gender** youth leader and teen, between the hours of **8:00 AM to 9:00 PM**.
    b. **Phone Calls:** Allowed only between **same-gender** youth leader and teen, between the hours of **8:00 AM to 9:00 PM**.
    c. **Group Chats:** Allowed, provided they involve multiple participants
    d. **Disappearing Messages: Not allowed.** Do not contact teens on any apps with disappearing messaging features (e.g., Snapchat, Instagram Stories).
3. **Ministry-Related Communication (Mixed Gender):**
    a. For activities related to ministry (e.g., serving), **mixed-gender contact** is permitted but only with **parental permission**.

4. **Catch Ups:**
    a. **Hang outs:** Allowed in groups (at least two students) with parent permission

b. **Transport:** Same gender allowed to drive students to and from youth / church with parent permission

16 and Over:

1. **Permission:**
    a. Permission will be sought but is **not required** for communication with teens over the age of 16.
2. **Communication Guidelines:**
    a. **Text Messaging:** Allowed between **same-gender** youth leader and teen, between the hours of **8:00 AM to 10:00 PM**.
    b. **Phone Calls:** Allowed between **same-gender** youth leader and teen, between the hours of **8:00 AM to 10:00 PM**.
    c. **Group Chats:** Allowed, provided they involve multiple participants
    d. **Disappearing Messages: Not allowed.** Do not contact teens on any apps with disappearing messaging features (e.g., Snapchat, Instagram Stories).
3. **Ministry-Related Communication (Mixed Gender):**
    a. Communication regarding ministry-related matters (e.g., serving) is allowed for **mixed-gender contact**, without the need for parental consent.
4. **Catch ups:**
    a. **Hang outs:** Same gender allowed to hang out one on one / group hang outs can be mixed genders
    b. **Transport:** Same gender allowed to drive students to and from youth

General Guidelines for All Ages:

- **Transparency:** Always ensure that communication is transparent, appropriate, and ministry focused.
- **Boundaries:** Respect the privacy and personal space of the teenager. Avoid sending messages outside of the stated hours or engaging in extremely personal conversations – if this is occurring suggest
- **Emergency Contact:** If there is a need to contact a teen outside of the above guidelines due to an emergency, ensure that this is done with proper documentation and follow up with a report to the ministry leadership.