



BCYS Mobile Phone & Social Media Use Policy

For Young Adult Volunteers Working with Young peoples in Lourdes

This policy outlines expectations for mobile phone and social media use by young adult leaders (ages 18+) on pilgrimage with the BCYS in Lourdes. It is designed to uphold safeguarding principles, and support a safe, focused, and respectful environment for all participants. *This policy applies to all young adult leaders working with or around young people (under 18s) during the Lourdes pilgrimage. It is part of the overall safeguarding and conduct expectations for volunteers.*

1. Mobile Phone Use

a. General Expectations

- We would expect all those in a leadership role with the BCYS to lead by example regarding phone use. That means...
 - Phone use should be limited during group activities, prayer times, or while in direct supervision of young people, except in emergencies or when directed by a senior leader.
 - Leaders should minimise phone use and encourage in-person connection, particularly at mealtimes and group social times.

b. WhatsApp Groups

- Our general guidance has always been to not share personal phone numbers with young people, however we do understand the benefits of using a group chat. Therefore, if you wish to set up a group chat for your small group, please follow these rules:
 - Any small group chats on WhatsApp should include at least two leaders who hold a DBS and safeguarding training.
 - No leader to message any young person privately.
 - Always use kind, respectful and professional language.
 - No one may share photos without permission from the people in the photo.
 - No one may send inappropriate or hurtful photos, videos or messages.
 - No one may share someone else's phone number without the permission of that person.
 - No one may send direct personal messages, including images and videos, to anyone without that person's consent.
 - If any message makes anyone uncomfortable, please ask a senior leader for advice. You may block a number if you wish.
 - Young people may remove themselves from the group at any time.

We ask that you share these rules with your group when creating the group chat.

c. Photography and Videos

- Avoid having / taking photos of young people on your personal phone.
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2. Social Media Use

a. Professional Boundaries

- Do not add, follow, or interact with young people on personal social media accounts during or after the pilgrimage. Instead, direct them to follow @brentwoodcys.
- Do not initiate or accept friend/follow requests from young people.
- Any communication with young people should remain public, i.e. no private or direct messaging.

b. Content and Conduct

- Do consider making your profiles "private" – consider that any young person, parent or pilgrim may be able to see what you have shared/posted on a public profile.
- We ask that any online content reflects the values of the pilgrimage and consideration for the reputation of the BCYS.
- Please do not post any photos which include young people or vulnerable adults, on any personal social media accounts.
 - *The BCYS policy advises parents that we cannot guarantee where photos and videos taken on BCYS trips will be displayed. For some young people there may be an issue with the display of photos. If that were the case we would talk sensitively to the small group leader and young person, and would ask every leader to accept that on occasion we may ask you to remove a photo which has been shared publicly. We follow the same protocols on the BCYS website.*

c. Group Messaging

- We ask that group chats are only to be used on WhatsApp. **The Youth Service does not promote the use of SnapChat as it is not safe for young people. Leaders are asked not to use the app or discuss its use with or around Young People. Please use your discretion in the use of other apps and websites.**
 - This chat should be deleted once the pilgrimage is finished.
 - Private messaging with young people is not allowed under any circumstance.
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3. Privacy & Safeguarding

- Respect the privacy of all pilgrims, especially vulnerable individuals. Do not share personal stories, images, or medical situations online or in messaging.
 - If you observe inappropriate phone or social media use by anyone on the pilgrimage, please alert a core leader or staff member.
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4. Breaches of Policy

- Any breach of this policy may affect your involvement in future BCYS events.
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Acknowledgment

All volunteers must read, understand, and sign this policy prior to departure for Lourdes. By signing, you agree to uphold the principles outlined above to ensure a safe, respectful, and spiritually enriching experience for all.

In all matters, please do also refer to the Safeguarding (child protection) policy for the BCYS, as this will help in making sure both you (as a leader) and every young person has a safe and happy trip, with support and friendship in the best and most appropriate ways. Thank you for volunteering to be a leader in the BCYS.

This policy was created by Gabriella Skinner, May 2025 and reviewed by Claire Bailey and Fr Michael Barwick, May 2025.