



#BBATHOME

Guidance to Leaders

We're excited to launch #BBatHOME a new programme concept to enable us to continue to engage our members with opportunities to learn, grow and discover through a balanced programme of activities in their own homes supported by their parents/carers.

Through this alternative programme we believe we will see...

- opportunities for all our members to engage in a fun and exciting programme of activities.
- children and young people getting into the Bible and having the opportunity to come to know Jesus for themselves.
- leaders continuing to engage with the BB family and build on the well-established relationships with children and young people and their parents/carers.
- The Boys' Brigade sharing a positive message of hope by showing how we care for and support our members and their families.
- opportunities for children and young people to be recognised for their participation and achievements.
- engagement by non-members, recognising that this will be a difficult time for children and young people who are restricted in their activities.

How will it work?

The **#BBatHOME** programme is focussed around children and young people engaging in activities in their home, supported directly by their parents/carers. Over the last week as we have had to cease to meet face-to-face we have seen that a number of Companies have already started to provide their own online and remote programmes for their members to participate in, which is fantastic. We hope that **#BBatHOME** will help support all leaders to be able to offer online and remote programming opportunities so that we can keep in touch with members and support them during the challenging weeks ahead.

There will be a number of elements to the **#BBatHOME** programme including:

- Weekly Activities/Challenges
- Brigade-wide Competitions
- Devotional & Thought for the Day Videos

Read on to find out more about what we are providing . . .

Weekly Activity Packs

We will provide a weekly activity pack including 6 activities for each age group (Company & Seniors will be resourced together as one age group), every week during the period that the outbreak means that BB groups cannot meet face-to-face. This will include an activity for each of the 6 Activity Areas – Get Active, Get Adventurous, Get Creative, Get into the Bible, Get Involved and Get Learning.

The activities have been designed for children and young people so they can choose which activities they would like to have a go at, supported by their parents/carers.

The weekly activity packs will look familiar to leaders and are similar in design to the new activity cards for Anchors and Juniors, with colourful illustrations, easy to follow instructions and important notes for parents/carers.

In writing these activities we have been conscious of the current situation, ensuring activities require minimal equipment/resources and where possible items which we would expect many to already have in the home. Activities encourage parents/carers or other family members (brothers, sisters, etc) to get involved in either supporting the child or young person or joining in with the activity.

There is encouragement alongside most activities for a parent/carer to share what the child or young person has been up to with their BB group directly or on social media using the hashtag **#BBatHOME**.

The weekly activity packs will be published every Friday ready for the start of the next week.

Competitions

In the coming weeks we will be launching a number of competitions for children and young people to get involved in on a Brigade wide basis. These are set to include a '**Colouring Competition**' for the Anchors age group, a '**Bake Off**' and an opportunity for children and young people to show off their talents in our very own '**BB's Got Talent**' competition. More details will be circulated shortly.

Devotional & 'Thought for the Day' Videos

We will be releasing a series of videos created by Chaplains/Ministers from across the Brigade which can be shared with children and young people. We hope these videos will help members in their journey of faith, with a variety of mini talks, object lessons and testimony.

Keeping in touch & Delivering the Programme

Whilst we cannot meet face-to-face and deliver our usual programme, the **#BBatHOME** programme offers us an opportunity to keep in touch with our members and for them to continue to participate in a fun and exciting BB programme.

We want to encourage leaders to get involved and continue to offer a programme remotely to members, by sharing these opportunities with parents/carers.

To consider how you might go about doing this could you get your staff team together by phone or online – it would be great to involve as many leaders as possible and encourage them to get involved in supporting the delivery of the **#BBatHOME** programme.

There are many different ways you could share these opportunities with members including:

- Email
- WhatsApp Group
- Social Media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram)
- Closed Facebook Groups
- Website
- Text Message
- Post/Letterbox
- Telephone Call



Further down this document you can find some advice about using the above methods to keep in touch with members and encourage them to get involved in **#BBatHOME**.

It is important to **remember that leaders MUST communicate directly with parents/carers**, and MUST not directly communicate with children and young people. The only exception is where appropriate measures are put in place with the Seniors age group (15+), where there is either a minimum of two leaders involved in all communications or parents/carers are included in group messages/chat.

In deciding how you want to share the programme, you may want to download resources from the BB website and attach/post them on your own channels, or alternatively you can direct parents/carers to the content on the BB website. From here they can sign up to get updates directly from BBHQ each week as the new activities are published, as well as announcements and reminders about competitions and a whole lot more. If you can we would encourage you to share the resources directly with parents/carers so as leaders you remain in touch with them.

Leaders may want to consider running **Virtual Sessions** to help stay connected with children and young people during this period. [Click here](#) to see additional guidance to support you running 'Virtual Sessions'.

Encouraging Engagement & Sharing Activity

We believe the key to engagement with this programme is encouraging parents/carers to share what their child/young person has been getting up to. The majority of activities suggest they share a photo or a video of the activity with the Company and/or post it on social media using the hashtag **#BBatHOME**.

Sharing with the Company could be done in a variety of ways and does not have to involve posting on social media, but could instead be a photo or video sent to a specific email address, or posted on a WhatsApp group, potentially whatever method you use to share the programme in the first place with parents/carers could also be used for the parents/carers to share photos/videos with you.

If some of your members take on activities and share how they got on this will encourage other members of the group to have a go and really help to boost engagement. To keep engagement up try to regularly acknowledge posts and interact with parents/carers.

We will be providing some additional incentives to encourage engagement in the competitions with prizes on offer for the best entries. Within your Company you could also consider offering a prize for the best entries in your group or running a weekly or monthly points competition and awarding points for each activity a young person completes. Equally you could see this as a continuation of an existing points system or a way of completing further activities towards awards/badges. Some of the activities are challenges and again through these you could encourage a little competition between members (i.e. Tallest Lego Tower or Number of cards in Card Pyramid).

In all cases, if the Company is sharing photos/videos of children and young people in an online setting or with BB Headquarters, please ensure you have the appropriate consent before you do so.

Leaders could also consider recording video messages and sharing these with parents/carers, so that the child/young person's sees a familiar face – this could be an opportunity to share a bible story or a thought for the day, or be a way of providing updates to share what different members are getting up to. Please be aware of your surroundings when recording any videos, also consider appropriate dress and who / what else can be seen before sharing any video content.

Sharing with Non-members

Recognising that this will be a difficult period of time for all children and young people who are restricted in their activities, we would also like to encourage leaders to share the programme with non-members. You could do this by encouraging parents/carers of existing members to share this with friends and/or by posting details on how to access the programmes on local community forums.

This could provide a fantastic opportunity not just to support the wider community, but also to recruit new members for when we are able to return to our normal programme and face-to-face meetings.

Can you Help?

It would be great if you have any ideas you can share with us that we can include in the **#BBatHOME** programme over the coming weeks. Please send any ideas to bbathome@boys-brigade.org.uk.

Who are you concerned about within your Company?

Schools are an added protective factor for vulnerable children in relation to their day to day care, emotional wellbeing and in some cases their food intake. Now that schools are closed, are there any young people within your Company that you are worried about? Are there any leaders that are over 70, have underlying health issues or that you know are self-isolating?

Please share any concerns with your Captains and Chaplains. For further advice please contact Debbie Moore, Safeguarding manager at safeguarding@boys-brigade.org.uk or call **01442 509534**.

Any Questions & Feedback

If you have any questions you can get in touch with our Staff Team by emailing bbathome@boys-brigade.org.uk. We would also really value your feedback, so please get in touch to let us know how you get on with the programme.

Additional Notes

Methods of Keeping in Touch & Engaging with Parents/Carers

Open Social Media Pages/Profiles (including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)

On an open page/profile you can post updates from an official Company account which, in theory, can be seen and interacted with by anyone. However, a user would have to like or follow the page for posts to show up on their own feeds. Many Companies and Battalions already use these mediums to promote their activities and events to a wider audience.

An example is the BB UK & RoI Facebook page at facebook.com/theboysbrigade

You could post activities on the page and encourage parents/carers to get their children involved and then share feedback/engagement. On Facebook, anyone can comment on a post and include photos or videos, but some moderation is required as there is a risk that unsuitable comments could be made. You should always ensure that at least two leaders have Administrator access to the page/profile. A reminder that leaders **MUST** not engage in direct 1:1 chat with children and young people.

Users can also post to the page as a visitor; these are visible to everyone and as an admin you have the option for these to appear immediately or to be moderated before they are visible.

The limitation with these mediums is that not all parents/carers will necessarily be social media users. A potential option is to deliver the **#BBatHOME** programme by other means and encourage parents/carers to share feedback/engagement, and then post updates from your page to show how children and young people are getting involved. You will need to check you have the correct photo consent for this.

Further advice on can be found in our additional resource on '**Setting up and making use of Social Media**'.

Closed Facebook Group

These are a way of sharing information in a private setting (as opposed to an open page). To become a member of the group, an individual either must be approved or invited by an admin.

You could set up a closed group for which membership is limited to leaders and parents/carers. The group can be set to only allow admins to post, or to allow posts from any member. If you allow posts from anyone, there is the option for posts to appear immediately or to be approved by an admin first.

You could encourage parents/carers to post to share feedback/engagement. If they do so, their message will be visible to all other members of the group, but not be visible outside the group.

Further advice on can be found in our additional resource on '**Setting up and making use of Social Media**'.

WhatsApp Group

WhatsApp is a messaging app that is available on most smartphones. It allows fast and simple communication with others, including the ability to create groups.

If you are setting up a WhatsApp group to communicate with parents/carers, it is important to ask their permission before adding them to a group. This is for privacy reasons: group members can see who else is a member of the group along with their phone numbers. You could either simply ask for a parent/carer's permission (ideally in writing) or send a group invite link which they can use to join the group themselves.

WhatsApp allows two forms of groups:

- Only admins can send messages: This setting is useful if you only want messages to come from admins, meaning that the group is focussed on key messages that you want parents/carers to see. Feedback/engagement from them within the group would not be possible, instead you could encourage them to share activity by other means (social media, email etc.).
- Anyone can send messages: This would mean much more feedback/engagement is possible as parents/carers could share feedback/engagement within the group. You should ensure they are aware that anything they share can be seen by all other members of the group. It might also be worth setting some basic rules to ensure that things stay on topic and don't descend into 'chatter' - this could result in important messages from the Company being missed.

Email

Email is already a key communication tool for many Companies and a method that nearly every parent/carer will use regularly.

Online Brigade Manager (OBM) has email functionality which you can use to communicate with parents/carers based on the email address against their child's record. You can send the same message to multiple recipients at the same time, but each individual will only see that the message that has been sent to them. OBM has the ability to include attachments on messages.

Standard email systems can also be used to send the same message to multiple recipients, but when doing this it is important to ensure that all parent/carer email addresses are entered into the 'BCC' field so they cannot be seen by others, and not into the 'To' or 'CC' fields.

You could encourage parents/carers to respond to emails to share activity, i.e. by attaching photos/videos. This would work well if you are then looking to post some of this activity on to Company Social Media Channels or keep track of who is getting involved, etc.

Website

A number of Companies will already be running their own websites, and some are used to share news of Company activities.

If you share **#BBatHOME** on a Company website it will require parents/carers to proactively visit it on a regular basis, so it is a good idea to use it in conjunction with other methods - for instance, you could post on social media with a link to signpost parents/carers to additional resources.

It is likely that parents/carers will need to use another method to share feedback/engagement, but the website is a good tool for the Company to share how children and young people have been getting involved.

Post/Letterbox

In some circumstances you may wish to deliver **#BBatHOME** directly to parents/carers by post or putting it straight through their letterboxes, but caution should be exercised taking into account any relevant Government advice around contact with those who should be in isolation and the spread of the disease.

Telephone Calls

Telephone calls could be an important, and much more personal way of keeping in contact with parents/carers and seeing how they are getting on. Calls could also be used to highlight the opportunities available through the **#BBatHOME** programme, particularly to those who may not be participating as a result of other means.