

Technology and Virtual Boundaries

Interactions with Youth



HELPFUL TIPS

EXAMPLES



Utilize technology (devices, applications and platforms) sanctioned by the organization.

- Check with your organization to see if there are specific sites or apps you should use.
- Don't give out your personal phone number.
- Ask minors not to share any zoom (or other video platform) codes or links with anyone else.



Keep personal social media accounts private.

- Youth should only have access to a parish or school social media account, or a program specific one.
- If needed, work with your supervisor to create one to have oversight.



Avoid "friending" or communicating with minors using personal accounts or private messages.

- Keep communication clear and only through professional means.
- If you receive a "friend" request from a minor, direct them to the parish, school or program page instead.



Do not post anything that could embarrass you or someone else—even if it's "just for fun."

- Once something is posted online it can be found there forever - even if you remove the post.
- What one person sees as a harmless post can easily be interpreted differently by someone else.



Meet with minors in online groups, or with appropriate supervision or transparency.

- Whenever possible, meet with minors in groups or with another adult.
- If you need to meet 1 on 1 with a minor, make sure your supervisor and the parents are aware.



If you see something inappropriate or illegal, it's essential to communicate it to the right person or place.

- This could mean communicating with the child protective services in your state.
- You may also need to report something directly within a site or app, or even to [report.cybertip.org](https://www.fbi.gov/cyber).

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Maintain appropriate communication with both minors and other adults.

- Copy parents or guardians on all communications sent to minors.
- Keep language professional, just as you would "in person."



Communicate with youth during appropriate timeframes.

- Communication with minors should remain as close to "normal business hours" as possible, and should not occur after normal "dinner time" evening hours.



Be mindful of what students will view and hear from your own surroundings during online meetings/classes.

- Consider your background what can be seen by minors.
- Do not participate in a video meeting with minors while sitting on a bed.
- Keep environment clean and free from anything that could be considered inappropriate for minors.



Model appropriate behavior.

- Be mindful of your posts, and of who is seeing it. Encourage youth to do the same.
- Only post something you would be okay with emailing to all of your work colleagues.
- Talking about fun activities is okay, but don't get too personal with conversation topics.



Follow your organization's policies and Code of Conduct.

- Whenever possible, meet with minors in groups or with another adult.
- If you need to meet 1 on 1 with a minor, make sure your supervisor and the parents are aware.



Assist minors with understanding what it means to maintain privacy in the digital world

- Help minors understand that nothing is private in the digital world, and that anything they post online stays there forever.
- Inform minors not to post personal information online.