

Simple Tips and Safety Information for 4-H Leaders Using Zoom™

While Zoom™ technology is a fairly simple, user-friendly virtual meeting platform for 4-H, we are aware this and other video conferencing platforms can be subject to hacking, and requires specific features to allow it to adhere to 4-H Youth Protection Policies. While Zoom has been working diligently to tighten up safety features, here are important guidelines for you to follow in carrying out safe, appropriate Zoom club meetings with your 4-H members.

Guidelines for 4-H Leaders When Setting Up Your Meeting:

- A minimum of two authorized 4-H adult volunteers must be present at all virtual meetings/events and must be present the entire time. Appoint one leader to be a co-host (done through the participant screen) so they can help manage the meeting and take over in case of technical difficulties.
- When setting up a meeting or event, always select “generate automatically” under Meeting ID. Make sure that along with the login information, there is a password required.
- Enable “waiting room” feature. This will allow the host/co-host only to admit those approved to
- Make sure the “private chat” feature is disabled (only group chat should be allowed).
- Turn off screen sharing for participants unless it is approved in advance (for example if 4-H members are doing presentations).
- Only send login information to those approved to attend meetings/don't post on any public site.
- Disable the “allow participants to join before host” feature.
- Make sure parents are aware that their children are participating in the meeting/event online and share safeguards with them.
- For those without video capability (webcam), allow audio only connection or provide information for them to call in by phone. Video connections require a strong internet connection.
- Inform all youth participants that they should only identify themselves with their first name. For a multiple person household using the same laptop or phone, all first names can be added.

How to Run Your Virtual Meeting:

- Make sure that approved 4-H adult volunteers join before the start of the session and do not log off until all youth participations have left.
- Do not record your meeting unless you have written permission from all parents or if you are only recording an adult's presentation or lesson.
- Make sure you follow all Protection of Minors policies and do not have any one-on-one contact with youth. Do not allow any private chats even with 4-H youth unless both adult hosts are on the chat, to adhere to the “Rule of Three.”
- Make sure you establish some ground rules with your group prior to the start of the meeting: how to raise their hands, ask questions, how to use the chat feature, etc.
- Encourage participants to use the “mute” feature when they are not speaking to minimize background noise.
- When many youth are attending a meeting, there may be two different “screens” of participants. Make sure that leaders are able to monitor both screens so all participants can be included.
- Have fun and thank you for keeping our 4-Hers connected during these challenging times!



* Compiled by Larua Bovitz, Middlesex County 4-H and Linda Horner, Cape May County 4-H from “Tips for Club Leaders on Managing Virtual 4-H Meetings Using Zoom”, Penn State Extension, and “Virtual Connects –Engagement Opportunities and Expectations”, University of Maryland, May 2020.