**Virtual Youth Programming Guidelines**

As the COVID-19 pandemic impacts in-person youth programs and activities on campus, we as an institution have modified many of our youth programs and activities converting traditional on-campus programs and activities to virtual programs and activities. This type of change enables our staff to continue to provide youth programs and activities that engage and challenge our youth.

As we shift from in-person to virtual programing, the following guidelines have been created to help implement this shift and to manage the safety and liability of risks pertaining to virtual camps.

**Select an appropriate technology platform**

Look for communication tools that do not allow for private, unmonitored interactions such as:

* Shared @oswego.edu email addresses
* Select a messaging service such as Slack, Remind or Schoology that does not require staff to use personal phone numbers
* Program sponsored Facebook pages or other social media profiles

**Enable safety features**

Look for technology platforms with security features that will protect youth privacy and strengthen safety protocols. Things to consider when considering a virtual platform:

* Require a password to join a meeting
* Enable the “waiting room” feature to give meeting organizers control over who joins the meeting
* Disable screen sharing by non-hosts
* Lock a meeting once all know participants join
* Turn off file transfers

You may also want to review established practices, guidelines and cybersecurity information such as those listed below:

[CTS Zoom](https://www.oswego.edu/cts/zoom)

[CTS Cybersecurity](https://www.oswego.edu/cts/cybersecurity)

[CTS Remote Learning Security Guidelines](https://www.oswego.edu/cts/remote-learning-security-guidelines)

**Design program activities to eliminate private, unmonitored 1:1 interactions**

* If using real-time video software, ensure there will always be 2 or more staff members in each video session
* Plan ahead to ensure the rule of 3 is observed and include this requirement in your communication to participants and parents

**Set conduct expectations with youth participants, parents and guardians**

SUNY Oswego has established rules and standards of conduct for all youth participating in a college sponsored youth program. It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian and the participant to review and agree to our standards of conduct.

<https://sunyoswego.formstack.com/forms/participant_code_of_conduct>

**Engage with parents**

* Educate parents about the technology you are using and how youth will interact with them, and encourage parents to discuss online safety with their children
* Reiterate that parents are responsible for monitoring their child’s time online and that program staff are not responsible for monitoring this with distance learning
* Ensure you solicit consent for participation in online youth programming
* Provide details about how, when and by what means youth will be interacting virtually with your program
* Suggest parents/guardian be present in the room with participants during online engagement or programming

**Address program-specific consideration in staff training**

Topics to consider include:

* What do 1:1 interactions look like in an online environment? How are they different from in-person interactions? What additional risks do 1:1 interaction pose? How can 1:1 interactions be avoided?
* How can staff set and maintain appropriate boundaries online?
* The importance of using official college accounts at all times for program activities and communicating with participants. What might be challenging about using shared accounts and how can you overcome those challenges to ensure transparency youth safety?

**Engage with staff around conduct code violations or general concerns**

* Have ongoing conversation with all program staff about how the program is running, specifically address virtual interaction
* Ask and address any group concerns
* Monitor methods of communication for program staff and participants to ensure safe and appropriate interactions. Immediately address any concerning behaviors or violations of the conduct code

**Consent, Release and Waiver of Liability**

Prior to participating in a SUNY Oswego sponsored/hosted youth virtual program, all participants must complete the Participant Consent, Release and Waiver of Liability form.

<https://sunyoswego.formstack.com/forms/participant_consent_release_and_waiver_of_liability>

**Available Technologies**

Use of any technology with youth adds risk to your programming. Be sure to utilize all of the security features available to prevent infiltration, hacking and other misuse of technology.

When possible, use University-sponsored technologies. Link below provides a guide for University sponsored technologies that are available to faculty/staff and students:

[CTS Communication-Tools](https://www.oswego.edu/cts/communication-tools)

**Resources for virtual youth programming**

[Best Practices for Securing Your Virtual Classroom/](https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/27/best-practices-for-securing-your-virtual-classroom/)

[Keep Uninvited Guests Out of Your Zoom Event/](https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/20/keep-uninvited-guests-out-of-your-zoom-event/)

[ACA Camps Virtual Program Resources](https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus/virtual-program-resources)

[ACA Best Practices Keeping your Online Virtual Programming Safe Campers](https://www.acacamps.org/news-publications/blogs/camp-connection/best-practices-keeping-your-online-virtual-programming-safe-campers)

[15 Strategies for Online Learning When School is Closed](https://globalonlineacademy.org/insights/articles/15-strategies-for-online-learning-when-school-is-closed)

[Cyberbullying Prevention](https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/prevention)

[Protecting Kids Online](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online)

[Staying Safe Social Media/](https://website.praesidiuminc.com/wp/wp/staying-safe-social-media/)

[Electronic Communications with Youth.pdf](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cmpaestel%5CDownloads%5CElectronic_Communications_with_Youth%20%283%29.pdf)

[Safe Digital Learning Plans/](https://www.d2l.org/safe-digital-learning-plans/)

[Top Tips for Creating Accessible Course Content/](https://accessibility.ufl.edu/faculty--staff/top-tips/)

[18 Distance Learning Tools with Sound Privacy Practices](https://www.commonsense.org/education/articles/18-distance-learning-tools-with-sound-privacy-practices)

**For additional information**

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[Child Protection](https://www.oswego.edu/campus-life/child-protection)