



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Staying Connected – Virtual Sessions

To support our #BBatHome programme, we have been looking at ways for our leaders and young people to stay safely connected through 'Virtual Sessions' during this period. As such we now have some guidance for leaders on how to setup and host interactive virtual sessions with children.

Virtual platforms come with new risks, we must not forget we are dealing with children, and so our interactions must be done safely and appropriately to ensure the safety of all who are taking part.

Some General Guidance to Follow

- Have a leaders meeting to talk about what you are trying to achieve and how you will do it. The Company Captain/Correspondent should be involved and satisfied that 'due consideration' has been given to the safety of children and leaders.
- Have a practice with leaders first – to give yourselves a chance to try it out and understand how it works.
- Age appropriate sessions – where possible, children should be invited to the session for their age group.
- Think about your surroundings – who/what can be seen. Ensure you, and anyone else in your household is suitably clothed. If you are at home with family, let them know you are taking part in a Zoom session with children to avoid any BB members overhearing/or seeing something unsuitable.
- Ideally, sessions should not take place in bedrooms. However, it is recognised that Seniors may have all their media devices set up in their rooms.
- If people are using mobile data instead of a Wi-Fi connection, sessions could be costly – please make sure parents/guardians are aware of this.
- Plan sessions carefully – with larger groups think about how young people can let you know they want to speak/contribute. Children joining in should be encouraged NOT to use headphones, so that parents/guardians can listen in and monitor.

Do's and Don'ts

- There MUST NOT be any 1 to 1 online session with children
- Ensure there is ALWAYS a minimum of two registered leaders present during each session. This would ideally be three leaders in case anybody becomes disconnected. Should for any reason one of the leaders leave the session, including due to loss of signal, the session must be terminated immediately.
- Seek permission from Parents/Guardians – You MUST make contact through parents/guardians. Anchors, Juniors and Company members MUST only be invited to join a Zoom meeting using their parents/guardians account. Parents/guardians need to remain nearby for the duration of the session. Where parents/guardians give permission, Seniors can join a Zoom meeting via their own account.
- Start the meeting with leaders 5 minutes before so that when children join there is already a minimum of two leaders online. You could send the link around by SMS/Email etc once leaders are online and ready to go.

- Do NOT record sessions or allow children to record or take screenshots. As recording sessions created complications in relation to storage of the recording and who can access it (BB face to face sessions are not routinely recorded). Consent would also be required for this.
- Virtual sessions should be advertised well in advance (ideally a week in advance), be held consistently at regular time, once or twice a week and limited to a maximum of 40 minutes.
- Leaders should keep a record of who attended each virtual session as they would any BB activity.
- If you become concerned about the welfare or safety of a child or young person you should follow BB child safeguarding policies and procedures.

Remember – Safeguarding and keeping children safe is central to what we do in The Boys’ Brigade. Behaviour by leaders should not be any different online to what we expect during face to face meetings. All online activity MUST be in accordance with our Child Safeguarding Policy and Leaders Code of Behaviour.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

Please share any concerns with your Captain who will report them to the Regional Safeguarding Panel. For further advice please contact a member of the Regional Safeguarding Panel:

Olive Good	+353 87 245 1310
Brian Weekes	+353 85 229 1104
Philip Daley	+353 87 205 7320
Alan Ayling	+353 87 051 9723

What Online Platform should you use?

We would like leaders to use Zoom, which is a platform that BB HQ in England has tested and will enable leaders to easily and safely run virtual meetings. The cloud conferencing service allow live video and/or audio meetings to be hosted, and the ‘Basic’ plan on Zoom is free allowing meetings up to 40 minutes in length. The great thing about Zoom is that only the person hosting the meeting needs a Zoom account, everybody else joining the meeting just needs a link and an internet connection.

So, we recommend checking out www.zoom.us and setting up an account for your Company to use. As with anything new it is important that you spend some time well in advance of your first meeting going through all the settings.

We recommend changing meetings settings as follows to:

- Not allow recording
- Allow only signed-in users to join
- Lock the meeting
- Remove unwanted or disruptive participants
- Prevent remove participants from re-joining
- Turn off file transfer
- Turn off annotation
- Prevent participants from screen sharing

Also here are a few things you can do during the meeting:

- Mute participants (un-mute as required) to control background noise and avoid people speaking over each other etc.
- Stope sharing video for a participant (as required)
- Share your screen to help show instructions or other information.

If you have any questions, please contact BB Headquarters at jennyweekes@boysbrigade.ie or +353 1 296 4622.