

Remote Learning Safe Environment Concerns and Best Practices
Office of Religious Education and Catechesis
May 15, 2020

Safe Environment

*We have received many questions about Safe Environment Policies as more parish programs are looking to engage in on-line learning, particularly with minors. **Please keep in mind the following Safe Environment Policies are still in effect.***

It is important to remember that Diocesan safe environment policies remain in effect. During the closure of parish programs, parish personnel and catechists **are still prohibited from:**

- Meeting with students at catechists homes;
- Communicating with students via cell phones, texts, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.,

Communication with students must be through official parish communication system such as Flocknote or other approved parish accounts.

Youth Ministry Policy [400.10](#) and [400.11](#) must be followed.

Additional Policies related to communication and sharing information are also important.

- [400.12](#), [400.13](#), [400.14](#), [400.15](#)

Mandatory reporting rules are also still in effect. If you have reason to believe a student is being sexually, physically, or emotionally abused, you must report it to the Children's Services Agency in the county where the student lives. You must also report it to the Safe Environment Office.

The Safe Environment Office has stated that the 2-deep rule still applies to on-line learning sessions. Parish staff and catechists should be using 3rd party platforms when conducting on-line learning directly with students and using parish issued accounts rather than personal accounts to set up meetings and learning sessions.

Remote Learning

There have been some concerns with safety when using Zoom and other on-line meeting programs. Please keep these general principles in mind when creating these sessions to ensure the safety of all participants.

Best Practices when using Zoom:

- Do not set up recurring meetings on Zoom.
- Delete meeting invitations after they happen.
- When setting up a meeting, deselect the option to join a meeting before the host and select the option for enable waiting room.

There have been reports of Zoom calls being hijacked while in process. In order to avoid this kind of problem, please follow these safety guidelines:

- Ensure that your meeting is private by requiring a meeting password or use the waiting room feature and control the admittance of guests.
- Do not share a link to a teleconference or classroom on an unrestricted publicly available social media post. Provide the link directly to specific people.
- Manage screen sharing options by selecting “Host Only”
- Ensure users are using the updated version of remote access/meeting applications. Zoom updated their software in January 2020. In their security update, the teleconference software provider added passwords by default for meetings and disabled the ability to randomly scan for meetings to join.

A new [Remote Learning Resource Guide](#) is available to assist parents, families, caregivers and educators as they navigate the world of remote learning during Ohio’s ordered school-building closure.