

Thank you all for taking steps to ensure the safety of girls in this difficult time. While in-person troop meetings are on hold, it doesn't mean your troop can't stay connected! Girl Scouts can be a source of comfort and stability in the girls' lives. If you and your girls are ready to try virtual meetings check out your options and tips for virtual meetings below to get started!

### Getting Started...

- Ask your families what technology they have available and ask for input. You might have a parent who is very familiar with a platform and can help you out! Look also to what your local school districts may be offering that could also be used for Girl Scouts.
- While we cannot endorse or support specific online meeting tools, we encourage troop leaders to look at the options and discuss with parents and girls to determine what the best solution is for your troop's needs.

### Some options for online meeting tools are:

- Zoom
- Google Hangouts
- Skype

### Planning your Virtual Meetings...

- **Set a Meeting Day and Time.** This may be the same as your regular in person meetings or may need to be adjusted based on new schedules. You can update your meeting location and time in your VTK Year Plan to help with communication to parents.
- **Plan activities in advance.** Activities may need to be customized to do virtually. Be creative and think outside the box! Check out GSNI at Home for ideas on badge or journey work.
- **Communicate to parents in advance.** Be sure they know the activity plan and what supplies and technology are needed. You might consider even holding a virtual parent meeting before meeting with the girls to work out technology roadblocks. It is also recommended that if possible, the troop leader and daughter login on separate devices in separate spaces. Utilize your VTK email function to communicate with parents about meeting supplies and expectations.

### Holding the Meeting...

- **Login in a few minutes early** to ensure technology is working.
- **Engage the girls equally and by name** so they are acknowledged and so they know you can see them.
- **Incorporate traditions** even if it feels awkward. Traditions can bring comfort in uncertain times and create a sense of normalcy for the girls.

- **Consider creating a group agreement.** Similar to the Troop Agreement found in the Brownie Quest Journey, create a group agreement that would establish updated troop expectations for the virtual environment.

### Tips for Successful Virtual Meetings...

- **Be present.** Avoid multitasking. Focus on the presenter, content and fellow attendees.
- **Use video.** Enable your video when possible, especially when presenting. Visual connection is important, and helps participants maintain focus.
- **Limit distractions.** Something that distracts you will distract others too! This includes anything participants can hear, like background noise, or see like people walking around behind you.
- **Mute your microphone.** Keep your microphone muted if you're not speaking. This will prevent accidental background noise from disrupting the meeting.
- **Speak up!** When you are participating, speak up and be heard! Other participants want to hear what you have to say, so speak loudly and clearly into the microphone.

### Zoom

Being one of the most popular online meeting tools, here is some helping information as well as some tips to keep you and your girls safe.

### Basic Features...

- Video conferencing with up to 100 participants and ability to screen share.
- There is a 40-minute limit on group meetings with the free version.
- Paid options are available with unlimited time.

### Zoom Tips for Video Conferencing...

- Make all conference meetings password protected
- Meeting links should not be shared on public-facing platforms
- Enable/Assign a Co-Host (your co leader or a parent volunteer) that has the same administration duties while the administrator/host presents
- Disable the *Allow Removed Participants to Rejoin* option, which prevents those kicked off the call to come back.
- \*Disable all non-host screen sharing capabilities, making sure screen share capabilities remain host-only.
- Enable the "Waiting Room" feature, which allows hosts of the meetings to see participants in a virtual staging area so they can be vetted before joining.

\*These security Tips may make it more difficult for actual invited participants to share appropriate content in your meeting.