

Offering Virtual Meetings

Online meetings can be a source of consistency and comfort for girls and volunteers. If your troop is interested in trying virtual meetings, these tips may help. Options for virtual meetings are consistently changing, so please reach out if assistance is needed. Contact info@gsnypenn.org.

Visit Girl Scouts of NYPENN's [Girl Scouting at Home](#) page. This page is loaded with resources for families, girls, leaders, and more! All of these amazing resources can support you and the girls as the “do” Girl Scouts at home.

Check out this popular options for hosting a virtual meeting:

Platform	Numbers of Participants	Time Limits	Account Needed?	Cost
Zoom	Up to 100 (or pay)	40 minutes (or pay)	Host Only	Free
Amazon Chime	Unlimited	None	Host Only	Free
WebEx	Up to 100	None	Host Only	Free
GoToMeeting	Up to 150	None	Organizer Only	\$12 per month
Google Hangouts	Up to 10	None	App download	Free
Skype	Up to 10	None	Yes	Free
Facebook Groups/ Video Chat	Unlimited	None	Yes	Free
BlueJeans	Up to 50	None	Host Only	\$9.99 per month
ezTalks	Up to 100 (or pay)	None	Admin Only	Free
<i>Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways does not endorse any platform or guarantee reported features</i>				

General Tips—for any meeting platforms

- Be aware that not all families are the same and have varying access and comfort with technology. Families may have to juggle timing with multiple commitments. Accommodate however you can. Remember—you can always email activities or have a phone call instead if needed.
- Practice first with a small group and gain feedback. Be sure to test your microphone, speaker, or headset.
- Start simple! Keep your meetings basic when you start and add extra features as the comfort level increases.
- Have a plan. Have girls send topics to the leaders in advance and create an agenda.
- Consider starting with etiquette badges, review the Girl Scout Promise and Law as a reminder of how to treat each other.
- Obtain parental consent especially for girls under 13. The Parent Permission form can be used. Use the meeting link as the address, and ensure a photo release is complete prior to sharing images.

Set Up for Success and Safety!

- Have all girls and parents read and understand the [Virtual Troop Meeting](#) and [Computer and Internet Use](#) safety activity checkpoints. Be sure to have girls sign the [Internet Safety Pledge](#) in the Computer and Internet Use checkpoint.
- Maintain adult supervision with a minimum of two unrelated adults, background-checked adults (one or more female) in all chat rooms and meetings.
- Only share the virtual meeting information with people individually, not in public places.

- Be sure to use strong passwords.
- Create individual meetings, rather than using your Personal Meeting ID to host the sessions.
- For larger Zoom meetings, use these options as needed:
 - Mute all participants upon entry—this reduces chatter and feedback.
 - Utilize the waiting room—you will individually add each person to the meeting, in turn keeping uninvited people out.
 - Set the meeting to only allow the host to share the screen—this can be done in the advanced settings. Then once the meeting is open the host can allow screen sharing to specific individuals.
- Create a code of conduct for virtual meetings. This will maintain emotional safety and help manage the group. Use the Promise and Law to prompt ideas. Consider these virtual specifics:
 - I'll keep my controls to myself and not mute other participants.
 - I'll ask before sharing my screen.
 - I'll speak up politely when I have something to say.
 - I'll be forgiving if someone talks over me—most likely it is an audio delay.
 - I won't share screenshots or other meeting information, except with my family.
- Consider earning Cybersecurity badges—they are available for every level!

Make Sure Each Person is Heard and Seen

- Use video when possible—girls like (and need!) to see themselves and each other.
- Maintain “eye contact” by positioning the camera so you're looking at it as much as possible. Teach girls to do the same.
- Use a list of participants and check the off as they participate.
 - If a girl doesn't speak up call on her. Just like in a real meeting, quiet girls (or ones whose video or sound are lacking) can feel invisible.
 - Make sure they know you see and hear them.
- Check the chat log often, if possible assign a helper to monitor the chat log.

Use Breakout Rooms for Patrol or Small Group Work

- Breakout rooms can be set up as you go. Just hover over “...” and the option will appear.
- Create groups of two or more people. Names can be assigned or be random.
- The facilitator can go in and out of each breakout room—just click join.
- Tip: assign specific tasks for the rooms.
- When the breakout ends have all groups report back to the group.

Use the Whiteboard to Collaborate

- Click Screen Share and choose whiteboard, A blank screen will appear.
- All participants can use the annotation tools to draw and share.
- Disable the annotation feature if you need to calm the doodle!