Video Conferencing Guidelines

GVSD supports two platforms for video conferencing:
1. Google Meet (previously Hangouts) - this is now a part of our SD61Learn GSuite for Education solution and integrated with Google Classroom.
2. Zoom Video Conferencing - we are currently transitioning staff to the Ministry-approved Enterprise Zoom platform.

Teachers and students are reminded that video conferencing is not a necessity for remote teaching and learning. **Video conferencing should not be viewed as a requirement, but rather as a tool to consider using with students if and when it will provide significant opportunities to support their learning.**

Think about your most vulnerable and complex learners…

Considerations for Video Conferencing

Equity:
- Is video conferencing an equitable choice for this particular group of students?
- Will video conferencing create a significant challenge for some students in my class?
- How will instruction be delivered and learning achieved without video conferencing?

Purpose:
- Does video conferencing provide a significant opportunity for students in my class?
- Am I using video conferencing to connect beyond the content with students to support their learning?
- Are there alternative real-time (synchronous) means to video conferencing that I can consider such as phone calls, chat within district-supported tools, etc.?

Intention:
- Am I using video conferencing in an innovative way or simply re-creating my classroom environment?
- Is my intended use of video conferencing effective or out of convenience?

Consent:
- GVSD is launching an online consent portal as the current process is paper-based. Students (and their parents/guardians) have the right to refuse participation in video conferencing at any time. They may also choose to simply dial in to the conference audio without sharing their video feed.

Teacher Guidelines

1. **Understand the Tool:** The use of video conferencing should be carefully considered before adoption, just as an educator would evaluate any other classroom-based learning tool or resource. To use the tool effectively teachers should know how to:
    a. Use the app's security features
    b. Moderate conversations
    c. React if something unexpected arises
2. **Classroom management:** Expectations for student behaviour and peer interactions should be the same as they are in the physical classroom.
3. **Issues with technology**: Students and teachers will take time to adapt to using the tool. Technical issues relating to the app, individual home internet connections, etc. are bound to occur. Be patient and make your students aware that our adoption of video conferencing is a work in progress. Go slow.
4. **Individual conversations:** Avoid video conferencing with only one student if possible. It is advised you have a parent/guardian present if one-to-one conversations are occurring.
5. **Make it interactive**: Plan for opportunities for students to engage and respond. Check for understanding and ask questions.
6. **Additional Material to Consider**: General Guidelines for Trauma-informed Remote Learning (by Kate Stoltfuz at ASCD)

General Etiquette During a Video conference

1. **Environment**: Select a setting with a neutral background when interacting via video.
2. **Behavioral Expectations:** Respect for your learning, and the learning of others, is your first responsibility.
    a. **What others see and hear:** Assume your audience is always aware of everything you say and do, even if you are muted.
    b. **Proper Lighting:** Try to find a light source that is above or in front (not behind) you.
    c. **Distracting Noise:** Anyone who is not speaking should mute their microphone to prevent feedback and limit background noise. Headphones/earbuds are recommended if available.
    d. **Chatting:** Use the chat to discuss on-topic subjects or ask questions about the conversations that are relevant to the whole group. You can also use the "privately" feature to direct messages to particular individuals on the call.

Teacher/Student Video Conferencing FAQs

How should video conferencing be used?

- For group check-ins to build community, group votes, etc.
- To assess learning and next steps
- As a means to meet with students and for students to acquire support
- To connect with small groups of students
- With clear expectations as to how often, when, and for what it will be used

When should video conferencing not be used?

- For consistent real-time (synchronous) learning. Not all students have equal access to technology; requiring them to attend a particular video conferencing session may put undue pressure on the families who cannot meet this standard
- When a student or family has indicated they do not feel comfortable with this tool
- For one-to-one calling without parents/guardians present

What should I consider when scheduling a video conference?

- Provide flexible times to connect within the hours of a typical school day
- Remember that students may have to share a device, and/or the physical space they will be connecting from, with other family members
- Ensure parents/guardians are notified of your video conferencing schedule
- Avoid publicly posting the links and/or passwords to video conference meetings
- Keep video conferences short and meaningful
- Be aware of questions in the chat, hand-raising features, and mute/unmute functionality
- Remind families that they can connect without sharing their video, if they prefer.

What happens if there is a behavioural issue that occurs during a video conference?

- During the first call with students, review the features of video conferencing (hand-raising, reactions, mute-all, unmute-all, etc. - Zoom only), and etiquette outlined in this document.
- You have the option to remove participants. Students who have been removed will not be able to re-join the meeting, unless you readmit them. (Zoom only)
- If a persistent or more severe behaviour issue arises:
  - Speak with the student and his/her parents/guardians directly via phone or send them an email after the meeting
  - If necessary, indicate that this will be escalated to an administrator