

Safety Guidelines for Video Conferences

As we continue to navigate this difficult time, we are discovering new ways to work, teach, learn and connect with each other. Using apps and programs like Zoom, Google Hangout, FaceTime and Skype, has become an essential way to communicate in our everyday lives and conduct business. But are you using these video tools safely? Here are four basic guidelines for using video chats and conferences. National PTA encourages you to follow these guidelines for all PTA business and communication conducted using these tools.

Beware of False Links and Invitations

Don't assume every Zoom or Google Hangout link is legitimate. The most common way malware infects devices is from the user's own actions. This includes clicking through an infected email, advertisement, image or hyperlink. Malware links can even come from seemingly trusted sources, but the link or the messaging may seem awkward. If you have any doubt it's best not to click anything that is hyperlinked, and instead double check the link with the sender in a new email, text or call.

Use a Password

Many video conference tools have a safety option that requires users to provide a password or ID number in order to join the meeting. Using this feature is an easy, yet strong way to secure your video. This prevents others from freely accessing it without an invitation.

Check Your Settings

Always look through the settings of any app or program you use to disable and remove unwanted functions. Features vary from product to product, but generally you can prevent an app from accessing your microphone, camera and location unless you are actively using the app. Remove any personal or unnecessary information from your account profile, including contact information, location and anything that could be used to guess your password. Adjust screen sharing capabilities to none or for only the host. Being as private and protective as possible with your settings can prevent some hackers from retrieving your valuable data.

Do Your Own Research

Video conferencing apps, programs and tools are similar, but there are some slight differences. Always research safety tips specific to the tools you are using. With a little bit of internet searching, you can also find step-by-step guides on how to discover certain privacy settings, as they might not be as obvious or easy to find depending on the tool.

As we all adjust to our new norms, it's imperative we stay safe physically, mentally and digitally. National PTA remains dedicated to serving our community. More resources are available at [PTA.org/COVID19](https://www.pta.org/COVID19).