



## Guidance on online sessions

An online session takes place at a regular chosen time and with the help of videoconferencing or live-streaming tools. Running online sessions is a great way for you to keep your Code Club or CoderDojo learning together until you can next meet up in person.

We've developed this guidance based on community members' experiences and feedback, and we will continue to update it as needed.

Whether you have three learners in your club or thirty, **you know your community best**. Every club experience is unique, so we encourage you to adapt this guidance to suit your club.

### The five points of hosting online sessions:

1. [Safeguarding](#)
2. [How to choose the right online tool](#)
3. [Data protection and security](#)
4. [Communication with young people, parents, and volunteers](#)
5. [Designing your session](#)

## 1. Safeguarding

Across all of the activities that the Raspberry Pi Foundation supports, we have a firm commitment to safeguarding. We believe that no child, young person, or vulnerable adult should ever experience abuse of any kind. We all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults, and to keep them safe.

The Raspberry Pi Foundation's [safeguarding code of behaviour](#) applies to online activities as well as face-to-face meetups. The only difference relates to the ratio between adults and young people: **for online activities, there should always be at least two adults present at all times. At least one of those adults must be a registered Code Club or CoderDojo volunteer with an up-to-date background check.**

Other adults, both volunteers and parents, can participate in online sessions, as long as you supervise them at all times and limit their access to young people's personal information. Under no circumstances should anyone run one-to-one sessions with an individual young person.

You should also do the following:

- ✓ Ensure that young people have their parents' consent to take part in your online session.
- ✓ A parent or other adult should be present in the house during the online session. They don't need to be in the same room, but they should know that the session is taking place.
- ✓ Advise parents that their children should participate in the online session while sitting in an open area of the house or in a room with the door open.
- ✓ Provide parents with the link to the Raspberry Pi Foundation's [safeguarding page](#), so that they know where to report any concerns.
- ✓ All communication with young people should be in the open, and you should avoid the use of online tools that allow private messaging between yourself and your learners, or between learners. If a learner sends you a private message, always reply in the public chat in order to bring the conversation back into the open.
- ✓ It is OK to use webcams during the session, but make everybody at home aware that they are not allowed to record or take screenshots of the session.
- ✓ If you share your own instructional videos/photos with young people, make sure that your background space is child-friendly and that nothing inappropriate is on display. Be sure to triple-check that you share the correct video/photo file and that no personal details are visible in it, including information that may identify your home address.
- ✓ Make parents aware that young people may send you their projects, as links or videos/photos, and make sure young people have their parents' permission before sharing any content with you.
- ✓ Do not share any personal details with learners via any communication tool.

Please watch our ['Best practice for online sessions' recording](#). You can also attend one of our regular live [online workshops](#).

## 2. How to choose the right online tool

There are lots of different online tools that you could use to host online club sessions, and they vary in functionality, cost, and usability. If your learners are under the age of 13, then almost all online tools will require their parents to sign in on their behalf or authorise their accounts.

Only use online tools that allow the following security functionalities:

- Creation of closed or private groups, with new IDs generated for each session.
- 'Waiting room' feature to control the admittance of guests. Do not share your personal session ID, and only allow people to join who are part of your club.
- The host is able to mute and remove individuals.

These are some online tools that you could choose to use:

- Online videoconferencing tools such as BigBlueButton, Cisco WebEx, Google Meet, and Zoom. See [this table for a comparison of their features](#).
- Streaming video services such as YouTube Live.
- Cloud classroom solutions such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom.
- Collaborative office suites such as Office 365 and Google Docs.
- Ice-breaker tools such as Kahoot! and Padlet.
- Showcasing tools such as Flipgrid and Scratch studios.

The community has tried a variety of tools. They found it useful that:

- **Google Workspace for Education**, which includes **Google Meet** and **Google Classroom**, is free for schools and Dojos (using their coderdojo.com email address).
- **Zoom** has temporarily lifted the 40-minute restriction for schools and Dojos (using their coderdojo.com email address) on the free basic version of their tool.
- Using either **Microsoft Teams** or **Google Classroom**, you can easily combine remote activities with online sessions, as each of these tools allows you to send materials and feedback, receive questions, and host live sessions.

When you choose an online tool, think about the following:

- ✓ **Do your learners already use a particular online tool for other activities?** It will be easier for them to join your session if you host them using a tool they're familiar with.
- ✓ **Does the tool allow private communication between adults and young people, or between young people?** This poses a safeguarding risk, so make sure to disable these functionalities for your sessions or avoid using tools that allow this.
- ✓ **Does the tool require young people to have an online account?** For most collaboration tools where an account is required, account holders need to be at least 13 years old. If the young people in your group are under the age limit of the tool you want to use, then their parents or carers must set up the required accounts and remain nearby throughout the session.
- ✓ **Does the tool need to be installed on learners' computers?** This may be an issue for learners without administrative rights to their computers.
- ✓ **Does the tool work on multiple operating systems and web browsers, and is it free to use?** Ensure that the tool is universally available for all participants without incurring a cost.

### 3. Data protection and security

You are responsible for the personal data you collect, so please ensure you continue to follow the principles of data protection that apply in your country. The GDPR applies in the EU, and all technology providers based in any EU country need to abide by the GDPR principles. However, for companies based outside of the EU, this is not always the case. Therefore, if you live in the EU and want to use an online tool provided by a company based outside of the EU (e.g. Zoom is from a US-based company), then you need to check their privacy policy to make sure that the company follows GDPR principles. Please visit the relevant data protection supervisory authorities in your country for further details, as they provide regular updates on data protection risks.

When choosing between different online tools, make sure you read each of the security and privacy policies of the companies providing the tools. You should find out how they allow you to handle the following issues:

- ✓ **Limit personal data usage and retention:** Files should be shared only as required and with limited personal data. Keep any personal data you collect as long as necessary and delete it as soon as possible, to minimise the risk of any breaches of personal data, and to act in line with the individuals' expectations.
- ✓ **Limit access to any personal data:** Limit access to the online tool and the data within it only to those who require it.
- ✓ **If you collect personal data, tell your participants about how you will use it:** You need to be clear and transparent about this.
- ✓ **Is the tool secure?** Check the tool's privacy and cookie policies and ensure that you've set the security and data settings to the appropriate level. When assessing the security level of a tool, please consider:
  - Does the tool require a strong password?
  - Can you create roles based on access requirements?
  - Is communication using the tool encrypted?

### 4. Communication with young people, parents, and volunteers

Let parents and volunteers know your session will be held online and include the link to the Raspberry Pi Foundation's [safeguarding page](#) in your announcement. Share the link to your online session and any instructions needed to join (this will depend on how you design your session). Also share what activities you are planning for your learners and include links to any online projects or PDF files they may need.

- Your communications with club members outside of club sessions should always be directed to the young people’s parents and not directly to young people.
- If you don’t have a way to contact the club members’ parents directly, ask your venue for help.
- Be careful never to share the access details to your online session publicly, so that only people you are inviting are able to attend.
- Provide an opportunity for parents to disclose whether their child will need added support to meet their individual learning needs.

## 5. Designing your session

Before you announce your online session, design the session structure and prepare your materials. Preparing for your first session will take longer than for future sessions, as it will involve setting up your resources and tools. We recommend your sessions last between 60 and 90 minutes.

Think about the structure of your session:

- ✓ Let the young people and adults taking part know in advance what activities you are planning for them.
- ✓ Remind the young people and adults taking part about the code of conduct and the behaviour expected during the online session, such as no private messaging or taking screenshots.
- ✓ Spend some time at the beginning of each session making sure that young people are familiar with and know how to use the online tool you chose for running the session.
- ✓ Plan an ice-breaker activity for the start of the session. This could be as simple as asking your learners to say hi and tell others what they plan to make.
- ✓ Decide if you want to divide learners in any way, such as by age, programming language, or level of support needed. Some online videoconferencing tools have a function to create separate rooms, or you can create multiple video sessions to accommodate different groups. Share the right link or links with parents in advance. Remember that there should always be at least two adult club leaders in each virtual environment, including breakout rooms.
- ✓ Consider facilitating a showcase at the end of the session so that learners are able to show off their projects.

We’ve put together more detailed guidance about [designing your online session](#) for your club, including a downloadable session schedule template.