Staying Connected with Your Troop:  
*Getting Started with Virtual Meetings*

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 the tips below to get started!

**Getting Started ...**

**Determine what platform to use.**

- Ask your families what technology they have available and ask for their 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. Use the info below to explore some free options that work with either a computer or smartphone:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Basic Features</th>
<th>Links</th>
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| Zoom               | Video conferencing with up to 100 participants and ability to screen share. There is a 40 minute limit on group meetings (paid version available with unlimited time). | [https://zoom.us/](https://zoom.us/)  
[Zoom Support during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://zoom.us/new) |
| Google Hangouts    | Video call one-on-one or invite friends for a group call with up to 10 people. | [Getting Started with Google Hangouts](https://support.google.com/a/hangouts/answer/62240) |
| Google Duo         | Simple, high quality video calls for up to 8 people                           | [https://duo.google.com/about/](https://duo.google.com/about/)         |
| Skype              | Host a video or an audio conference with up to 50 people.                    | [https://www.skype.com/en/](https://www.skype.com/en/)                  |
| YouTube Live Stream| Host a livestream to communicate with a larger group of people at a certain time. | [https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/9257891](https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/9257891) |
| Facebook Live      | Live video stream within Facebook Groups                                      | [https://www.facebook.com/facebook media/solutions/facebook-live](https://www.facebook.com/facebook media/solutions/facebook-live) |
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Set a Meeting Day and Time. This may be the same time as your regular in
person meetings or may need to be adjusted based on new schedules – yours
and/or the girls.

Plan activities in advance. Activities may need to be adjusted to do virtually.
Be creative and think outside the box!

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
digital 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.

Holding the Meeting...

Login 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 with ground rules in your first
meeting.

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.