Make Virtual School Safer

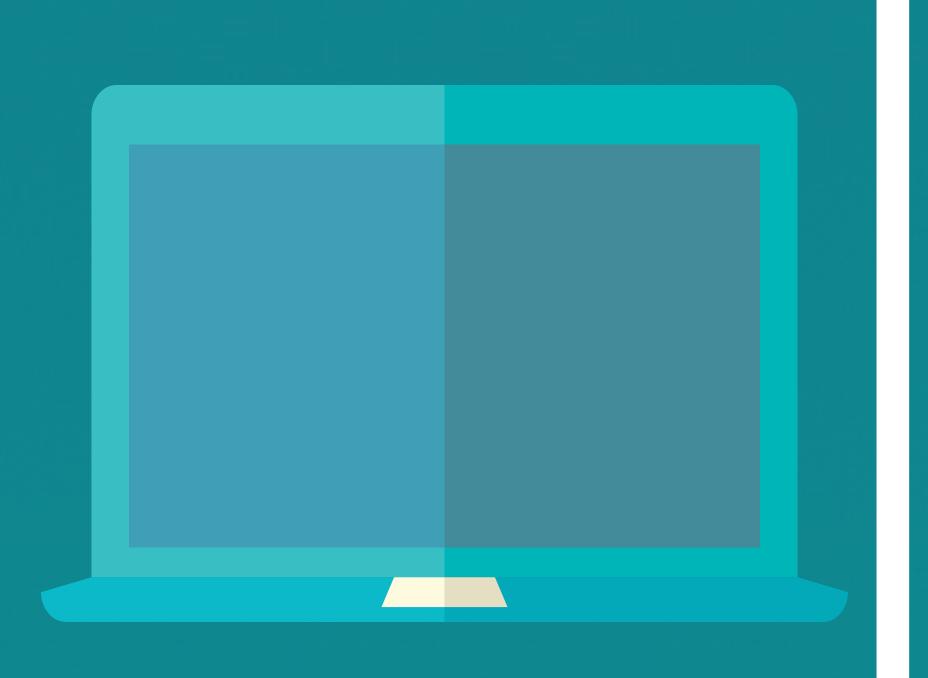## Principles of e-learning child protection:

- Follow school child protection policy and professional code of conduct.

- Contact should be observable and interruptable.

- Maintain appropriate boundaries - avoid conduct that a reasonable person might question.

- Avoid being alone or causing someone else to be alone with a child (such as being late for online supervision or not recording synchronous session if required to do so).

- Report child protection concerns to your safeguarding designate.

- Ensure your personal social media is private and inaccessible to students.

- Seek educational solutions to educational problems. Assess risk if you're not sure!

e-Learning
Child Protection

Communication

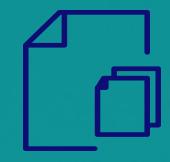Guidelines to be observed during any digital or online contact with students.

Educational purpose:
All communication with students should have an educational purpose.

Observable:
Virtual synchronous sessions should be recorded and conducted in a place that is observable and interruptable.
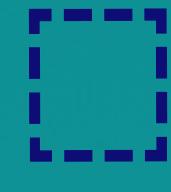
Communications follow school policy which should state that another adult be included. That may be a parent or colleague. Communication with multiple students is preferred.

School platforms:
All communications are on school platforms and if possible, using school WIFI. Proxy logins may be needed.

Professional boundaries:
Adults are responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries. This is not the job of the student. Codes of conduct should be shared with parents.

Communication Pitfalls

Situations to AVOID online:

- **Casual or intimate atmosphere**: Intimate locations, casual dress, nicknames, private conversations, observational comments about home or family, oversharing personal details. On camera, an impersonal or blurred background is preferred and is less distracting for student learning. A professional tone is critical to maintain boundaries online.

- **Changing platforms:** Avoid the temptation to change platforms if communication is disrupted by technical difficulties. Reschedule the session instead.

- **Unclear expectations:** Ensure synchronous learning events are predictable, structured, and distraction free.

- **Code of conduct violations**: Meeting children on other platforms, taking photos or screen shots of students, out of program contact, favoritism, derogatory or sexist remarks, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs are grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal.

Get more information on child protection at EdPortal.ICMEC.org