



Diocese of
OWENSBORO

Safe Environment and Video Conferencing

The challenge we are currently facing in ministry with regards to social distancing and canceled events is a daunting one. It's been incredibly encouraging to see the creative and innovative responses of many in our diocese working to sustain ministry efforts through Facebook, Instagram, Zoom, Google, and other avenues.

We wish to encourage continued use of these opportunities, while taking a moment to review their use through the lens of Safe Environment.

- 1) Any live streamed event through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. which is made available to the public is treated like a **general parish event** and does not need to meet any unique safe environment concerns.
 - a. *General Events: Parents/guardians maintain primary responsibility for the safety of their children at events designed for families of all ages (e.g. Mass, parish socials/picnics, sporting events not held during the school day, fall festivals, ethnic celebrations and other family faith gatherings in homes, outreach efforts, etc.). Organizers of such events should incorporate child safety considerations into their plans but also help parents/guardians understand their responsibilities. (P.2 of Safe Environment Policy)*
- 2) Any closed or restricted event or meeting over Zoom, Google hangout, Skype or other video conferencing software **does need** to line up with the current Safe Environment policy. (Please refer to pages 2-3 of Safe Environment Policy)
 - a. *The person responsible for overseeing any activity or event governed by this policy will be considered the lead supervisor. That lead supervisor must be **at least 21 years of age and Safe Environment-compliant.***
 - b. **No one should be left alone in a supervisory capacity.**
 - c. *Because we are in a unique situation and time frame in ministry, we are asking that for any closed or restricted event or meeting over video conferencing software **that a minimum of two adults be present and one must be the lead supervisor who must be at least 21 years of age and Safe Environment-compliant.***
 - d. *The other adult helping can be a parent or other trusted adult who is fully aware of their role in service to the ministry experience taking place over video conferencing. When at all possible, they need to have read and agreed with the Adult Code of Conduct as well.*

Please know that this response is in no way meant to deter the use of current technology for ministry, **in fact we highly encourage it.** However, it is also our duty to maintain safe space and contact with minors.