



Let's Talk Science is excited to be able to ramp up online and virtual programming opportunities to help youth, parents and educators continue to engage with STEM and to keep our volunteers engaged and excited through this particular time. Whether or not online and virtual programming is new to you, there are important factors that need to be considered, especially when working with minors and representing an organization. This document provides overall guidance and specific recommendations for hosting live online events and creating static content.

Live online events work well for:

- Guest speakers and presentations (for example, if you had a guest speaker lined up for an in-person symposium) with Q&A sessions
- Career or other panel opportunities (see previous National Career Panels as examples – links can be found on the Volunteer Portal homepage). Similar panels could include research discussions, special topics, etc.
- Interactive opportunities that would engage participants in a back and forth conversation with the presenter/host/guests

Static Content works well for:

- Activity Demonstrations
- Adaptations of some in-class workshop kits/experiences
- Other instructional content on activities to do at home
- Guest speakers and presentations without Q&A sessions or where reliable connectivity may be a concern

**In all cases,** when creating and sharing online content (live or static), the following should be ensured:

- ☐ Outreach Site Coordinators need to check with their Regional Coordinator before beginning a new project/initiative to review their plans and seek advice and recommendations.
- ☐ All activities must follow the Safe Activities and Presentations Guidelines (including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at all times), and the Interaction with Minors Policy (not being alone with minors, even virtually). These are located in the Volunteer Portal and the Volunteer Training Workbook.





- ❑ For demonstrations, include disclaimers such as “Ask an adult for help and permission if you’d like to try this at home”.
- ❑ Ensure content aligns with the Let’s Talk Science Communications Guidelines. Online, even more than in person, you are representing Let’s Talk Science in a format that can be saved, shared and spread widely. Our Communications team is available to help with branding, messaging, proofreading, etc.
- ❑ All site coordinators and volunteers participating in online programming must ensure the following if video is recorded or shown:
  - They are wearing a Let’s Talk Science t-shirt (and real pants - not pyjamas!)
  - They have a neutral background without anything defamatory, political, religious, controversial or age inappropriate showing
  - They avoid open backgrounds where other people may suddenly be visible
- ❑ All site coordinators and volunteers participating introduce themselves as “Volunteers with Let’s Talk Science at [your post-secondary institution]”.
- ❑ For promotion of events and sharing content, please connect with your Regional Coordinator if your promotion plans extend beyond your city/immediate geographical area.

With 50+ Outreach sites across Canada, the Let’s Talk Science National social media platforms will be unable to share/retweet/promote all opportunities and content across Canada. However, please reach out and work with us in advance of your live event if you would like some promotional support and our communications team will be happy to work with you.





Live online events are a great way to offer a similar level of interactivity for participants as an in-person event. In this style of event, the participants are interacting with the host as they are presenting, allowing for discussions and questions throughout. Challenges associated with live online events include ensuring the online safety of youth participants and the technical support required to run an event, in addition to some of the same unpredictability that comes with in-person activities.

For Live events (in addition to the general guidelines):

- ☐ Let's Talk Science has a Zoom account that you can use. Please contact Toni-Marie at [tskinner@letstalkscience.ca](mailto:tskinner@letstalkscience.ca) for assistance in reserving a time and setting up your gathering.
  - Let's Talk Science will ensure the settings are as secure as possible for you and your specific participants/target audience (including appropriate settings for sharing audio, video and chat comments).
  - Should you prefer to use a different program or option, please connect with your Regional Coordinator first to discuss how to ensure the security/safety of participants as well as quality.
  - To help plan, explore the options available in [Zoom Resources](#).
- ☐ You must have two adults (site coordinators/volunteers) participating in the event to ensure no one is left alone with students (see the Interactions with Minors policy). We suggest ensuring one adult (who is not also hosting/presenting) moderates attendance, chat boxes and assist with muting/unmuting as needed.
- ☐ Test the platform you are using (if setting up with Zoom, a short training call can be arranged) with your co-hosts/moderators to be familiar with all settings and how the platform works.

Online Safety when working with youth:

- ☐ Begin every live session with an online safety check.
  - Instruct participants under the age of 13 that they should have the permission of their parent/guardian to participate in the event and/or to share their video (if applicable).
  - Remind students not to share personal information beyond their first name (in Zoom the host can rename a participant to remove last name if needed). This includes their school, address, email address, phone number, or other information about them or their family.





- ❑ Events should not be recorded while youth share their videos unless Parent/Guardian Consent forms (media release) were previously obtained by participants and their guardians attend with them. If you would like to record an event to share as a video later:
  - Ensure all participants (including guest speakers) know in advance that it will be recorded (with a reminder at the start of the session) and ensure individual videos remain off.
  - The host should be the only one to record the video and must save to a local computer (not the Zoom server).
  - Check the video carefully to ensure there was no accidentally disclosed personal information before sharing more broadly.
- ❑ If participating in an event managed by another organization (for example, a community group has requested you join their online meeting), ensure the educator of the group is always in attendance. Defer to the educator to manage the behaviour and expectations of the participants (similar to an in-class workshop).

**Logging a live event on the Volunteer Portal:**

- Select the type of activity that best matches the event you offered.
- Select "Online No School" for the School and "Online no Educator" for the educator, if there is neither associated with the event (ex: a public event).
- During the event, note how many youth and adult participants you had and include those in the activity log.
- Answer the remaining questions as well as you can for the event you had. Use the "Brief description of the activity/event" to include additional information you would like to record.





An option for providing virtual engagement with fewer concerns about online safety for youth is to create static content online. This would include pre-recorded videos, photo tutorials/walk-throughs, or downloadable materials. Consider how materials developed now could be useful in the long term.

When creating static content (in addition to the general guidelines):

- ☐ Ensure content includes STEM background information/accurate explanation of what you are presenting in the piece – for something that could/will be shared virtually indefinitely, it is more important than ever to ensure accurate STEM information.
- ☐ Check with your Regional Coordinator to ensure that similar content doesn't already exist from the National Office or has been created by another Outreach site. If your content fits one of the following categories, you could contribute it to one of the national platforms (contact your Regional Coordinator to find out requirements):
  - Hands on Activity idea written for either the public or educators/volunteers
  - Career profile (written or video)
  - STEM in Context Article
- ☐ Consider who your intended audience is (such as educators, parents, or direct to youth) and where you plan to share your content (such as your local outreach website, local Outreach site social media accounts). Choose a platform that is appropriate for your audience. Try to select a platform where viewership can be tracked (for example, Youtube) so that we can more easily understand its impact.
- ☐ Get someone to review/proofread your content then send it to your Regional Coordinator for a quick check (we commit to responding within 1-2 business days).

### Logging static content creation on the Volunteer Portal

At the time the content is created:

- Use the "Log Non-activity hours" form to capture volunteer hours used to create the content.
- Include a link to the permanent location of the content in the Description field, along with any notes on the intent/plans for the content and sharing it.

If the content is shared with a specific group (for example, a request from an educator or community group):

- Log the interaction as a regular outreach activity to capture school, educator and # of participant information.
- Include "Online Event" in the Keywords field.
- Answer the questions as best you can, include the name of the person who sent the content as the volunteer with minimal hours (ex: 0.5), as the volunteer time associated with its creation has already been captured above.

