



VOLUNTEERING IN A VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

We invite you to join teachers and students in their virtual classrooms. A host teacher will provide the online platform, and JABC will provide all the necessary printed and digital program materials.

Before the Virtual Delivery:

- Become familiar with the delivery platform (Zoom, Teams, or Google Classroom) in advance. Your host teacher will schedule the delivery on their platform of choice, so ensure you can access and test it. If possible, teachers will give you access by phone if the video fails or is not an option.
- Discuss delivery details with your host teacher. Sort out specifics before the delivery day, such as time to join, classroom expectations, if web cameras will be used, if students have access to the portfolios and who will moderate the delivery. On some platforms, volunteers might not be able to see participants. In this case, host teachers should act as moderators so they can engage students.
- Be prepared. Review your session plan and ensure you have access to resources in case the host teacher cannot share them with the class.
- Use an appropriate background and setting. Position your web camera at eye level, dress appropriately and ensure you have a neutral wall or professional background behind you. Ideally, choose a private space where you cannot be disturbed. An open background, where other people may suddenly be visible, is not recommended. If you are unsure, blur your background or use a JABC background provided on our [Volunteer Training and Resources](#) web page.
- Consider health & safety. View this important [WorkSafeBC video](#) about working from home.
- Join the virtual delivery 5-10 minutes early. This is a good time for you and your host teacher to do a technology check. If you will be screen-sharing, turn off all notifications and close all non-essential programs or windows on your computer.

During the Virtual Delivery:

- Prioritize safety. Virtual gatherings should be private and by invitation-only. Your host teacher or Program Manager will arrange and share the virtual meeting link through email. A password, waiting room and/or lock meeting function may be enabled to ensure only those invited have access to the meeting space.
- Start with an overview and classroom expectations. The session should begin with the host teacher giving an overview of the program and virtual meeting etiquette. The protocol will likely include muting microphones and posting questions within the chat box. Work with the host teacher to show students where to find emoticons and feedback tools



During the Virtual Delivery (continued)

and encourage their use. Give everyone a chance to try them out so they are more likely to interact.

- Introduce yourself. On the first day, share a bit about your background, knowledge, experience, and program goals. If you are able, stand up! People tend to be more dynamic standing.
- Make the students feel comfortable and involved. Avoid asking students to introduce themselves. Instead, ask them to post their name and favourite hobby in the chat section. Ask questions and conduct polls using the feedback tools. Self-identify your pronoun and encourage others to model that when speaking and sharing to create a more inclusive environment.
- Engage students even if you cannot see them. Depending on classroom expectations, students may choose not to use a webcam. Allow the host teacher to manage this aspect, keeping in mind that some students may feel uncomfortable sharing their environment. While it can be challenging to engage students when you cannot see them, use the chat and hand raise functions.
- Use both screenshare and your webcam. Ensuring students can see you will help create a personable experience. There are times when you might want students to focus on the program slides or video, but when you are talking or engaging in a discussion, it is helpful to see your face.
- Vary your tone, speaking speed and volume to help keep participants engaged. Periodically check in to make sure participants can hear you.
- Use a whiteboard. This is a great way to simulate being inside a school classroom. You can even make it your background.
- Keep an eye on the time. Emphasize the time limit for the program. It can be difficult to end a session, but it is up to you and the host teacher to work together. At the end, host teachers should confirm the volunteer(s) have logged off and officially close the virtual session so students are not left online unsupervised. Make certain you are never alone with students on a call.
- Use breakout rooms. To accommodate group activities, particularly when brainstorming or tackling problem-solving, consider breakout rooms. Work with your host educator or Program Manager to:
 - Provide students with proper guidance before you send them off on their own.
 - Indicate expectations. Be clear about what students need to achieve.
 - Circulate through the breakout rooms and provide support.
 - Give students clear instructions around when they are required to return to the central virtual meeting.
- Recordings and screenshots are not permitted. Do not record your virtual classroom involvement or take screenshots. If the host teacher requests to record and share the delivery with students not in attendance, you will be asked to provide verbal consent.