

Student Activity

Creating a Safe Virtual Learning Space

Educators and students can create their own virtual background on Zoom and in some cases on Google Meet or in Google Classroom. The purpose of this activity is to create a learning place where all students feel safe and able to learn. However, the technology to accomplish this task may be too complicated for elementary level children. In some cases, teachers may want to change their background and let the students stay with the natural background.

This background can be based on one of several themes:

- » Making the classroom a safe place—your space in the classroom.
- » Where in the world? Places an individual would like to go in the world.
- » Favorite character in a book.

Process:

1. Teacher facilitates a discussion to develop positive norms for class time on camera. Some ideas include:

- Make positive statements about others and yourself.
- Point out other students' and the teacher's statements and work that is well done.
- Act out of kindness toward other students and the teacher.
- Understand all student and teacher mistakes as opportunities to grow and learn.

2. The teacher, counselor, or other school staff member provides students with multiple options of pictures to use in their background. Students can find their own but must have it approved by the teacher. Assignments such as “What are your favorite hobbies, book, movie, or song?” can be the basis for the visual background as long as they do not include violence and vulgar words. Alternatively, “What is your favorite place in the classroom or favorite place outside?” can be a soothing background for a student.

3. Create the virtual background. Directions for creating virtual backgrounds in Zoom and Google Meet can be found on the platforms' websites or in YouTube videos. Many students learn best from videos so here are links to YouTube videos for each platform:

- [Zoom: How to Make a Zoom Virtual Background Using Kapwing](#)
- [Google Meet: How to Change the Background in Google Meet using Snap Camera](#)

