# Teaching with Technology During COVID-19: Best Practices to Protect Educators & Students

We are in unprecedented times. It's difficult to know what to do and what not to do while teaching remotely. Your Association continues to work to provide you with support and information to keep you personally and professionally secure as we work to fend off this COVID-19 pandemic. **Here are 10 ways to take care of ourselves, each other and our students as we engage online:**

1.  **Know your employer's rules for online engagement. Follow them at all times.** Most employers have policies to define what is allowable on work computers and networks. Employers may also have policies that describe appropriate and inappropriate online interactions with students and families. Re-familiarize yourself with and follow these policies as directed. If you are concerned your employer does not have policies to provide you with sufficient guidance or you have questions about a directive, contact your **NSEA Organizational Specialist.**

2.  **Be aware of your professional online presence.** Give yourself time to learn the technology. Be present when you're using it. Minimize distractions and personal interruptions when interacting online. Being professional in an online learning platform means you avoid eating, drinking or multitasking. Place yourself in professional space and dress in professional clothing. Avoid posting on social media during the "school day" – *especially avoid political posts*. Do promote your positive work with students and that of your colleagues. Speak, type and post with the same professionalism you would use in face-to-face interactions with students, families and other members of the school community.

3.  **Ensure student privacy.** Make sure you are engaged in online instruction in a private space. Make sure that no application you use is set to 'record' while you are using it (many applications, such as ZOOM, may automatically record your session unless you specifically set the application not to record). ***Do not send students to websites or social media apps that are not approved by your employer. Unapproved sites may gather personally identifiable information about students.*** Check with your employer if you have questions about maintaining student privacy and to see whether there is a list of allowable Apps and websites that meet Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. If you have additional concerns, contact your **NSEA Organizational Specialist.**

4.  **Maintain your own online privacy in interactions with students.** Make your personal accounts private. Establish professional accounts on other platforms and applications that you use with students. While ensuring that students are not being recorded in online format without permission, ensure the same for yourself. If your employer expects lessons to be recorded in a way that you believe may violate your collective bargaining agreement, contact your **NSEA Organizational Specialist.** Remember: when using an employer-provided network or computer, employees do **not** have a right to privacy.

5.  **When selecting materials for online instruction, adhere to all copyright laws.** Consider copyright issues in online instruction just as you would in face-to-face instruction. While a 'fair use exception' allows copyrighted materials to be used without permission in many educational circumstances, this

allowance is not absolute. Good information  for public school teachers, including examples of what qualifies as fair use, is available from the  **Library of Congress.**

6. **Commit to creating a positive online environment.** It is important for students to feel  connected to you and each other. Display positivity with students. Be  patient with their progress. Remember that they may be dealing with serious issues at home. Check in with parents and students who may need extra support or resources.

7. **Communicate patience and encouragement.** Be encouraging of colleagues who have had to  learn online options quickly, sometimes without guidance and support. Be patient with parents who  are dealing with professional and personal stressors as well as with the added pressure of  helping their children with online assignments.

8. **Don't forget to engage your own oxygen mask first.** This means to, first and foremost, *follow guidelines from the* **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** *and* *your local public health department*. Create a daily schedule for yourself that includes  downtime. Intentionally seek out socialization by calling friends and family, facetiming people to  express gratitude, or taking a walk to greet neighbors (from a distance) who are outdoors.  Ensure you are getting sufficient exercise, eating well and avoiding excessive media exposure. If you have any free time, *try something new*! Download a free book, practice online yoga, watch online tutorials to learn a new  hobby, create the ultimate playlist, or take an online museum tour in another part of the world!

9. **Check NSEA.org for up-to-date information and professional support through nsea.org/webinars related to the COVID-19 pandemic.** If you need ideas for completing district required professional development days, contact your **NSEA Organizational Specialist** regarding our updated micro-credentials.

10. **Find the latest information and guidance related to Nebraska public schools at:**
    **NSEA.org**
    **Nebraska Department of Education**
    **NEA Resources for Online Learning**
    **NEA Today!**