Guidelines for videoconferencing:

REMINDER: Students and teachers alike should focus on the methods they are most comfortable with. If you are not comfortable with video conferencing, consider sticking to text (e.g. Moodle “chats”, emails) or voice calls through Microsoft Teams/Zoom.

1. Familiarity
   - Remember, always make sure to test your video, audio, mic, and comfort level with the software BEFORE the scheduled session.
     - SUGGESTION: Try and run a “test” session with a colleague! That way, you can familiarize yourself with the different functions and test your equipment/internet connection.

2. (N)Etiquitte
   - When conducting group video conferencing, ask everyone to mute themselves as they enter (when using Zoom, you edit the settings so that participants are
muted upon entry) to avoid feedback noise/too many people talking at the same time.

3. Preparedness

• Make sure you and your students are “videoconference-ready”
  o Make sure the scene behind you is not very distracting and is devoid of inappropriate items. MS Teams has an option to “blur background”.
  o Check to see what your students will see once your camera is turned on
  o Remind students to treat the session as though they are “in class” and that other people can/will see what they are doing during the conference
  o Try and limit any background noise (e.g. put phone on silent, find a quiet spot to conduct the conference, etc.)

• Send materials like slides and docs to students ahead of time so they can refer to them. Record the session for students who cannot be present.

• Keep an eye on the chat function for your preferred videoconferencing platform; some students might be more comfortable with messaging their questions.

4. Question Protocols

• Have question protocols and an agenda so everyone is aware of expectations.
• Remind students to treat the session as though they are “in class”.

5. Child Safety

• One-on-one with students by video is best avoided. Best practice is to conduct video conferencing with small groups or including a second adult in the video (e.g. having a parent be in the same room or asking another teacher to be part of the conference).
  o In the interest of having effective group meetings, consider limiting group videoconferences to 4-5 students. Of course, the number of students in your group videoconference would depend on your goal for the meeting, student body, and grade level.
  o Another alternative would be to record the video conferencing session. However, if you choose to record the session, be sure to inform students.
6. Teacher posture

- Maintain eye contact with students as much as possible; this might be a bit awkward as it requires you to look directly at the camera rather than students’ faces when talking, but it will allow students to feel more connected to you.
- Move and gesture slowly – remember that internet connections can sometimes lead to lag. While this won’t fix the issues, it can help in some situations.
- Speak in a clear, loud, and slow manner. Remember, not only will internet connections vary, but you will likely also have some low English speakers.
- As much as possible, use a headset/earphones with a mic rather than your computer’s speaker to reduce issues related to audio feedback.

7. Alternatives

- Due to challenges with time zones, consider another alternatives to video conferencing such as
  - FlipGrid. This allows teachers and students alike to pre-record videos/audio clips, where students record themselves responding to a teacher’s prompt. Sign up using your WAB Microsoft login using this link: https://auth.flipgrid.com/signup
  - Voice Thread
  - Wakelet