



## Guidance on Online Engagement for Rise Representatives

Rise, an initiative of Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust, is a global program that finds extraordinary young people who need opportunity and supports them for life as they use their talents to serve others; it is one of the largest scholarship programs in the world.

This guide will help Rise representatives to deliver activities and engage with young people online in a way that is safe, fun, and efficient. The guide has three sections:

1. Online Safeguarding
2. Technology Good Practice
3. Humanizing Online Engagement

The information within this document applies to any online engagement held for the purposes of Rise, including outreach, selection, programming, or other.

### Online Safeguarding

Rise staff, selectors, volunteers, and consultants (hereafter referred to as “Rise representatives”) will need to adhere to the Rise Safeguarding Policy and its supplementary documents. In addition, all Rise representatives that interact with minors must read and sign the Rise Code of Conduct. These documents state the programme’s commitment to safe and equitable selection and programming.

When interacting with Rise participants online, Rise representatives must:

- Ensure you only contact Rise participants using the approved and official means of communication; let a Rise team member know of any interactions you have had with a Rise participant outside of Rise engagements as they could constitute a conflict of interest.
- Familiarize yourself with the Rise Safeguarding Policy, particularly information on creating a safe environment for the Rise participants, and how to report a safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Be aware of the Rise Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), as most virtual Rise engagements will be attended by at least one DSL.

### Technology Good Practice

It will be important that you are aware of technology best practices to ensure that you are set up for success when running selections or engaging with young people online. Adhere to the following guidance:

- Find a suitable space for video calls, with your set-up in a position that allows your face to be well lit and for you to have a neutral background.
- Ensure your space is free from distractions.
- Be ready and willing to help a young person who may be having technical difficulties.

- Turn off any notifications that may come through your device to prevent distractions and sharing of information you do not intend to share during the session.
- Always inform Rise participants if a session will be recorded and obtain their permission to do so before enabling recording. **Do not record any online interactions unless specifically instructed to do so by the Rise Team.**
- Schedule regular breaks to eliminate fatigue; at least a 10-minute break every 60 minutes is a good idea.
- Ensure any online platforms, such as Zoom, require a passcode for people to join and also have a waiting room.
- Apply the same high standards of professionalism and etiquette that would be expected for any in-person session (including in relation to conduct, language, dress, and punctuality) when conducting sessions online.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, follow these guidelines:

- Technological glitches will happen, either for you or the Rise participants; remember to be patient with everyone and provide affirmation when needed.
- Many Rise participants do not have exclusive use of a space in their home; please be patient with cameos and the temporary distraction they may cause (so long as the person is not providing any assistance to the participant).
- If you suspect a young person is either recording the session, taking screenshots or pictures, or appearing to have someone off-screen providing help (which has not been pre-approved in cases of disability), let the session/breakout group facilitator know so they can reassert the guidelines and inform a Rise team member.
- If possible and you are equipped to do so, offer assistance to solve any participants' technical issues (or ask a technical support member to assist, if present) to set the participant at ease and give them space, affirming that the glitch is not their fault and that things like this happen frequently.
- If the technical issue continues for more than 5 minutes during a selection event, inform the session/breakout group facilitator, as this is likely to have a wider effect on the assessment day schedule. Again, set the participant at ease when the opportunities arise. (Note: If this happens, the overall session facilitator, with the help of technical support, will come to a solution with the participant.)
- If you encounter technical difficulties that you are unable to resolve within 5 minutes, inform the session/breakout group facilitator who may move things around to accommodate this and can connect you to a tech helper.

## Humanizing Online Engagement

Rise participants represent an extremely broad variety of backgrounds, personalities, and experiences. In addition to the enrichment and complexity that this brings, online engagement is a reductive experience compared to face-to-face interactions, and reading each other's feelings and experiences



often becomes much harder. Intentionality is important for making online engagement with Rise participants and representatives as respectful and enjoyable as possible. To the best of your ability, follow these guideline:

- Do not assume everyone is familiar with digital tools. When possible, start the online interaction with a tech tutorial, for example drawing attention to the chat function for questions, raising hands, and reaction functionality.
- Endeavour to use young peoples' first names when referring or speaking to them. Try your best to pronounce a participant's name correctly, in addition to using their preferred pronouns.
- Listen attentively to Rise participants as they speak. Let them know up front that you may take notes and that they should not worry or read into your not looking at the camera.
- If you are a group facilitator, encourage quieter young people to contribute their ideas either verbally (preferred) or via the chat function. Use your intuition to gauge appropriate frequency for calling on individuals; asking them to contribute individually once or twice is usually enough. More generalized language can also help reduce anxiety, such as, "It would be great to hear from those who have not spoken yet." Activity guidance should make the role of the facilitator clear, although note that some activities may be participant-led.

Providing a safe and humane online environment is as important as providing a safe physical environment for young people. If you have any questions, input, or feedback upon going through this guide, please contact the Rise Selection Team at [selection@risefortheworld.org](mailto:selection@risefortheworld.org).