



Responding to Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior in Web Conferences

If your class is disrupted by uninvited guests or even students in the class, it is important that you address these disruptions openly and promptly, especially since these disruptions may be hurtful or offensive or may create a hostile learning environment. Take the following steps to manage these situations:

Take Precautions

- To protect against outside disruptions ("Zoombombers"), use the recommended security settings in your virtual web conference ([Zoom](#), [Webex](#))
- [Know how to mute all, turn off videos, limit screen sharing, block annotation, and remove users](#)
- [Have policies for appropriate online classroom behavior](#)
- Have a plan B and communicate to students in advance what to do if a class meeting ends early

Remove Unwanted Guests

- Immediately mute all students and revoke screen-sharing and annotating privileges
- Identify the intruder's name and remove them from the room
 - Select the participant's name in the participant list: In Webex, select "[Expel](#)"; BigBlueButton (Conferences in Canvas or Sakai) choose "[Remove User](#)"; in Zoom select "[Remove](#)" or "Put in Waiting Room"
- If this does not work and your class is compromised, quickly end the class meeting
- Follow up with participants about how you will resume your meeting

Respond to Disruptive Students

- Temporarily mute all students and turn off the ability to chat, share screens, or annotate
- Issue a warning to reduce future incidents:
 - Warn the disruptive student that their behavior is inappropriate in a personal message
 - Remind students about policies for civil behavior in the syllabus and the Student Code of Conduct
- Remove the disruptive student if necessary

Follow Up

- Follow up with the rest of the class:
 - Take time during class to discuss the disruption and let students express their reactions; acknowledge what occurred and condemn the inappropriate behavior
 - Do not share video footage that contains obscene or offensive disruptions with the class
- Consider whether students may have violated the [University Code of Student Conduct](#), which expressly prohibits threatening behavior, alarming conduct, bullying, intimidation, or harassment when it interferes with a student's ability to participate in their education
- Proceed with disciplinary action if necessary:
 - Submit a complaint alleging a violation to the Office of Student Conduct/Community Standards ([New Brunswick](#), [Newark](#), [Camden](#), [Biomedical and Health Sciences](#))
 - Document the incident in writing, save any video evidence, and inform your department
 - Follow up with the person who caused the disruption
- Incidents with unwanted guests or intruders should be [reported to the IT security team](#)

Resources and References

Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (2020). Teaching. Retrieved from <https://ctaar.rutgers.edu/teaching/>

Harvard. (2020). Zoom Bombing. Retrieved from <https://teaching-and-learning-website.document360.io/docs/zoom-bombing>

Rutgers IT. (2020). Key tips to avoid Zoom bombing and unwanted meeting guests. Retrieved from <https://it.rutgers.edu/zoom/knowledgebase/key-tips-to-avoid-zoombombing-and-unwanted-meeting-guests/>

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