For Participants of Video Conferencing Sessions:

Before the Meeting:

1. **Test your hardware and internet connection beforehand**
   - Test your software prior to attending a session.
   - Knowing these issues prior to the session allows you time to troubleshoot before the session starts.
   - Familiarize with the video platform technology.

2. **Plan Ahead by Opening up Files that have been sent by your conference leader/teacher.**
   - Because it can be difficult or distracting to find files while participating, consider opening and reading files prior to the start of the session.

3. **Remember Location, Location, Location.**
   - While you are not hosting the session, others will want see you. Lighting is important. Face the window if you are in a room with a window.
   - Remember that all those in the meeting will be able to see the background. Pick a location that does not contain inappropriate or distracting background. Zoom and other video conferencing programs allow you to replace your messy background with virtual images of the International Space Station or nature.
   - Find a location that provides some privacy. Finding a perfectly quiet spot may not be possible, but consider those who are watching the video. Are there better places with fewer disruptions to attend the session?

During the Meeting:

1. **Arrive early and make sure you are set to go.** Join a session a few minutes early to test your audio and video connections. Just like in person, avoid going to a session late.

2. **Mute the audio** unless you are speaking so as to prevent unintentional background noise from disrupting the conversation.

3. **Remember that you are on camera and live**. Everyone can see you and what you are doing.
   - **Dress appropriately**. Dress as if you are in a classroom. Remember others can see you.
   - **Remember everything around you is also visible**. Avoid going to the kitchen to cook food, eating your breakfast, or embarrassing yourself and others with inappropriate conduct. Find a quiet place without lots of distractions.
   - **Remember you are not anonymous**. Your facial expressions, words, and speaking tone are all very visible to all. Act and speak just as you would if you were physically present.
   - **Stay awake and appear attentive**. Everyone can see you when you fall asleep or do other tasks.
   - **Avoid doing something that makes you the target of a viral video**.

4. **Act as if you would in a real-life meeting/class.**
   - **Take turns to speak.** Be kind and considerate. If your session has the chat feature, think about adding your comments there. Language should be appropriate for class.
   - **Think before you speak**. Stay on topic. Make sure your comments are clear and appropriate to the conversation. Don't say anything you wouldn't say in your actual classroom.
   - **Be a good listener.** Take the time to listen to what people are saying.
   - **Avoid interrupting others.**
   - **Take it slow**. Remote learning is probably a new experience for you. Resist the impulse to be silly or to say or type the first thing that comes into your mind.

5. **Reminder #2 about Muting (because it is so important):** When you join the meeting, remember to mute yourself until you are ready to speak; after speaking, then remute yourself. If you are not speaking, you should be muted.

6. **Think before you type.** If your video conference enables the Chat feature you may be able to participate by typing into a chat box. Choose your words carefully. Use appropriate spelling and grammar. Stay on topic. Don't use sarcasm or humor that could be misunderstood. Don't type in all caps.

7. **Avoid interruptions.** If you accidentally drop off and have to reconnect, there is no need to interrupt the meeting by announcing that you are back or that you were dropped.

Sources for this information:
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https://www.iths.org/blog/news/video-conferencing-best-practices/

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https://www.zdnet.com/article/24-video-conferencing-tips-to-go-from-telecommuting-zero-to-hero/