

Social Media + Website Guidelines

Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council has established the following guidelines to help Girl Scout volunteers, parents and girls who wish to use the internet to talk about their involvement in the organization. Every member of the organization has the responsibility to uphold the image and reputation of the Girl Scout brand. When using online communications, it is important to think about the content you are posting, the privacy settings on your account and the people, businesses and organizations that you friend or follow. You are responsible for what you write and say online about Girl Scouts, even if it is on your personal social media account.

Starting a website or social media page

Pages on the internet can be read by people all over the world. Think carefully about how you want to represent yourself and Girl Scouts. Before starting a new page, consider the following points:

- >> Who will your audience be and what types of content will interest them?
- >> Do you have a plan in place to ensure that your page will be updated regularly?
- >> Will the site you are creating accommodate your needs-file sharing, chat, etc.?
- >> Will there be a cost associated with the site and, if so, who will pay?

Online safety

It is important to remember that the internet is an open forum for anyone. To ensure online safety, volunteers should follow these safety measures:

- >> Use only first names of girls online.
- >> Ensure photo permission before posting pictures of girls online.
- >> Never post girls' addresses, phone numbers or email addresses.
- >> Never post addresses, dates and times of group meeting places. An adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families and girls should use email, a password-protected website or a private/closed social media page.
- >> If your website or social media page has open forums, an adult must screen all postings before they are published to the site.
- >> Before placing a link to an external site on your page, ensure that the page you are linking to is suitable for children and appropriate for Girl Scouts.

Girl Scouts who are at least 13 years of age and have parental permission may participate in setting up and monitoring online communities. Before starting, an adult should go over the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge and have each girl sign the form.

Additional online safety guidelines can be found in Volunteer Essentials.

Social Media and the Girl Scout Promise & Law

As a Girl Scout, the Girl Scout Promise and Law should guide all your actions—and that's true for when you're using social media, too! We've included some ideas to keep in mind below, but this isn't a comprehensive list—when in doubt, ask yourself, “Is this action in line with the Girl Scout Promise and Law?”

1. **Be honest and fair.** Be transparent about your role as a Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest volunteer when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online.
2. **Be friendly, helpful, considerate and caring.** Treat others as you want to be treated. Don't use social media to attack other volunteers, troop members, or staff members.
3. **Be courageous and strong.** Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a welcoming and supportive community. If you see posts, comments, or behavior that concern you, please notify your troop program manager. Don't be afraid to speak up or ask questions.
4. **Be responsible for what you say and do.** Remember that what you post online will be around for a long time (think of it as your online carbon footprint), and nothing is really private anymore. Use discretion and if you have questions about whether or not you should post something, ask your troop program manager.
5. **Respect yourself and others.** Respect other people's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when choosing to connect with a fellow volunteer or girl guardian. (For service unit or troop Facebook groups, the privacy settings will give you the ability to give permission to only those who are involved with the service unit or troop.) Also, please do not publish girls' full names online—girl safety is a top priority!
6. **Respect authority.** If your actions on social media—as with any other kind of actions taken as a Girl Scout volunteer—do not support the Girl Scout Promise and Law, we do reserve the right to take corrective action.
7. **Use resources wisely.**
8. **Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout.** This is true regardless of how you are communicating!

Advertising and Product Sales

Do not sell advertising on your site or within your group—including banner ads, sponsored links, etc. The sale of advertising creates an implied relationship between Girl Scouts and the goods or services advertised and cannot be permitted.

Social Media Bullying or Other Incidents

If any Girl Scout member's actions on social media—as with any other kind of actions taken as a Girl Scout—do not support the Girl Scout Promise and Law, we do reserve the right to take corrective action.

If you have any concerns at all—about a specific post, person, or conversation—please contact your troop program manager immediately. We are here to help make sure that all Girl Scouts can have a safe and supportive online environment!

Account administration

Websites and social media accounts created by volunteers and girls are unofficial accounts and should be labeled as such. Do not use a Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) or Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council (GSHNC) logo as your profile picture. Copy and paste this disclaimer as part of your profile description:

- >> "This is an unofficial page created by volunteers of [insert Service Unit/Troop/Group name]. For official information from Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council, visit www.hngirlscouts.org.
- >> Account administrators should send an email to marketing@hngirlscouts.org with the link to their website or social media page, as well as the contact information for the person who serves as the primary administrator for the page.
- >> Whenever possible, avoid having a social media or website account associated with an individual's personal email. Instead, create an email address for your group (troop000@gmail.com). More than one person should have the login information for both the email and social media or website account.
- >> An adult must serve as an administrator on all websites and social media accounts, as well as be the person responsible for the email address associated with the account.

Branding

Girl Scouts is a well-loved, iconic brand. Girl Scouts of the USA has developed a visual brand language that conveys the Girl Scout Movement as it exists today and that speaks to our core audience-girls. Just as when designing print collateral for Girl Scouts, brand guidelines must be followed online. When creating a website or social media site for your Girl Scout group, follow the guidelines in the Brand Resources section of the GSHNC website.

In order to ensure brand consistency, volunteer-run pages must be hosted independently from non-Girl Scout pages. It is permissible to use a free hosting service, but not to put a Girl Scout page on an existing, external business or organization website.

In addition, do not violate copyright laws by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder. This includes Girl Scout images and graphics, such as the Trefoil, which must be used in accordance with guidelines from GSUSA.

For questions about branding guidelines, please contact the GSHNC Marketing department at marketing@hngirlscouts.org.

Media Requests

GSUSA handles all national media outreach. GSHNC Marcom staff reaches out to all TV, print, and radio outlets in our region and manages all Girl Scout brand-related media inquiries and crisis communications. Please always refer and reach out to marketing@hngirlscouts.org regarding these media relations and communications.

Before taking your girl or troop story directly to the press, or helping council-wide recruitment or other campaign efforts, please review our resources and guidelines, and then focus on your hyper-local neighborhood newspapers and radio shows broadcasting in your immediate area to avoid overlapping outreach. If you wish to contact or have been contacted by other media, please coordinate with marketing@hngirlscouts.org to avoid causing confusion for our media friends or duplicating efforts.

Girl Scout Group Website and Social Media Page Self Checklist

If you answer yes to all the questions below, your website or social media page is ready for launch.

- >> Is my page hosted independently from an existing, external business or organization website?
- >> Does my account have at least two administrators?
- >> Do I have a non-personal email account tied to my webpage or social media account?
- >> Have I checked the links on my website to make sure they only lead to safe, appropriate websites?
- >> Have I added an unofficial account disclaimer to my page?
- >> Do all of the girls in pictures on my page have photo permission on file?
- >> Is meeting information only posted on private, password-protected pages?
- >> Have I emailed information about my account to GSHNC?
- >> Are all of my images and graphics free from copyright violations?