



## Website and Social Media Guidelines for Service Units, Troops, and Volunteers of Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc.

### **POLICY:**

Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida (GSGCF) will maintain guidelines and standards for the use of affiliated website and social media accounts by volunteers for Girl Scout-related communications. All volunteers are required to follow all standards and guidelines, and consider the safety of girls, families, and volunteers as a priority, along with the highest ideals of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

### **Background:**

The term “social media” refers to tools that allow the sharing of information and creation of communities through online networks of people. It is a method for having two-way conversations online. Some of the most common types of social media include social networking sites (Facebook), microblogging sites (Twitter, Snapchat), photo-sharing sites (Instagram), online forums or blogs, and content-sharing sites (Youtube).

The goal of social media for GSGCF is to connect with the public and create awareness of the mission, vision, and values of Girl Scouting; to encourage support of GSGCF’s services and programs; to increase public awareness and public support; and to be one voice for and experts on girls and their development. The use of websites and social media enhances the visibility of our council as a unified voice as we strengthen our mission to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Whether or not a GSGCF service unit, troop, or volunteer chooses to create or participate in an online community is a collective decision, based on the purpose of using social media. GSGCF volunteers and members are responsible for insuring that the policies, standards, and guidelines are followed when using online platforms to share news and information about GSGCF and Girl Scouts.

### **Guiding Principles for Social Media and Website Use at Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida:**

#### **The Girl Scout Law**

**Be honest and fair:** Be honest about your role as a GSGCF volunteer, member, or alumna when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online.

**Be friendly, helpful, considerate, and caring:** Treat others as you want to be treated. Do not use the Internet to attack, abuse, or badmouth, but rather as a valuable resource of information.

**Be courageous and strong:** Careful monitoring of social media is important to maintaining a positive image of GSGCF and Girl Scouting. Questionable posts/comments/behavior should be brought to the attention of the GSGCF Corporate Communications department. Don't be afraid to speak up or ask questions.

**Be responsible for what you say and do:** Anything posted online will be around for a long time, and nothing is really "private" anymore. Use discretion and ask questions if you are unsure about whether or not to post something. The GSGCF Corporate Communications department can provide guidance.

**Respect yourself and others:** Respect other people's privacy and personal boundaries by using discretion when choosing to accept or invite a Facebook friend or connection through other social media channels.

**Respect authority:** Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida reserves the right to block or delete any postings, administrators, or group members or to restrict volunteer access to website pages and social media sites within council control. Also, if you are contacted by a member of the media through a social media site and asked to comment on an issue, please refer them to the GSGCF Director of Corporate Communications.

**Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout:** This is true regardless of how you are communicating.

**Be mindful of how you look and act by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law**

An online presence is expected to reflect positively on GSGCF and Girl Scouting, if a profile identifies the user with the organization or the Girl Scout Movement in any way. Be aware of actions captured via images, posts, or comments. Use of privacy setting options in social media accounts to limit public access to information is highly recommended. Note that profile pictures are frequently open to the public. Use discretion when choosing how the world sees you.

**Standard 1: GSGCF will develop social media and website guidelines for use by service units, troops, and volunteers.**

1. GSGCF will review the policies and procedures annually for changes and updates. Policies, standards, and guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge.
2. GSGCF will make guidelines and standards available via the website and through volunteer training.

**Standard 2: Affiliate websites and social media groups/pages should link to those of GSGCF.**

1. GSGCF encourages all affiliate social media groups/pages and websites to "like" or follow official council social media accounts and websites, and to invite GSGCF to "like" or follow affiliate social media groups/pages and websites.
2. Select links to other websites and social media groups/pages carefully. The contents of each link should be in accordance with the principles of Girl Scouting. Also, link contents should be tasteful, age-level appropriate, and beneficial for girls, volunteers, alumnae, and Girl Scout families. The same consideration should be taken when permitting other websites and social media groups/pages to be linked to yours.

### **Standard 3: Girl safety is a priority.**

1. When posting online, use girls' first names and last initials only. Girls may use their last names when required for registration for social media sites or similar online resources, provided they meet that service's age requirements and terms of service, and also have parental permission.
2. Never post girls' personal information, such as addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses.
3. Never post the addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, unless you are utilizing a password-protected feature or closed Facebook group.
4. If you wish to use messaging functions of social media sites to share the type of sensitive information listed above, verify everyone set to receive the information is a Girl Scout parent or guardian.
5. Girls must have parent/guardian permission before participating in any online project. Girls and their parents/guardians must sign the "Internet Safety Pledge" in the "Computer/Online Use Safety Activity Checkpoint." You can find this form at [www.gsgcf.org](http://www.gsgcf.org) under "Volunteer Resources," "Safety Activity Checkpoints." Completed forms must be available for review by GSGCF prior to starting any online project.
6. If parents/guardians have not given you permission, you may not post pictures or videos of their girl online.
7. Permission for photos or video granted to GSGCF by the parent/guardian does not extend to troop leaders, adult volunteers, individual staff members, or any other individual or entity.
8. Ensure that you have parental/guardian permission before submitting your photos to GSGCF for use on the council's website or social media pages.

### **Standard 4: When you identify yourself as Girl Scout volunteer, parent, or alumna, you are a representative of GSGCF and Girl Scouting. All roles require that volunteers adhere to all GSGCF policies, standards and guidelines.**

1. If you communicate about Girl Scout-related issues online, clearly acknowledge your position with the organization. Share accurate information – do not post hearsay or speculation. Remember, regardless of your Girl Scout position, you will be seen as an official Girl Scout spokesperson.
2. Be helpful to those who request information. Please answer inquiries quickly and efficiently. However, you should only answer questions or offer information that is within your area of expertise.
3. Be positive about your Girl Scouting experiences. Share your enthusiasm! If another volunteer, parent, girl, etc., does post a concern or complaint, contact GSGCF or share the council contact information with the individual.
4. Be respectful. It's okay to disagree with others, but making derogatory remarks about or insulting volunteers, employees, corporate sponsors, parents, etc. is not. Respect your audience and don't use obscenities, personal insults, ethnic slurs, or other disparaging language.
5. If you choose to use your personal social media account profile for Girl Scouting activities, please use good discretion about the non-Girl Scout related content that you are adding. Some volunteers may prefer to set up a separate, specific troop or service unit account profile on a social media site. Please consult **Standard 5 below** before doing so.

**Standard 5: Affiliate websites & social media accounts require use of discretion, caution, and critical thinking.**

Troop, service unit, volunteer, and alumnae websites or social media accounts can be an excellent tool for sharing information, creating a sense of community, and promoting Girl Scouts. Please regard the following policies when creating an affiliate website or social media profile or group:

1. Maintain the standards of safety and integrity as outlined in "Volunteer Essentials" (consult the most recent edition found at [www.gsgcf.org](http://www.gsgcf.org) under "Volunteers," "Volunteer Resources," "Volunteer Essentials").
2. Social media sites that are representative of GSGCF and the Girl Scout Movement must be inclusive and non-discriminatory in welcoming members.
3. Follow all terms and conditions set by the social media or website service provider.
4. All affiliate social media groups, accounts, and websites must be under the administration of at least two appointed, unrelated volunteers of the council (i.e. troop leaders, co-leaders, service unit managers, etc.). Non-registered/non-appointed volunteers may not open or serve as administrators on any affiliated account.
5. Girls' personal email address or other contact information should not be used to set up, or made available to the public through, any social media sites, groups, or websites.
6. Affiliate Facebook groups must be established and maintained as "closed" Facebook groups, not "open" or "secret" groups. If you are unsure if your group meets this criteria, or are unsure how to set up a "closed" Facebook group, please contact the GSGCF Corporate Communications Department for assistance.
7. GSGCF reserves the right to ask you to remove or edit posts pertaining to the organization, including but not limited to posts that contain misinformation, spelling errors, embargoed information, or information that violates personal privacy.
8. GSGCF reserves the right to remove or request removal of inappropriate links.
9. Links on affiliate pages should be monitored regularly to ensure that the link destination continues to meet the guidelines.
10. Linking affiliate websites or profiles to commercial sites selling a product or service, or selling advertising on your site, is NOT permitted as this may imply Girl Scout endorsement of that product or service.
11. Affiliate websites and social media accounts may not be linked to sites that endorse a political stance or campaign, to protect the council's tax-exempt status.
12. If you are not familiar with or suspicious of someone who requests to be a "friend," "fan" or other association to your profile/troop page, please send a message asking for an introduction before accepting the request. This will not only keep your girls safe, but also protect your own personal data and computer systems. Be aware that it is common for cybercriminals to set up accounts with false information and representations of their identity.
13. In the event that your affiliate website or social media account is "hacked" for unauthorized use, please report the incident to the GSGCF Corporate Communications Department as soon as possible.

**Standard 6: Girl Involvement with social media will include the three keys to learning: Girl Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning.**

1. Girls must have parental permission to be involved in a project that involves creating or maintaining an affiliate website or social media profile. All participating girls and their parents/guardians must sign the "Internet Safety Pledge" in the "Computer/Online Use Safety Activity Checkpoint." You can find these forms at [www.gsgcf.org](http://www.gsgcf.org) under "Volunteer Resources," "Safety Activity Checkpoints." Completed forms must be available for review by GSGCF prior to starting any online project.
2. Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is typically 13 years old and above in accordance with the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA) and the Child Online Protection Act (COPA).
3. Consult **Standard 3** for additional information and guidance.

**Standard 7: Use of copyrighted material is forbidden without permission from the copyright owner.**

1. The use of copyrighted designs, text, graphics, or trademarked symbols on a troop or service unit website or social media account is forbidden without permission from the copyright holder. Girl Scout trademarks can only be used in accordance with guidelines for their use. For more information, please contact the GSGCF Corporate Communications department.
2. To use trademarks and graphics owned by GSUSA, contact GSGCF's Corporate Communications department to ensure you are using official, approved images.
3. Information on use of GSUSA graphics and trademarks can be found at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) under "Terms and Conditions."
4. Permission is required from the author or publisher for use of videos and music. Do not post words to copyrighted songs, poems, or book content without permission from the record label, publisher, artist, poet, or author.
5. Using the phrase "no copyright infringement intended" (or similar wording) on your website does not mean that you can upload copyrighted or trademarked materials without permission. All necessary permission must be obtained or the material cannot be posted on your website.
6. The following must be placed at the bottom of every website page: "© Copyright 2016 GSUSA. All rights reserved. Girl Scout name, mark, and all associated trademarks and logotypes, including the Trefoil Design, are owned by GSUSA."

Approved by the Board of Directors 5/3/16