Purpose of Social Media

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia is continuing to develop a social media presence through the use of our Facebook page, Google+ page, Twitter and YouTube accounts.

The term ‘social media’ refers to tools that allow the sharing of information and creation of communities through online networks or people. Some of the most common types of social media include social networking sites (Facebook, Google+), microblogging sites (Twitter), forums, blogs, and content-sharing services (YouTube).

The goal of our social media presence is to recruit potential Girl Scouts, volunteers, and donors, as well as to retain current membership, and reconnect with alumnae. The use of social media enhances the visibility of our council as a united front reaching out to the community and media regarding council activities, national events and more. With these online collaboration platforms, we are continuing to strengthen the mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Social media is changing the way we work, communicate and how we engage with each other and the public.

Why Issue Online Communications Guidelines?

There are many Girl Scout employees and volunteers contributing to online spaces such as blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums and photo and video sharing sites. The following guidelines will help you talk about your involvement with the Girl Scouts in an open and transparent way. As Girl Scouts, we must always uphold the trust of people, and uphold the mission and image of Girl Scouts, so it is critical that we tell our story responsibly.

All kinds of social media and social networking tools are available to those who want to share insights, express opinions and communicate in a globally distributed conversation. While the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia recognizes the value of posting personal online content (Web sites, Weblogs, podcasts, photos, chat rooms, forums and wikis), it is important that Girl Scouts who choose to tell their Girl Scout story online understand what is recommended, expected and required.

General Guidelines for Social Media
We invite volunteers to participate on Facebook, Google+ and to follow our Twitter account – keeping the guidelines below in mind.

1. Be honest and fair
Be who you are. We believe in transparency and honesty; anonymity is not an option. Be transparent about your role as a Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia volunteer when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online. When discussing topics relevant to GSHG, you must use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you volunteer for GSHG. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and be judicious in disclosing personal details. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of GSHG.

2. Be friendly, helpful, considerate and caring
Treat others, as you want to be treated. Don’t use the social media to attack other volunteers, troop members and/or staff.
3. **Be courageous and strong**
Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. If you see posts/comments/behavior that concerns you, please notify a member on the communications team. Don’t be afraid to speak up or ask questions.

4. **Be responsible for what you say and do**
GSHG staff and volunteers are personally responsible for the content they publish online, whether in a blog, social computing site or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time (think of it as your online carbon footprint), and nothing is really “private” anymore—protect your privacy and take care to understand a site’s terms of service. Use discretion and if you have questions about whether you should post something, ask a member on the communications team. If you publish content online relevant to GSHG in your personal capacity use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia’s positions, strategies or opinions."

5. **Respect yourself and others**
The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. By virtue of identifying yourself as a Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia volunteer within a social network, you are now connected to your Girl Scout sisters worldwide. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at GSHG. If you have joined GSHG recently, be sure to update your social profiles to reflect Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia’s guidelines. Respect other people’s privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when choosing to accept or invite a fellow volunteer, staff and/or parents as your Facebook “friend” on your personal Facebook page. (For the service unit or troop Facebook page, the privacy settings will give you the ability to give permission to only those who are involved with the service unit or troop.)

**Respect copyright and fair use laws.** For GSHG’s protection and well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including GSUSA’s own copyrights, trademarks and brands.

**Protecting confidential and proprietary information.** Social computing blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be thoughtful about what you publish—particularly on external platforms. You must make sure you do not disclose or use GSHG’s confidential or proprietary information or that of any other person or company in any online social computing platform. For example, ask permission before posting someone’s picture in a social network or publishing in a blog a conversation that was meant to be private. Make sure you have a girl’s photo release before posting the photo. Remember to adhere to all Safety-Wise guidelines regarding internet safety and website design.

6. **Respect authority**
Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to block and/or delete any postings, administrators, group members, etc., or restrict volunteer access to social media sites within council control. Also, if you are contacted by a member of the media through a social media site and are asked to comment on an issue, please refer them to the communications officer.

7. **Use resources wisely**
Your time is a valuable resource and your social media activities should not interfere with your volunteer commitments.
8. Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout
This is true regardless of how you are communicating. Remember to always put the Girl Scout mission first: building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We invite you to help us spread the word on what Girl Scouts are doing, not only at GSHG but worldwide. When using social media, you have the potential to discover what’s happening in Girl Scouting, connect with other Girl Scouts and to take action to make the world a better place.

9. Be mindful of how you look and act by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law
Your online presence can reflect positively or negatively on Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. Be wary of your actions captured via images, posts or comments. It is always recommended to set your personal Facebook profile to “private” (only your friends can see it), especially if you have Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia listed as an organization that you volunteer for or represent. Please remember that your Facebook profile picture can always be viewed publicly, so use discretion when choosing how the world sees you.

10. Deliver effective and deliberate communication to internal and external audiences.
Respond to questions and concerns in a timely manner. Be a valuable resource for information.

Guidelines on how to create a Service Unit and/or Troop Facebook page

1. The page name should be the service unit name or Troop #xxxxx – and then specify in the “Info” section that your service unit or troop is affiliated with Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia but state that it is NOT the official council page. Use a disclaimer such as this: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t necessarily represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia or Girl Scouts of the USA.

2. You must have at least two people set as administrators to help monitor the group page.

3. You may use the Girl Scout logo on your page. Please contact the council office for the official logo.

4. You must create your page as a “group” page that has privacy settings set to “closed.” This means page members must either be invited to join the group or be approved after they request to join. Only service unit members, volunteers or parents in that service unit or troop should be allowed to join. Additionally, Girl Scouts older than age 13 may join, as well as Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia staff.

5. If you have already created a profile for your troop and/or service unit, please set the privacy settings to “friends only” (if it is a regular Facebook profile page). This way people must request to be your “friend.” Note: This will ONLY work if your page is a regular Facebook “profile” page. If you created a fan page, you should change it to a group and set the settings as noted above.

6. These guidelines for Facebook are in place so that girls are protected online—especially if you are posting pictures and/or meeting dates and times on the page.

7. After you have created your page, please send an email to Maggie Reimer at: mreimer@gshg.org so that we can register your page on our website and so we can “Like” you or “Friend” you. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia does not intend to “police” the social media community. Quite the contrary: we want to aggregate all the powerful stories Girl Scouts are telling and showcase your individual contribution to the overall mission and gather links in a page at www.gshg.org.
We are posting regular status updates, pictures, links and more. We also invite our fans to participate in discussions and share information.

“Like” us—Search for “Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia”—when you find us, simply click the “Like” button.

Best practices for Facebook:
- Update your status regularly
- Brighten your profile with photos and videos
- Join groups and/or networks
- Write on friends’ walls
- “Like” pages, share links with friends and organize events

**Guidelines on how to create a Twitter account**
What is Twitter? [Twitter](https://twitter.com) asks the question *What are you doing?* and millions of people answer in 140 characters or less. The basics of Twitter:
- Follow relevant accounts
- Post tweets

We are posting 140 character tweets from our Twitter account [@GAGirlScouts](https://twitter.com/GAGirlScouts). To create a Twitter account visit: [www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com) and click on “Sign Up.”

**Full Name**
Your real name. This will appear on your public profile. In your profile underneath your Username you can say who you are and what you like, ex: Bulldog fan, Girl Scout leader, avid gardener, world traveler, etc. If you are using your account to post about GSHG related events and issues, please use a disclaimer such as this one, “The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent or reflect Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia positions, or opinions.”

**Username**
This is your “handle” on Twitter. (ex: ours is [@GAGirlScouts](https://twitter.com/GAGirlScouts). It can be your name, ex: JaneSmith25, or something that is “you,” ex: CookieFan18

**Password**
Just a password. You need this to sign into your account.

**Terms of service**
Agree to these. Basically, you are agreeing to not spam other users.
Click “create account”. Once your account is created you will see an account page where you can fill in more information about yourself. Please do this!

Before finishing, be sure to click on the “Picture” tab and upload a photo of yourself. A headshot is the best idea.

If you have any questions about creating a Facebook profile or a Twitter account, please contact Maggie Reimer at [mreimer@gshg.org](mailto:mreimer@gshg.org). Please send Maggie an email so that we can “follow” you.

Remember: People like the human touch and will appreciate posts with your thoughts and experiences more than you think. They also like it when you say ‘hi’ and respond to their comments, etc.
Best practices for Twitter:
- Build relationships on Twitter
- Listen for comments about Girl Scouts
- Respond to comments and queries
- Ask questions
- Post links to things people would find interesting
- Retweet messages you would like to share
- Use a friendly, casual tone
- Don’t spam people

Guidelines on how to create an Instagram account

What is Instagram? Instagram provides a social media platform for billions of people around the world to share photos and videos. The basics of Instagram:
- Follow relevant accounts
- Post photos and videos

We are posting photos and videos from our Instagram account @Girl ScoutsHistoricGA.
To create an Instagram account visit: www.Instagram.com and click on “Sign Up.”

Full Name
Your real name. This will appear on your public profile. In your profile underneath your Username you can say who you are and what you like, ex: Bulldog fan, Girl Scout leader, avid gardener, world traveler, etc. If you are using your account to post about GSHG related events and issues, please use a disclaimer such as this one, “The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent or reflect Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia positions, or opinions.”

Username
This is your “handle” on Instagram. (ex: ours is @GirlScoutsHistoricGA). It can be your name, ex: JaneSmith25, or something that is “you,” ex: CookieFan18

Password
Just a password. You need this to sign in to your account.

Terms of service
Agree to these. Basically, you are agreeing to not spam other users.
Click “create account”. Edit your bio on the home page with information about yourself or your troop.

Before finishing, be sure to click on the “Edit Profile” tab and upload a photo of yourself. A headshot is the best idea.

If you have any questions about creating a Facebook profile, Twitter account, or Instagram account, please contact Maggie Reimer at mreimer@gshg.org. Please send Maggie an email so that we can “follow” you.

Remember: People like the human touch and will appreciate posts with your thoughts and experiences more than you think. They also like it when you say ‘hi’ and respond to their comments, etc.
Best practices for Instagram:
- Build relationships on Instagram by tagging and following other accounts
- Listen for comments about Girl Scouts
- Respond to comments and queries
- Be positive in your comments
- Post interesting photos
- Use a friendly, casual tone
- Don’t spam people

SERVICE UNIT WEBSITES

All service units in Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia are encouraged to share information with their volunteers via a service unit website that is accessible through the council website.

Service units may create a service unit website and link it to the council website. Check Shutterfly Share Sites, Weebly.com or Google Sites for free website options.

In order for a service unit website to be linked to the council website, it must be created with the following criteria:
- There must be NO advertisements on the website. There are many sites that offer free hosting and/or free websites—but they are usually “free” because there are ads posted along the sides of the page.
- The website must use the proper Girl Scout logos and branding.
- There must be a link to the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia’s website on the service unit website.
- The service unit website must follow Safety-Wise guidelines regarding Internet safety and website design.
- Any pictures of girls should NOT have nametags visible (first and last names should not be shown). Make sure you have photo releases for all girls before using photos.
- Identify the service unit name and/or number, along with the communities you serve
- Please use the following statement as an example: Welcome to Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia (insert SU name) Service Unit proudly serving more than (insert #) girls and adults in (insert counties served) counties though Girl Scouting activities, meetings and more.
- Include the Girl Scout history, promise and law
- Service unit meeting information (day, time, location)
- Service unit roster (if all members are OK with their information being posted)
- Monthly information (agendas, meeting minutes, event fliers, announcements)
- Pictures - A limited number of photos can be posted on each page. The photos should be compressed for web viewing and may be rotated out each month.

Please contact Maggie Reimer at mreimer@gshg.org if you would like help in setting up your website.
USING WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

1. Adult responsibility
Before you begin developing a website for your service unit and/or your troop, you should designate one adult who will be responsible for monitoring the website so it meets the guidelines stated above.

2. Identifying members
   - If you wish to post Girl Scouts’ names on your website, use first names only. Do not identify by name any Girl Scouts pictured in any photos you post online.
   - Never identify the schools, addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses of Girl Scout members.
   - Never list the address or location of any Girl Scout meeting or activity.
   - Identify trip or event locations AFTER they have occurred.

3. Website & Facebook content
All website and Facebook pages must say they are a part of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia council. Remember that anything posted on your website reflects Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia and GSUSA, so be cautious when selecting content.

4. Girl use
Speak with the girls in your troop or service unit and make sure they understand the importance of preserving the Girl Scout image online. Encourage them to use good judgment and discretion when posting online. GSUSA’s Internet Safety Pledge for girls:

5. Hyperlinks
Consider hyperlinks with care. If you link to another website from your website, make sure that page’s content is consistent with Girl Scout values and does not contain inappropriate or controversial material.

6. Advertising and product sales
Do not sell advertising on your website, either in text or graphic format. This includes banner ads, skyscraper ads, sponsored links, etc. The sale of advertising creates an implied relationship between Girl Scouts and the goods or services advertised and is not permitted.

   Also: girls and/or adults may not post notices on websites to sell Girl Scout Cookies or other products from council-sponsored sales.

7. Website infractions
If you are contacted by Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia or GSUSA and asked to remove any content or links from your website, please comply with that request.

If you find a Girl Scout website that is in violation of these guidelines, please contact Maggie Reimer at mreimer@gshg.org. Please describe the violation in detail and provide the URL of the website.

We expect all who participate in social media on behalf of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia (or in relation to Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia) to understand and follow these guidelines. These guidelines will continue to evolve as social media evolves and new technologies and tools are added.
Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I balance my personal and professional lives online?

You need to determine your own comfort level in discussing work in your personal communications. If you choose to talk about your Girl Scout work via your personal online accounts, please disclose your relationship with Girl Scouts and be responsible.

Should I respond to comments or mentions I see online?

If you should come across comments online, please refer them to our communications team to respond to them appropriately. Again, it is important to uphold the mission and image of Girl Scouts, so it is critical that we tell our story responsibly.

Should I use social media platforms to sell cookies?

Please follow the internet safety guideline provided by Safety Wise. Girl Scouts or their parents cannot sell cookies online – whether it is on a website or a commercial auction site. Although girls can ask for online cookie “promises”, they cannot accept online payment. The heart of the program experience remains the face-to-face interaction that the public expects. Girls will deliver cookies and accept payment in person, following appropriate safety guidelines. You can however promote the cookie program online.