

# Web Site and Social Media Guidelines for troops and service units

Nearly all Girl Scout members surf the Web regularly and participate in social networking, and many Girl Scout troops and Girl Scout service units design their own Web pages and find a presence in social networking resources. Ensuring the health and safety of girls is essential in the Girl Scout Movement. Web sites and the information they contain may be viewed by anyone, anywhere; social networking includes its own host of potential risks and issues.

Below is a summary of the most important guidelines for participating in social media or creating a troop or service unit Web site. For more detailed information regarding social media and computer safety, refer to the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoint for “Computer/Online Use” at [www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/resources.php](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/resources.php).

## Girls’ safety is our #1 priority.

- Girls must have parental permission to be involved in a project that involves creating or maintaining a troop or service unit Web page or social media profile.
- All girls and their parent/guardian must sign the “Internet Safety Pledge” found in the “Online Safety” section of our Web site: [www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/onlinesafety.php](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/onlinesafety.php) before participating in any troop/service unit-organized online activity.
- Go over Internet safety with all girls by visiting *Let Me Know* ([lmk.girlscouts.org](http://lmk.girlscouts.org)), a site addressing Internet safety for girls and young women, and the other resources available on the council “Online Safety” page ([www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/onlinesafety.php](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/onlinesafety.php)).
- If you wish to post Girl Scouts’ names on the Web site, use first names only (no last names). Remember: do not identify the Girl Scouts pictured in any photos you post online! Never identify the schools, addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses of Girl Scouts.
- Web sites and social media can be used in product program sales. Refer to the “Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale: Safety Activity Checkpoints” available from the GSMH “Resources” page: [www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/resources.php](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/resources.php) for information and guidelines.

## Web Sites

- Before you begin developing a Girl Scout Web site, you must first designate one (1) adult who will be the primary volunteer responsible for managing the Web site. This person will be responsible for monitoring the Web site so that it meets the applicable guidelines.
- The URL, or Web address, you select for a Girl Scout troop or a Girl Scout service unit ties the troop or service unit to the image and identity of the URL. It is important to make sure the Web address is reasonably clear in identifying the troop or service unit and does not connect it with a private individual or commercial entity (within reason).
- Make sure that the girls and adults in your Girl Scout troop or service unit who may be contributing content to the site realize that this is a Girl Scout Web site, not a personal Web site, and that everything they contribute must be scrutinized carefully by the Designated Adult before it is uploaded -- both for appropriateness of content and for safety/security of GSMH members.

- A group Web site may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder. The basic principle is: If it is not yours, don't use it. This rule applies to copyrights and trademarks held by GSMH and GSUSA, as well. If official GSUSA and/or GSMH logos or trademarked symbols are used on a Web site, the final site must be approved by the GSMH communications department.
- You are encouraged to link to the GSMH site ([www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org)) and Girl Scouts of the USA ([www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)) from your Girl Scout troop or service unit Web page.

If you have any questions, please contact the Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland e-media specialist or chief communications officer.

## Social Media Through the Girl Scout Law

- **Be honest and fair:** Be transparent about your role as a Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland volunteer when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online.
- **Be friendly and helpful, considerate and caring:** Treat others as you want to be treated, do not use the internet to attack or abuse. If you encounter a complaint, concern or incorrect information, help us by posting correct information or suggesting resources that may help.
- **Be courageous and strong:** Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland. If you see posts/comments/behavior that you are concerned about, please notify your community/membership development specialist. Don't be afraid to speak up or ask questions or post a reply.
- **Be responsible for what you say and do:** Use discretion and think twice before you post something. Remember nothing is really "private" or stays hidden forever once it is on the Internet. The GSMH communications department can answer questions about whether or not you should post something. You may try to limit access to your online activity, including postings, by using tools such as Facebook lists or its privacy settings. GSMH takes the privacy of its staff, volunteers, friends and affiliates very seriously. We will never abuse personal or private information by sharing it with others recklessly. To learn more, please visit our GSMH Privacy Policy at [www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/privacypolicy.php](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org/pages/privacypolicy.php).
- **Respect yourself and others:** Respect other people's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when sharing online or when choosing to invite or accept invitations to become Facebook friends, Twitter followers or members of other networks, including applications. Do not feel obligated to open your personal life up to those with whom you have professional relationship.
- **Respect authority:** When forming a troop/service unit Facebook group (or something similar) we ask that you allow a GSMH staff member to be a part of your group. If contacted by a member of the media through social media and asked to comment on an issue, please refer them to the GSMH chief communications officer at 877-312-4764. The practices and policies of GSMH are still applicable on the Internet. For instance, if one of your postings prompts a member of the media to seek your opinion please follow our guidelines and refer the person to the council's communications department. The CEO and/or CCO and their agents reserve the full rights to block/delete any postings, administrators, group members, etc. or restrict volunteer access to social media sites within council control.
- **Use resources wisely:** When possible, please share articles/events from the Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland Web site so as not to duplicate resources.
- **Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout:** This holds true regardless of how you're communicating (telephone, e-mail, in person, etc.).

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### Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, Inc.

T 877-312-4764 • F 417-862-4120 • [www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org) • [gscouts@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:gscouts@girlscoutsmoheartland.org)