

GSDSW Service Unit Social Media Guidelines

Facebook groups are a great way to communicate with your Service Unit, sharing information on upcoming events, resources, activities, and more! They can also be an effective tool for Service Unit Team members to communicate with each other. Instagram accounts can also serve as a great visual way to share what Service Units are doing.

Service Units and Service Unit Team Groups and Account Privacy

It is a Service Unit Volunteer's responsibility to maintain girl identity and privacy and to keep all girl oriented and Service Unit online activity as safe and protected as possible.

Any Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest Service Unit or Service Unit Team's Facebook Group must be set to "closed" rather than "private" or "public" and your Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest Director of Engagement must be one of the group administrators.

Anyone can publicly search for your "closed" group, but they will not be able to see posts and page/group contents unless you "approve" their request to join. Use caution when approving members and limit approval to join requests to Service Unit Troop Leaders, Volunteers, Caregivers of girls in your Service Unit, and GSDSW staff only.

Council also does not permit creating accounts that appear to be managed or created by Council, for example "GSDSW Hiking Group." For groups supported by GSDSW who wish to have a public account, please contact info@gdsw.org.

Instagram

Any Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest Service Unit or Teams' Instagram Account must be set to "private" not "public". The Instagram @username must be provided your Director of Engagement, and you must "accept" @gdswofficial as a follower. The Instagram password must be given to your Director of Engagement.

People can see your "private" Instagram account, but they will not be able to see posts unless you "approve" their request to "follow" you. Use caution when approving followers and limit approval of follower requests to Service Unit Troop Leaders, Volunteers, Caregivers of girls in your Service Unit, and GSDSW staff only.

GSDSW Guidelines

Know that what you put on social media is permanent, whether you delete it or not. Deleted and old posts on the internet, can be tracked down. Please think twice about what you are sharing with the world. You do not need a poorly chosen Tweet to create havoc for your life, your troop, the Council, or the Girl Scout Movement as a whole. If you have an issue or conflict with another Girl Scout or Council Staff, we kindly ask that you honor the Girl Scout Promise and Law by addressing the party directly and not through social media.

- Guidelines must be adhered to when representing Girl Scouts, whether from a personal social media profile, or one that you set up specifically for a troop or group. Only registered Girl Scout members can represent Girl Scouts, online or otherwise.

- We always recommend using privacy settings on any social media account so that profiles are not open to the general public or searchable on the web.
- Do not use the last names of minors on social media.
- Never give out sensitive or personal information, such as home address or personal phone numbers.
- Avoid listing exactly when and where your troop meets - unless it is a private group or password protected.
- Be sure to have caregiver permission if you are posting photos of girls, do not post a picture of them unless you have written consent. Troop Leaders can verify this by going into their troop roster and downloading it in Volunteer Toolkit. It is the responsibility of supervising adults in each troop or service unit to be aware of girls who have opted out of such photo permissions.
- Before posting your location, consider if doing so could put you, your family, or girls at risk. Most social media sites allow you to turn off the geo-location feature or keep your posts private.
- When posting, have a purpose and add value. Say something informative or offer tips to others.
- Do not use "Scouts" or "Scouting" alone when publicly referring to/promoting Girl Scouting - ensure all references to the organization and program use our differentiator, *Girl Scouts* (or our full Council name). "Scouts" and "Scouting" are copyrighted by Boy Scouts of America.
- Speak for yourself - your opinions may not always be the same as the Council's. Just make sure your presence on social media is in the first person - lots of "I," and not so much "we." Do not post something that could be considered controversial.
- Be thoughtful and respectful of other people and their opinions. Do not be mean or rude, call people names or use foul language. Everyone is entitled to their own opinions and to make their own choices, and though we do not expect everyone to agree, we will not tolerate any public shaming or harmful language against our Girl Scout families. We reserve the right to remove offensive posts. Conduct conflicting with the Girl Scout Promise and Law could result in being removed from a group or blocked from GSDSW online, in addition could result in corrective action up to and including removal from the Girl Scout Organization.

If you have a complaint or concerns with the Council or another person, we ask that you communicate it directly - do not post on social media to report rule-breaking. Start on common ground, address the situation, attempt to resolve it, and report the communication and outcome to Council or request mediation support by emailing info@gsdsw.org.

Respect copyright and fair use - do not use other people's content without asking and giving them credit (and do not use content if there is an explicit request not to). In some cases, it is illegal.

- This includes using Girl Scout symbols and logos. It is unlawful to copy them from other websites and use them.
- Obtain permission to use the Girl Scout logo by reviewing our brand and logo guidelines and contacting info@gsdsw.org.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact info@gdsdw.org.

GSDSW Social Media Platforms

- **Facebook** - Be sure to like and follow our public [GSDSW Council Facebook Page \(Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest\)](#).
- **Instagram** - Follow our [GSDSW \(@GSDSWOfficial\) Instagram page](#). Instagram is a visual platform used to inspire, confirm relevance, and showcase girls and Girl Scout Troops. We share every part of Girl Scouting here.
- **Twitter** - Follow the [GSDSW Twitter Page \(@GSDSWGirlScouts\)](#). Twitter is used to share news, network with partners/media and showcase what Girl Scouts and Girl Scout Troops are doing.

Facebook Groups

Along with the Council's public Facebook brand page, we also manage one closed Facebook group for volunteers. This group is intended for its members to exchange ideas, collaborate, and talk about Girl Scout events and experiences. Because this group is intended for specific members, not everyone can be in it. When people request access to the closed group their membership will be verified through Salesforce, our member data system. If for any reason they do not meet the requirements of the group, they will be removed or denied access.

- [GSDSW Volunteers](#) - This group is for GSDSW Volunteers only and is intended to be a space for everyone to share meeting ideas, troop stories, and service projects or to ask for suggestions!

The GSDSW Volunteer page is held to strict guidelines. We recommend that you read the rules and guidelines (listed below) before engaging to avoid posts being removed and removed from the group. We also do a "spring cleaning" in this group, so if you are no longer a volunteer or have an alias Facebook name, you may be removed without direct notice. If you are removed and feel that you should be in the group, please simply request to join the group again, we will re-verify your current eligibility.

Facebook Group Pages Rules

- No personal attacks or offensive language. We reserve the right to remove offensive posts, comments, and members without warning. Conduct conflicting with the Girl Scout Promise and Law can result in removal or blocking from GSDSW online.
- No commercial promotion. No advertising you or another business/organization that is not an official council program partner.
- No selling/reselling of merchandise. Posting Official Girl Scout merchandise (clothing, accessories, etc.) for resale is not allowed. No posting/selling other merchandise for personal or troop gain.
- Posted fliers must comply to GS Branding and be approved by Council. Send flyer at least three weeks in advanced for approval to info@gdsdw.org. Events, activities, projects, or other communications that will be shared externally (handed out and advertised in public and posted online) must include the Girl Scout logo.
- No event promotions. Events can only be promoted in this group if they are Council approved money earning activities or hosted by a Troop or Service Unit.

- Posts must follow group guidelines. We reserve the right to remove members, comments, and posts with or without warning that do not follow group guidelines.
- Complaints and Concerns Policy. Contact the person directly - do not post on social media to report rule breaking. If you see a confrontation building online, take it offline or encourage those involved to do so.

Feel free to report Council issues directly or for mediation support by emailing info@gdsdw.org or calling the Council emergency phone at 559-284-3795.

Dealing With Sensitive Issues and The Press Via Social Media

It is increasingly common for the media to approach people online. If you are approached by the media in a crisis or uncertain situation (such as being solicited for your Girl Scout opinion on potentially controversial topics), please do not respond to the media, instead, contact info@gdsdw.org or 559-284-3795 (Council emergency phone). As a member of Girl Scouts, you are a representative of the organization. What you say and do affects the whole organization. Use discretion, and if you ever have a question, please reach out! Additionally, families, girls, and volunteers **must** contact and collaborate with their council in advance on any news media opportunities tied to girls online marketing and sales efforts. **GSDSW must be contacted prior to any media interactions for written approval from the Chief Executive Officer.**

Sensitive issues refer to a range of topics. They can be incorrect rumors about Girl Scouts and tend to resurface during the cookie season when we are most visible to the public. Some past/current sensitive topics that have been brought to our attention: Planned Parenthood, COVID-19 guidelines and safety practices, questions about politics, and concerns about the palm oil industry and Girl Scout Cookies. These are not the topics we want to focus on during cookie season as it takes away from the girls and the important program pieces promoting positive learning.

Intellectual Property Considerations for Posting

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. Girl Scout trademarks such as trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, badges, and patches can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) All Facebook administrators must complete Brand Ambassador 101 for Volunteers Training in gsLearn.