



Computer and Internet Use

Council Approval: Not Required

Activity Permitted for: D B J C S A

About Computer and Internet Use

Girl Scouts use the internet for a variety of reasons, including:

- **Completing steps toward earning a badge or other similar award online.**
- **Research topics.** Girl Scouts might research other council sites or Girl Scout topics, complete research needed to earn a badge, or learn more about their community.
- **Visit Girl Scouting sites.** These can include the [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts](#) (WAGGGS) website online or other WAGGGS member countries' websites.
- **Build a website.** Members could create a static webpage on the internet (one that looks the same each time users view it, with no commenting or posting capabilities) or set up a secure, password-protected website with a calendar and information for troop members and families.
- **Blog about Girl Scouting.** Groups that are planning a Take Action project, road trip, or camping adventure can consider documenting their plans and experiences on a council or national blog, and divide up the documentation duties (e.g., photography, writing, editing) among the group.
- **Participate in product programs.** Girl Scouts may participate in online Girl Scout product programs.

Adults should monitor websites that youth view, ensuring that they are safe and actively controlled. No one acting on behalf of members can conduct money-earning activities online with one exception: GSUSA-approved product programs. For more information, see [Cookie and Product Programs Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Most Girl Scouts will go online from their home computers and older girls may access the internet on mobile phones. For those who cannot go online from home, confirm their ability to access a computer at school or at their local library. If those are not options, check with your Girl Scout council for suggestions on sites where computers are available for use.

When planning a group learning session, identify locations such as a library, a Girl Scout program center, a school or college computer lab, a computer retail store



with a training facility, or a museum that provide groups with opportunities to use computers and access the internet.

Learn More

- [Girl Scouts of the USA](#)
- [Stop, Think, Connect](#)

Include all Girl Scout Members.

Talk to Girl Scout members with disabilities and their caregivers. Ask about needs and accommodations, such as screen readers for Girl Scouts who are blind or visually impaired. Some members may need adult or peer support to physically navigate the internet themselves.

Equity. Consider the history, culture, and past experiences of the Girl Scout members in your troop that could affect their ability to equally participate in an activity. Work with members and families to understand how an activity is perceived. Ensure that all Girl Scout members and their families feel comfortable and have access to whatever is needed to fully participate, such as proper equipment, prior experiences, and the skills needed to enjoy the activity. See the [Equity](#) section of the [Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for general advice about expense.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before starting any activity and review it so all are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury, missing person, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

Computer and Internet Use Checkpoints

Copy and distribute the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#). All youth, as well as their parents/guardians, must read, agree to, and abide by the *Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge* when online.

Ensure Girl Scouts' safety in website design. They must understand that the internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites can often attract people other than their intended audiences and users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of all Girl Scout members is not disclosed on a website. The following measures help to ensure Girl Scouts' safety while online:

- Use only first names; never include last names.
- Never post addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of members.
- Always have a parent or guardian's permission when using pictures of Girl Scouts on a website. This is important for all youth, and special regulations apply for children younger than 13 years of age.



- Do not post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events, or trips. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate about upcoming events with troop members and families should send an email or use a secure, password-protected website.
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to their website. All postings on sites such as message boards or guest books should have adult oversight and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure websites do not show personal email addresses of members but use a troop or group email or an adult's email address.

Be aware of shared content. When linking to other websites from your site, make sure site contents are in keeping with Girl Scout principles and activities. Avoid linking to commercial sites selling merchandise to avoid implied Girl Scout endorsement of the products they offer. Instead, seek out sites that support participation in Girl Scouting. These sites should be tasteful and program-level appropriate. They should show diversity, be beneficial to Girl Scout members, adults, and families, and be consistent with the mission of Girl Scouting. As a courtesy, consider emailing the site's webmaster for permission to link to the site. Use similar criteria to determine which sites you support linking to your group's website.

Respect copyrighted material. The basic principle is: If it's not yours, don't use it. A group's website may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder.

Girl Scouts may use trademarks owned by GSUSA, which include the trefoil shape, Daisy and Brownie Girl Scout pins, contemporary and traditional Girl Scout pins, the words Daisy Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, Junior Girl Scout, Cadette Girl Scout, Senior Girl Scout, Ambassador Girl Scout, Girl Scouting, Girl Scouts, Girl Scout Cookies, Brownie Girl Scout Try-Its, Junior Girl Scout badges, all Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scout interest project awards, names, and symbols, and all Girl Scout Journey insignia. Information on the use of GSUSA trademarks can be found under [Terms and Conditions](#) on the footer of each page of the national site.

Keep in mind that Girl Scout trademarks 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. Check with your council for complete graphic guidelines and approval information.

Note, too, that some names (such as commercial products and cartoon characters) are trademarked and cannot be incorporated on most websites. Permission is also required from the author or publisher for the use of videos and music on



websites—so don't post words from copyrighted songs, poems, or books, as permission must be granted from the record label, publisher, artist, poet, or author.

A troop/group social networking site may be set up by groups whose Girl Scouts are at least 13 years old and who have obtained parental permission to do so. In addition, all social networking sites (such as Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, and Instagram) must be approved by the council and must meet age limits set by the provider—usually 13 years or older in most cases, which is in accordance with the U.S. Child Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA) and the Child Online Protection Act (COPA).

Any appearance in a Girl Scout–related online video or picture requires permission in writing from each member's parent or guardian, using the Girl Scout permission form or media release provided by your council. These completed forms should be held by the adult and/or council.

For information on online product programs, see [*Cookie and Product Sales Safety Activity Checkpoints*](#).

Other Girl Scout Programs

As part of Girl Scout programs, members may create their own unique website to highlight their program activities. These program activity website links should only be shared with family, friends, and others the members know firsthand.

To keep members safe when they use their own websites, keep in mind:

- Parents/caregivers must review and approve a Girl Scout's website before it goes live.
- For youth under 13 years old, a parent or caregiver must manage their website and be responsible for all content, communication, and information posted.
- Parents/caregivers must review and approve any pictures and videos before they are posted to the website. If the youth is under 13 years old, a parent or caregiver must personally post the pictures and videos to the website themselves—youth under 13 are not permitted to do this.



Girl Scouts Computer Internet Safety Pledge

Girl Scouts Internet Safety Pledge for all Girl Scouts

On my honor I pledge that,

- I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number(s), parents' or guardians' work address/telephone number(s), and the name and location of my school without their permission.
- I will tell an adult right away if I come across or receive any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- I will always follow the rules of internet sites, including those rules that are based on age of use, parental approval and knowledge, and public laws.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents or guardians. If my parents or guardian agree to a meeting, I will arrange it in a public place and bring a parent or guardian along.
- I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parent or guardian.
- I will talk with my parent or guardian so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide on the time of day that I can be online, the length of time that I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.
- I will not use the internet to collect money for Girl Scout products other than what is specifically permitted and outlined in the safety guidelines related to Girl Scout product sales.
- I will practice online "netiquette" (good manners) at all times when online.
- I will not spam or hack others.
- I will not bully, nor will I tolerate bullying (and I will always tell a trusted adult if this is a problem).
- I will not use bad language.
- I will be guided by the Girl Scout Promise and Law in all that I do online.

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