

Guidance Note -

Boundaries When Interacting With Others in Guiding (particularly with Youth Members)



About this document

This document is provided as a supplementary document to the Girl Guides Australia (GGA) Child Safe Child Friendly (CSCF) Policy. In particular it supports the Procedures for Element 10 – Girl Guiding in Practise: clause 3 Boundaries When Interacting With Youth Members. Your supervisor will be able to provide you support if you need to gain a better understanding of the boundaries that must be observed by all Adults in Guiding when engaging with other Adults in Guiding and Youth Members. Leaders in charge of events should make all Casual Volunteers aware of the GGA Code of Conduct. As all Casual Volunteers are supervised by an Adult in Guiding, the Adult in Guiding can use the Code of Conduct to guide the supervision.

GGA Code of Conduct

All Adults in Guiding have agreed to be bound by the GGA Code of Conduct. This means all Adults in Guiding have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with the Code of Conduct, noting that the Code of Conduct also applies to conduct outside of Girl Guide meetings and events. The second page of the Code of Conduct provides examples of behaviours which demonstrate compliance with the Code of Conduct and the commitment to maintaining Girl Guiding as a safe and friendly organisation for all.

The consequences of a proven breach of the Code of Conduct includes loss of leadership qualifications, exclusion from Guide events and loss of membership.

It is the responsibility of all Adults in Guiding to take appropriate action if they see others not acting in accordance with the Code of Conduct. This includes taking action immediately where the health and safety of any Youth Member or Adult in Guiding is impacted or lodging a Girl Guide Complaint Form with the relevant State office.

Girl Guide Promise and Guide Law

The Code of Conduct requires all Adults in Guiding to behave in the spirit of the Girl Guide Promise and Guide Law. A further expectation of all Adult Members is that they will have made or be working towards making their Girl Guide Promise. All who have made the Girl Guide Promise should live their life in accordance with that Promise – doing their best, being true to themselves, developing their beliefs, serving their community and Australia and living by the Guide Law.

The Guide Law is a framework and philosophy for living. It provides significant guidance on the expectations around engagement with others – respecting yourself and others, being considerate, honest and trustworthy, being friendly to others, making choices for a better world, using time and abilities wisely, being thoughtful and optimistic, living with courage and strength.

The Child Safe Child Friendly Policy

An important strategic foundation of Girl Guides Australia is Child Safe Child Friendly Community. The Child Safe Child Friendly (CSCF) Framework was introduced to formalise and consolidate the child safe child friendly ways of work that have always formed part of the Girl Guide community. The CSCF Framework, Policy, Procedures and Guidance Notes all support Adults in Guiding to maintain a Child Safe Child Friendly Community. Adherence to the CSCF Policy and Procedures is mandatory to maintaining involvement in Guiding in Australia. This is supported by training and supervision. There are specific areas of guidance provided in the Child Safe Child Friendly procedures – particularly Elements 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Other policies and procedures of GGA and State Girl Guide Organisations (SGGOS)

While the Child Safe Child Friendly Policy provides comprehensive guidance, there are several other policies which will contribute to understanding of appropriate boundaries. These reinforce and expand on areas in the GGA Code of Conduct, Girl Guide Promise, Guide Law and the various procedures for the Elements of the Child Safe Child Friendly Policy. Of particular relevance to boundary settings are the:

- GGA Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- GGA Social Media Policy
- GGA Privacy Statement
- GGA Internet and Social Media Policies

Some specifics on behaviours within Girl Guiding in Australia

The primary activity of Girl Guiding in Australia is to deliver the Australia Guide Program to girls between the ages of 5 and 18 years. The program offered has near endless diversity as it is girl-led. Usual activities will include indoor games, activities and programs; camping; overnight stays in accommodation; hiking; abseiling; wide games; boating; caving; interstate and international travel to attend events; visits to local parks.

Girl Guides does not offer services such as out-of-home care or personal care (toileting, feeding, changing clothes and other activities of daily life) to Youth Members or others.

All Adults in Guiding are expected to maintain boundaries appropriate to the Girl Guide activity they are engaged in at the time. Included below are some behaviours that represent good practice when interacting with others, particularly Youth Members:

- Follow the [GGA Supervision Ratio](#) policy noting at least two adults should always be present
- Utilise the Guide 'Arm up' signal to gain the attention of Youth Members rather than using a raised voice or any other attention seeking method
- Only used a raised voice if there is danger and gaining attention is imperative to avoid an injury
- Provide clear instruction to Youth Members and take time to explain the instructions in a different way should they not initially understand
- Make affirmative comments to redirect behaviour of Youth Members if they are being disruptive
- Limit physical contact to involvement in the usual games and activities - there should never be rough play
- Check in with the Youth Member if it is ok with them if you provide assistance to them e.g., when they need assistance to raise a tent or when you need to check the harness for abseiling or the life jacket for water activities
- Never act in a way that is intended to cause pain or distress to a Youth Member
- Have minimal physical contact when rendering first aid, responding to an emergency situation or providing comfort in a distressing situation
- Not providing personal care such as toileting, feeding or changing clothes (unless this was part of the response to a transient health situation)
- Apply the [GGA Supervision Ratio](#) policy and other relevant policies regarding electronic communication with Youth Members remembering that children are particularly vulnerable on digital platforms
- Not give unwarranted gifts to individual Youth Members or show any other sort of 'favouritism'
- When transporting Youth Members in a vehicle, follow the guidelines in Element 10 – Girl Guiding in Practise and use your common sense as to what is the most child safe seating configuration for example:
 - Always try to have at least two girls in the vehicle with you – preferably in the back seat
 - Consider the order and manner of dropping off Youth Members – you can ask a parent to meet you at the second last drop off location so that you are not alone with any Youth Member
 - Only use the front passenger seat for a Youth Member when all other seats with seat belts fitted are occupied by other Youth Members
 - In an emergency situation when you may be transporting one Youth Member, place them in the back seat if it is safe to do so. If, for example, they were having an asthma attack and you were transporting them to medical assistance and no other person is able to travel with you, then having them in the front seat so you can observe their breathing is managing the risk in that situation appropriately.