

Guidance Note:

Being Safe in the Digital Space



About this document

This document is provided as a supplementary document to the GGA CSCF Policy in particular it supports the procedures for Element 10 – Girl Guiding in Practise: Clause 8 Digital Platforms.

Please note: Social media and digital platforms are changing regularly. The information in this Guidance Note is current at the date of publication.

Being safe and responsible in the digital space

The GGA Code of Conduct provides the foundation for how Adults in Guiding communicate with others in an open and respectful way when using digital platforms. Included below are some ways you can apply the GGA Code of Conduct in digital spaces:

1. *Behaving in the spirit of the Girl Guide Promise and Guide Law.*
If a behaviour would not be considered as acceptable as a Girl Guide in ‘real’ life, it is also not acceptable to behave that way online.
2. *Adhering to the laws of Australia and the policies and procedures of GGA and the relevant SGGO.*
We are all responsible for ensuring that those in Girl Guiding are safe online. Following laws, policies and procedures will guide you in what is appropriate.
3. *Contributing to a safe, friendly environment and culture in which all people are safe from emotional, physical, verbal and sexual abuse.*
Cyber-bullying is a crime. If you are concerned that behaviour might be criminal, you should report the conduct to the Police. If you witness or are subject to bullying or abusive behaviour online from anyone in Girl Guiding it should be reported to your SGGO. You can also refer to the guidance provided by GGiA policies such as the GGA Child Safe Child Friendly Policy or the Whistleblower Policy for GGA or your SGGO.
4. *Treating all people fairly and not tolerating discrimination of any kind.*
Using digital platforms in a way that is inclusive and appropriate for all people , taking into consideration their age and access to technology. There should not be a requirement to exclusively engage with Girl Guiding through a particular digital platform, where that can be avoided.

5. *Respecting other's rights to privacy and the confidentiality of their personal information.*

Content (including photos and information) shared online should be considered as lasting forever. A person may be impacted (either positively or negatively) by the sharing of content about them online for many years. The GGA Privacy Policy should be referenced for further information.

6. *Conducting myself in a manner that a reasonable person would consider appropriate.*

We can all enjoy digital platforms more and keep ourselves and others safe when our conduct is reasonable and appropriate.

7. *Representing Girl Guiding on digital platforms in a positive light.*

When you are representing Girl Guides, you should only promote the beliefs and values of Girl Guiding. Online, people might think your comments represent GGIA because they can see that you are an Girl Guide Member, Volunteer or Employee.

For Youth Members, Leaders will work with their Units every year to develop Unit Rules. All Unit Rules must cover the digital space. For camps, Camp Rules must also cover the digital space and use of electronic devices while at camp.

For all other persons volunteering or working for Girl Guiding in Australia in any way, it is the responsibility of the person engaging the person to provide an induction on all of the requirements of *Guide Lines*, including the requirements in the digital space.

Use of a disclaimer on your personal social media accounts

Use of a disclaimer may minimise the fallout of inappropriate comments, however it may not limit the review of the comment against the Code of Conduct.

An example of a disclaimer for personal social media accounts could be "*views and opinions expressed are my own and are not reflective of any organisation I work for or volunteer with*". A simplified version is "*views and thoughts are my own*".

Use of Girl Guiding photos on your personal social media accounts

We understand that you are often excited to share your Girl Guiding adventures with your friends and family. However, the safety of our Members is very important.

Photos of Youth Members cannot be shared on your private social media. If you share a photo of an Adult in Guiding, you must have their consent to use the photo and if they ask you to remove the photo you must acknowledge their request and remove it from your page.

You CAN share a social media post of an official Girl Guide social media account.

Your behaviour online can also have external consequences

You can commit a crime online just like you can in the ‘real’ world and the police may charge you for breaches of the law. Where your action breaches a policy of GGiA you might cause a GGiA entity to breach its legal obligations, which can result in fines or other charges to you or the GGiA entity. Cyber-bullying, sharing inappropriate images, breaching copyright and inappropriately sharing someone’s private information can all result in serious implications to you and GGiA.

Adults in Guiding are also responsible for the online safety of Youth Members while engaged in Guiding. This is done by complying with the Child Safe Child Friendly Policy and creating a Child Safe and Child Friendly space. All conduct on digital platforms must give high priority to meeting these obligations.

Being safe in the digital space - In Action

Below are some examples of how you may use digital platforms in Girl Guiding appropriately.

Desired use of Platform	Appropriate	Not appropriate
You are a Unit Leader and want to use a Facebook Group for communication with your Unit Members	Your Facebook group is approved by your SGGO and only Members, parents/guardians of Youth Members, or Youth Members 16+ years old (Facebook’s min age for an account) are group members.	The page is open and there are no controls on who may see or join the group. You use the Facebook Group to communicate with just one Youth Member.
Using Zoom for a meeting with Youth Members	Youth Members connect through a parent’s account if under 16 years old (Zoom’s minimum age for an account) and are reminded they should join from a public space in their home (not a bedroom). GGA Supervisions Ratios are being met.	Only one Adult Member is online for the meeting. A Youth Member(s) have joined the meeting from private spaces such as a bedroom.
Using WhatsApp for messaging a group of Members	All Members in the group are over 13 years old (WhatsApp minimum age for an account) or for Youth Members are connected through their parent’s account and content of messaging is moderated.	Posts are not moderated and some Members post comments that make other Members feel excluded. The behaviours are repeated, and some Members are being cyber-bullied.
Running a Girl Guide Unit for Youth Members where they meet online only	When parents make a decision for their daughter to join the Unit, they are aware that the Unit meets online. Appropriate controls are in place for how digital platforms are used. Other options are available for girls to engage with Guiding through meetings or flexible program options.	Parents feel forced to have their daughter utilise online digital platforms and/or have personal accounts that are not appropriate for her age.

Desired use of Platform	Appropriate	Not appropriate
Sharing content about Girl Guiding on your Instagram page	You share your personal experience in a positive way, and it is clear from your Instagram page that you are not speaking officially for GGiA when you post content as you have included an appropriate disclaimer.	You post pictures of Youth Members. It isn't clear from your page that any comments you make about Guiding are your personal views as you have not included an appropriate disclaimer.
Sharing content on an Official Site such as an SGGO Facebook page	You check before providing an image for posting that all Members in an image have given appropriate consent for this image to be used.	You are not sure who has given permission for their image to be used and don't alert your SGGO to which Members are in the image so they may confirm the image may be used.
You are asked by a Youth Member or their parent/guardian to remove a photo of their child or of them on the Unit Facebook Group	You remove the image as soon as possible and at least within 24hours of receiving the request.	You ignore the request and leave the photo online as you think it's a nice photo.
You are sending an email via a Girl Guide email address.	You send and receive emails relating to your role in Girl Guides and consider the GGA Code of Conduct when responding to emails.	You send and receive personal emails, subscribe to retail newsletters using the email address or subscribe to external third parties using the Girl Guide email address (for example Netflix, Disney).
Sending a group email to share information on an upcoming event	Those who receive the email can only see and reply to the email addresses of those who have agreed for their email to be shared. All other email addresses of recipients are in the BCC field.	All email addresses are open and can be seen, whether or not permission has been given. You don't remove someone from a group email following their request for you to do so.
Your program requires the use of the internet (such as JOTA/JOTI)	You have undertaken a risk assessment for the activity and considered relevant issues such as using internet enabled devices that are in public spaces, Youth Member supervision in accessing sites or applications and availability of content filters.	You have not considered the risks of the program. Youth Members are allowed free and unsupervised access to internet enabled devices which includes downloading and using applications which you are not familiar with.
You use your personal device for Guiding purposes	Your device is password (or biometrically) protected and programs where GGiA information is accessed or stored (such as your email) are also password protected.	You don't have passwords and GGiA information could be accessed easily.

Some Useful Links

Australian Cyber Security Centre [ACSC Homepage | Cyber.gov.au](https://www.cyber.gov.au)

Information website that includes the ability to register for newsletters and updates, step-by-step guides and other support material on keeping business, individuals and children safe online.

eSafety Commissioner www.esafety.gov.au

Information website for staying safe online. Also provides a method for reporting concerns.

ACCC Scamwatch www.scamwatch.gov.au

You can report internet scams to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission via this site.

Crimestoppers crimestoppers.com.au or 1800 333 000

You may contact Crimestoppers to report a crime or if you are concerned a crime may have been committed.

Some Useful Definitions

Term	Definition
BCC	Blind Carbon Copy and means when you BCC someone on an email it sends them a copy of the email but conceals their email address from all other recipients.
Multi-factor authentication	The creation of multi-factors to identify access to an account (typically in addition to passwords or passphrases).
Official Site	An official site on a digital platform which is operated and maintained by GGA or an SGGO.
Page Administrator	The individual or individuals who manages the social media page.
Passphrase	A string of words that must be used to gain access to a computer system or service:
Password	A string of characters that allows access to a computer system or service.
State Girl Guide Organisations (SGGO)	Girl Guides New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory & Northern Territory, Girl Guides Queensland, Girl Guides South Australia, Girl Guides Tasmania, Girl Guides Victoria and Girl Guides Western Australia.
Volunteers	A person doing unpaid work for or on behalf of GGA or a SGGO. All Adult Members are considered to be Volunteers.
Youth Member	Current financial Members of a SGGO under 18 years of age.

For more definitions used in the Child Safe Child Friendly Framework – refer to the [CSCF Definitions and Abbreviations](#) document on *Guide Lines*.