

## Guidelines for Using Social Media

For Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio, the power of Social Media to help us do our work is matched only by its power to hinder our work, whether it's FaceBook, Twitter, or some other form. We see both of the faces of Facebook and other social media sites dozens of times each day during Cookie Season. The purpose of this information sheet is to offer guidelines that will help all of us use the power of social media to accomplish our goals. With the advent of Facebook pages in the regions and areas, as well as thousands of personal Facebook pages, it becomes absolutely necessary to follow some rules. **Not following these rules will result in a demand by GSSGC to either take down the offending site or remove all references to Girl Scouts and GSSGC.**

When using social media, it will be helpful to remind ourselves why we are using this tool. Over 50 years ago, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur delivered what is now known as his Farewell Speech to the Corps of Cadets at West Point. The General concluded his remarks by saying that his last conscious thoughts before he died would be "of the Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps." When we log onto our computers to use social media, let our first conscious thoughts be of the Girls, and the Girls, and the Girls.

Now for the guidelines. No one can dictate to you how you use your personal social media, but these guidelines are really rules and established policy for your Council staff and must be followed if the Girl Scout or GSSGC names and logos are used. They govern the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Facebook page, which is the ONLY social media site where you will find answers you can depend on 100% regarding Girl Scout programs (including Fall Product and Cookies), membership recruitment, volunteer affairs, and Council events.

- **Remember Your Audience**

We've all heard horror stories about social media posts that have come back to haunt people—sometimes years later. You may know who's friended you on your own Facebook page, but do you know everyone who might see your post on another person's Facebook page?

- **Be Positive**

Let's be frank. It's sometimes hard to resist using social media to criticize things we don't like or, sadly, to tear down people with whom we don't agree. Remember the Girl Scout Promise and Law before posting. And consider this: If you think you should post anonymously, you should not post at all.

- **Tell the Truth**

Needs no explanation? Maybe, but ask yourself if you're telling the whole truth or leaving stuff out to bend the truth to be what you want it to be. Are you relating facts of which you have personal knowledge, or passing along rumors and stories that might not be true?

- **Have a Purpose**

Before you post a comment, know what you want to accomplish and the goals you are trying to reach. You may be asking a question, sharing information that you have learned or trying to drum up interest in a project or issue that's dear to your heart. Ask yourself, does this post move you toward your goal?

- **Add Value**

Say something helpful, witty or informative. Use social media to move ideas forward, encourage girls and your Girl Scout colleagues, and offer positive suggestions. The world doesn't need to know what you ate for breakfast this morning.

- **Speak for Yourself**

When you are sharing your personal opinion, use the first person—that is "I" and not "We." When offering advice or information regarding Girl Scouts, be sure that you are clear that you are sharing your personal experience and knowledge of Girl Scouts, and that you are not speaking for Girl Scouts or GSSGC.

- Play Nice**

Remember that you are a Girl Scout and live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Social media may appear to be the “Wild West,” but it is no more a place for mean, disrespectful comments than any other social gathering place. Don’t call other people names; make unfounded accusations; resort to foul language; use racial or ethnic slurs: in short, don’t act like a jerk--behave well. Heed your mother’s adage: “If you can’t say something nice about somebody, don’t say anything at all.”
- Give Attribution and Respect Copyrights**

Don’t use other people’s stuff without permission. If you do get permission, give the person credit for the idea or material. Furnishing links to articles or material on websites is acceptable, if those websites acknowledge the source or author of the material. Never use other people’s material or ideas as if they were your own.
- If It’s Confidential, Keep It That Way!**

OK, we’re not talking about sharing national security secrets. But we are talking about violating another person’s confidence. Social media is no place to share your personal business or the personal business of others. Once something is put out there, it can take on a life of its own and spread like wildfire. You may think you are talking to your friends, but you may really be talking to hundreds of strangers without knowing it. So if someone has told you that something is confidential, keep it that way and keep it out of your conversations on social media.
- Be Social**

The name “social media” comes from the idea that online conversations are taking place, much like they might in your living room or over coffee after church. It’s not a one-way conversation; it’s give and take, back and forth. If you blog and people comment on your blog, respond nicely to their comments. Acknowledge them and the value of their points of view, just as they acknowledge and value yours.
- Use Common Sense**

Think of social media as a giant billboard. What you post can be seen by anyone—your boss, your co-workers, your sister Girl Scouts, your Mom. A poorly chosen comment could damage your council and wreak havoc on your life.
- Your Daughter Is Watching**

Imagine that your daughter (or someone else’s daughter) is reading what you post. Let your conscious thoughts always be of the Girls, and the Girls, and the Girls.
- Enjoy the Interaction**

Have fun using Social Media. Where else can you connect with old friends and make new ones in a split second? Where else can you learn new things and then immediately share that knowledge with others? Where else can you get help with a thorny problem and benefit from the experiences of hundreds of other people? Where else can you celebrate your triumphs, share your disappointments, and be reassured that many other people think and feel the way you do about Girl Scouts and serving the girls?