



Computer and Internet Use

Activity Permitted for: D B J C S A

Council Approval: Not Required

Vendor Approval: Not Required

Required Training: 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights (gsLearn): when computer and internet use is part of field trip activities away from troop/group meeting place

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. Girls might research other Girl Scout council sites or Girl Scout topics; complete research needed to earn a badge or learn more about their community.
- Visit Girl Scouting sites. Girls might visit the [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts \(WAGGGS\)](#) website online or other WAGGGS member countries' websites.
- Learn more about product activities. Girls can use Girl Scout vendor websites to learn more about product activities.
- Build a website. Girls may 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 girls 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.
- Girl Scout Product Sales programs. Girls may participate in online Girl Scout product sales programs.

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

Most girls will go online from their home computers and older girls may access the internet on their mobile phones. For girls who cannot go online from home, 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](#)
- [Go Girls Only](#) (for girls in grades 1–6)
- [Stop, Think, Connect](#)

Equity. In addition to physical and social-emotional disabilities, 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.

Infectious Disease Guidelines. Girl Scouts use a commonsense approach to health and safety. Before participating in Girl Scouting activities, members are to undergo health checks at home for any symptoms such as fever of 100.4 (or need for fever-reducing medications) chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, stomach aches, nausea, or vomiting. Members with any of these symptoms or in need of fever-reducing medication **MUST** stay home until fully recovered.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Review and document your Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before taking girls out for any activity and review it with the girls so they too are prepared. Think through scenarios of what can go wrong such as an accident, physical injury to a girl, missing girl, sudden illness, or sudden weather or water emergencies.

Computer and Internet Use Checkpoints

Required Training: Troop/Group Program leaders must complete GSUSA’s online leadership courses and GSVSC’s 281 GS 201 Trips & Overnights course in gsLearn when computer and internet use is part of field trip activities away from troop/group meeting place. Adult volunteer chaperones must complete GSVSC’s 281 GS 104 Orientation for Support Volunteers online course in gsLearn.

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

Ensure girls’ safety in website design. Girls 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 Girl Scout members (girls and adults) is not disclosed on a website. The following measures help to ensure girls’ safety while online:

- Use only first names, and never include last names.
- Never post addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of girls.
- Always have a parent or guardian’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is important for all girls, 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 families of Girl Scouts should send an email to the families.
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a 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 girls 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 girls' participation in Girl Scouting. These sites should be tasteful and program-level appropriate. They should show diversity, be beneficial to girls, 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 is 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.

Girls may use trademarks owned by GSUSA, which include the trefoil shape, Girl Scout Daisy and Brownie pins, contemporary and traditional Girl Scout pins, the words Girl Scout Daisy, Girl Scout Brownie, Girl Scout Junior, Girl Scout Cadette, Girl Scout Senior, Girl Scout Ambassador, Girl Scouting, Girl Scouts, and Girl Scout Cookies, Girl Scout Brownie Try-Its, Girl Scout Junior badges, and all Girl Scout Cadette and Ambassador 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's website 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, and is nearly impossible to obtain.

A troop/group social networking site may be set up by groups whose girls are at least 13 years old and who have obtained parental permission to do so. In addition, all social networking sites (such as Facebook and Twitter) must be approved by the council and must meet age limits set by the provider—usually 13 years old and older in most cases, which is in accordance with the United States 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 from each girl's parent or guardian, using the GSUSA girl/adult permission form. 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](#). Girls may only post about their participation in Girl Scout programs on social media sites that allow them to restrict access to friends and family, such as Facebook, and not to social media sites open to anyone, such as Craigslist or eBay.

Girls may create their own Girl Scout program website to highlight their program activities. Girls should only share program activity website links with family, friends, and others they know firsthand.

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

- Parents/guardians must review and approve a girl's website before it goes live.

- For girls under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must manage the girl’s website and be responsible for all content, communication, and information posted.
- Parents/guardians must review and approve any pictures and videos before they are posted to a girl’s website. If the girl is under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must personally post the pictures and videos to the girl’s website themselves—girls under 13 are not permitted to do this.

Girl Scouts Computer Internet Safety Pledge

Girl Scout 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 the permission of my parent or guardian.

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.

The GSUSA Online Safety Pledge is based on the Online Safety Pledge developed by the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#).