



Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints



Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons such as to communicate with other girls, research travel plans and activities, and create websites for events and series opportunities. In addition, Councils may choose to participate in the Digital Cookie online sales program, as well as the online sale and marketing of other approved Girl Scout related products. In addition, a Girl Scout group working with an adult may wish to do such things as:

- Earn a technology award or other award found online
- Search for other Girl Scout council or group web sites
- Research a badge or community resource
- Visit the [World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts' \(WAGGGS\) Web site](#) or member countries' web sites
- Create a static web page on the Internet (a static web page is one that looks the same each time users view it and does not allow guests to post to it)
- Set up a secure, password-protected Web site with a calendar and information for girls and families
- Use Girl Scout vendor web sites to learn more about product activities

Adults should monitor web sites that girls view, ensuring that they are safe and actively controlled. No girl or adult acting on behalf of girl members can collect money online for

Girl Scout products or conduct money-earning activities online with two exceptions. The first is for Digital Cookie, and the second is for GSUSA-approved magazine vendor programs. In addition to the information contained in these Safety Activity Checkpoints, please also see the Safety Activity Checkpoints titled “Girl Scout Cookie/Council Sponsored Product Sales”.

Know where to use computers and go online. Most girls will go online from their home computers. For girls that cannot go online from home, check with your Girl Scout council for suggestions on sites where computers are available for use.

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Learn more about the resources and information that **Independent Living Institute** provides to people with disabilities.

Prepare for Computer/Online Use

- Communicate with council and parents.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Girls plan the activity.** *See the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints.*
- Arrange for transportation and adult supervision.** *If girls will be participating in a group learning session outside of their normal meeting place, see the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints for the recommended adult-to-girl ratios.*
- Verify instructor knowledge and experience.** When planning a group learning session, make sure the instructor has the appropriate knowledge and experience for the learning session.
- Select a safe location to use computers and the web.** When planning a group learning session, identify a location that provides group members with opportunities to use computers and access the Internet. Look for computers available for group use at a library, Girl Scout program center, school or college computer lab, computer rental store with training facility, or museum. Make sure that there are enough computers for each girl to learn by doing, even if there is some sharing (cooperative learning) taking place.
- Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.** Before girls use the Internet, copy and distribute the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, which is available at the end of this document and at www.girlscouts.org. All girls, as well as their parent/guardian, must read, agree to and sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge before girls go online.

Guidelines for Developing a Web Site

- Ensure girls' safety in web site design.** Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, web sites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a web site. The following measures help to ensure girls' safety while online:
 - Use only girls' first names.

- Never post last names, addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses of girls.
 - Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a Web site. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
 - Do not post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events or trips. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families.
 - Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a web site. All postings (such as message boards or guest books) should have adult oversight and be screened prior to posting live.
 - Ensure that web sites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop or group e-mail, or an adult's e-mail address.
- **Web sites and links.** When selecting links to other web sites that show on your site, make sure the contents of potential links 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. Seek out sites that enhance girls' participation in Girl Scouting. These sites should be: tasteful; program level appropriate; show diversity; beneficial for girls, adults, and families; and in keeping with the Girl Scout organization's purpose. As a courtesy, you should e-mail the site's Webmaster, requesting permission to link to the site. Use similar criteria to determine what sites link to your group's web site.
- **Respect copyrighted material.** A group web site may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder. The basic principle is, if it's not yours, don't use it. Girls may use trademarks owned by GSUSA, which include the trefoil shape; Girl Scout Daisy Pin and Girl Scout Brownie Pin; contemporary and traditional Girl Scout pins; the words Girl Scout Daisy, Girl Scout Brownie, Girl Scout Junior, Girl Scout Cadettes, 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-Ambassador Interest Project awards, their names and symbols, as well as all Girl Scout journey insignia. Information on use of GSUSA graphics and trademarks can be found at www.girlscouts.org under Girl Scout Central: Graphics Gallery, and under the link for Terms and Conditions on the footer of each www.girlscouts.org page (http://www.girlscouts.org/help/terms_conditions.asp). 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 Web site. Check with your council's Web site for complete graphics guidelines and approvals. Some names (such as commercial products and cartoon characters) are also trademarked and cannot be incorporated into web sites or web site addresses. Permission is also required from the author or publisher for the use of videos and music on web sites. Do not post words to 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.
- **Social-networking sites.** Groups whose girls are at least 13 years old and have obtained parental permission may set up a troop or group social networking site. In addition, all social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace) 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 online marketing using social networking tools must follow guidelines outlined in the “Managing Group Finances” chapter of *Volunteer Essentials*. Any appearance in a Girl Scout–related online video or picture must have 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.

Digital Cookie Guidelines

Digital Cookie is an online sales outlet for Girl Scout Cookies, designed to supplement and enhance the traditional cookie sales program. Since this is a unique way for girls to participate in the Girl Scout Cookie sale, separate Terms and Conditions for Girl Scouts, Volunteers, Parents/Guardians and Councils have been developed.

- **Ensure girls safety.** Girls must read and accept the Girl Scouts Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. Parents/guardians of girls must read and accept the Terms and Conditions for Parents/Guardians of Girl Scouts before their daughter can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. Finally, volunteers must read and accept the Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in the Digital Cookie Program. The following measures will help to keep a girl safe while participating in the Digital Cookie Program:
 - Girls should never post their last names, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses
 - Girls may only post about their participation in the Digital Cookie program on social media sites that allow them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook), and not to social media sites open to anyone (e.g. Craigslist or e-Bay).
 - Girls will only share the link to their Digital Cookie site with people they know in real life
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- **Digital Cookie web sites.** As part of the Digital Cookie program, girls will be creating their own unique web sites to market and sell Girl Scout Cookies. Girls will be able to take and track orders, set sales goals and show how they will use the proceeds from cookie sales to support Girl Scout activities. Girls will also be able to upload videos to their website to help market the Girl Scout cookie sale. In order to ensure the safe use a girl’s Digital Cookie web site the following points should be kept 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 web site and be responsible for all content and information posted.
 - Girls must only share their first name, troop number and council name on their Digital Cookie web site.
 - Parents/guardians must review and approve any pictures and videos before they are posted to a girl’s Digital Cookie web site. If the girl is under 13 years old, a parent or guardian must post the pictures and videos to the girl’s web site.

- The posting of all videos must be done in accordance with the instructions provided by GSUSA in order to ensure the security of the girl's Digital Cookie web site.

Computer and Online Safety Links

- Girl Scouts of the USA: www.girlscouts.org
- Go Girls Only (for girls grades 1–6): www.gogirlsonly.org
- Stop, Think, Connect: (<http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/STCResourceforKids.pdf>)
- The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia: www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org
- Girl Scout Cookies (for information on Girl Scout Cookies): www.girlscoutcookies.org
- Girl Scout council Finder: www.girlscouts.org/councilfinder

Blogging

- **Blog about Girl Scouting.** Planning a take-action project, road trip, or camping adventure? Consider documenting your plans and experiences on a council or national blog and divvy up the documentation duties (photography, writing, editing, and so on) among the group.

