

General Organic Social Media Guidance for Councils

(provided by GSUSA)

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This document offers evergreen guidance for council staff to ensure your organic social media content is strategic, brand-aligned, and effective. This is a living document that gets updated as new guidance becomes available. Use it alongside your campaign toolkits and individual posts to maximize impact while maintaining consistency across the Movement.

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Social Voice & Tone

Girl Scout social content should feel:

- Warm and welcoming
- Girl-led and empowering
- Fun, friendly, and clear
- Mission-aligned without being overly formal

Avoid jargon, too many adjectives, or overly polished corporate language. Write like you're talking to real families, girls, and volunteers (including new and unfamiliar audiences.)

Caption Writing Tips

While GSUSA provides captions for some of posts, you will need to write captions for any videos you produce and any additional posts you might create.

- Start strong. Use the first line to spark interest. Questions, bold statements, or playful openings work well.
- Include a clear call to action (CTA): Explore, Be in the Know, Register, Unlock your Patch, Share, Get the Scoop, etc. Stay away from overtly formal CTAs: Learn More, Visit Our Website.
- Use emojis intentionally (if appropriate for the platform).
- Keep it short and scannable, especially for Instagram and Facebook.
- Don't forget to include the correct link, whether it's in your bio, Stories, or post copy (for Facebook and LinkedIn). Use trackable links when available.
- When using the sample captions provided in the toolkit, feel free to tweak or localize them. Add your council name, mention a troop or event, or spotlight a real local Girl Scout to make it more engaging for your local audience.
 - If there is a specific direction in the toolkit NOT to change the captions, please DO NOT change the captions.
- Encourage comments and shares to boost post-performance.
- Be mindful of trending sounds, ensuring audio is age-appropriate and approved for brand use (explore the commercial sounds library in the platform for options.)

Creating Photo & Video Content

- Prioritize girl-led, candid photos whenever possible.
- Always have signed media releases for minors.
- Vertical video performs best on IG Reels, Stories, and TikTok.
- Avoid overusing stock images. Work with your local Girl Scouts!
- Music Rights Reminder: Only use music that is available within the platform's licensed library (e.g., TikTok's commercial sound library or Instagram's music tool). Do not use copyrighted music pulled from other sources unless you have permission or a commercial license. When in doubt, opt for royalty-free tracks or trending sounds that appear in the app's native selection.

Posting Cadence & Engagement

- Aim for 3-5 posts per week across platforms. Quality over quantity.
- Don't just post. Engage. Reply to comments and DMs.
- Use Stories for behind-the-scenes, quick updates, or UGC features.

Hashtags & Tagging

- Use campaign hashtags provided in each toolkit.
- Always tag @girlscouts when relevant. This way our team can possibly spotlight your content on the national pages.
- Tag partners and sponsors to increase reach if you see their handles in the toolkit.

Best Practices by Platform

Instagram

- Prioritize Reels and carousels for maximum reach and performance.
- Use Stories weekly to maintain top-of-mind relevancy and drive link clicks.
- Tag @girlscouts and partner accounts when applicable.
- Zero to 3 hashtags. Use only relevant hashtags (see campaign toolkits)
- Always update your bio link if directing people there.

Facebook

- Encourage comments and shares to boost post performance.
- Avoid long paragraphs; break up copy with line breaks.
- Add links directly into the caption when promoting something.

LinkedIn

- Use to reach alums, donors, and corporate audiences.
- Highlight impact stories, partnerships, and organizational wins.
- Maintain a more professional tone.

TikTok (Optional)

For councils with an active TikTok presence:

- Focus on trends, humor, and authentic moments.
- Prioritize short-form content, filmed vertically.
- Be mindful of trending sounds, ensuring audio is age-appropriate and approved for brand use (explore the commercial sounds library in the platform for options.)
- Explore popular content formats (“get ready with me”, “a day in the life”, “put a finger down if...” etc.) to share Girl Scout experiences.
- Highlight girls in action, behind-the-scenes, or cookie season content.
- Include short captions with hashtags and a CTA in the video or description.

UGC (User-Generated Content)

- Reshare great content from Girl Scouts, volunteers, and caregivers with necessary permission
- Use Instagram Story question stickers to collect UGC
- Credit the original poster when resharing

Crisis & Comments or Direct Messages (DMs)

- If a post sparks negative comments or controversy:
 - Pause and assess: can the comments be answered with more information about Girl Scouts or are the comments entirely hateful in nature? If comments have negative sentiment, but can be resolved through sharing approved messaging, it might be a good opportunity to present the correct narrative on a public platform. Contact GSEMA for guidance at customercare@gsema.org.
 - Create a screenshot document to keep records of negative feedback on social media.
 - Aim to re-direct negative commentors to private DMs to resolve issues.
 - Consider turning off comments on posts with overwhelming amounts of negative or harmful comments.
 - Alert your team lead and GSUSA if needed.
- Hide or delete comments only if they are abusive, spam, or violate platform guidelines, or your own community guidelines.

When in Doubt

- Reach out to the GSEMA communications team. We're here to help!
customercare@gsema.org