



A quick note on terms:

- 'Girls' means the young members enjoying the Girlguiding programme in a unit.
- 'Volunteers' are everyone in the team who delivers guiding: leaders, young leaders, unit helpers, occasional helpers and parent helpers.
- By 'parents' we mean parents, carers and other adults with responsibility for a young member.
- When we say 'term' or 'termly', we're assuming units have three terms in the year.
- When we say 'you', we're speaking directly to leaders and assistant leaders in a unit.

Doing Our Best standards

The Five Essentials checklists

The **Five Essentials** are the key principles that run through the Girlguiding programme.

Under the description of each standard there is a checklist to help you bring it to life in your unit.

A balanced and varied programme which is girl-led

Girls develop skills for life through a variety of fun indoor and outdoor activities, residential experiences and social action projects. They achieve badges and awards for their efforts.

In your unit

- Are your activities appropriate for the girls' ages and abilities?
- Do the girls enjoy a range of unit-based activities across all six programme themes?
- Do you help girls to challenge and develop themselves - and to complete at least one stage of a skills builder across each of the six programme themes?
- Do you encourage girls to work towards interest badges independently - and celebrate and record their achievements?
- Do girls take part in activities outside your unit meeting place and have chances to experience residential?
- Do you make sure girls know about all the things they can do outside your unit - with the wider guiding family, other organisations and in the local community?

Working together in small groups

Girls enjoy working with different members of the unit and in different types of groups.

In your unit

- Are you giving each girl regular chances to work with the whole group, in different group sizes and with different girls during your unit-based activities?
- Are you planning and arranging groups to give each girl the chance to contribute, thinking about the group dynamics and each girl's personality and needs?

Caring for the individual

All girls, volunteers and parents feel valued during their time with the unit and build positive relationships with each other. Whenever members are ready to move on, we help them decide the next steps in their guiding journey.

In your unit

- Do you give all new members (girls and volunteers) friendly, inclusive information that clearly explains what to expect - and give visitors a warm welcome too?
- Do you manage your waiting list effectively to make sure girls don't miss out on guiding? Do you keep girls and parents up to date and tell them about other ways they can enjoy guiding, including joining another unit?
- Are you approachable and do you take time to get to know each of your girls and fellow volunteers as individuals?
- Do you use what you know about people's likes, dislikes, needs and abilities to make sure every member has a positive experience?
- Do you record and recognise girls' individual achievements and progress through the programme, and celebrate this in your unit and beyond?
- Do you make sure parents know how to contact you, and keep them up to date about guiding activities and opportunities for both girls and adults (for example, as parent helpers)?
- When girls or volunteers are ready to move on, do you help them to explore their options and decide the next steps in their guiding journey?
- Do you work with other units and local commissioners to help young members move on to the next section or to another role in guiding when they reach the right age?

Encouraging self-government and decision making

Girls choose, plan and lead activities - and reflect on what they've experienced and learned.

In your unit

Planning and leading activities

- At least once a term, do you involve all girls in planning the programme and deciding which activities to do?
- Are you encouraging girls to make choices during weekly activities and involving them in decisions about events and residential?
- Do you support girls in choosing, planning and leading activities themselves, either for a small group or the whole unit?
- Are you encouraging girls to think about resources and possible risks, and creating a safe space where they can learn by doing?
- Do you allow girls to make mistakes or not meet the objectives of a task (unless it's unsafe) to help them learn from experience and understand it's OK to 'fail'?
- Are you encouraging girls to take more ownership of the programme as they get older and (where appropriate) involving them in the running of the unit?

Evaluation

- Do you give girls regular chances to share what they like and don't like doing in the unit, and what they've learned and achieved?
- Do you make sure every girl's voice is heard by evaluating activities in different ways?
- Do you give girls the chance to reflect at different times - after activities, after weekly meetings and events, and looking back on the whole term or year?
- Do you take what girls thought about past activities into account when planning?

Sharing a commitment to a common standard

We help girls to understand the meaning of the Promise and the Law, and how they can stay true to these commitments in their daily lives. They choose how and when to make the Promise. Volunteers also live the Promise and Law in everything they do in guiding.

In your unit

- Are you using current Girlguiding programme materials for your section so that the Promise and Law are at the core of your unit programme?
- Are you linking the activities you do with your girls to the ideals of the Promise and Law, and helping girls to understand that they're part of a worldwide guiding family (the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) who share these values?
- Do you encourage girls to share and celebrate how they're living the Promise and Law?
- Do your girls understand that they can decide whether they make the Promise, and that they can do this whenever they feel ready?
- Do you support girls to choose how and where they make the Promise, so that it's a moment that's special for them?
- Are you making time for your unit to explore and agree their expectations for behaviour (for example, through unit guidelines) in line with Girlguiding values?
- Are all volunteers in the unit following the volunteer code of conduct, acting as a role model and giving girls positive experiences?