



Parents supporting Girlguiding events

Girlguiding Safety and Safeguarding Policy

It is the policy of Girlguiding to make every effort to safeguard its members from physical, sexual and emotional harm while participating in guiding activities. The Association takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, through relevant procedures and training, children, young people and adults taking part in guiding activities do so in a safe environment.

All Leaders, instructors and other adults, whether female or male, have an obligation to avoid creating distressing situations. The trust required between Leader or instructor and participant is fundamental to the learning process and therefore should not be jeopardised. For this reason those working with girls and young women must follow these guidelines.

Other adults present

Leaders, instructors and other supporters should avoid situations where they are alone with a girl or young woman. Ideally, the third person present should be a female adult who knows the girl or young woman. This precaution protects all parties by removing the feeling of threat from an insecure participant, and by providing a witness if an accusation of improper behaviour is made.

Physical contact

Physical contact between an individual and the Leader or instructor or other supporter should be avoided. There are instances when it is necessary, eg to demonstrate a skill, but such contact should remain impersonal so there is no risk of it being misinterpreted.

Appropriate language

Care should be taken about what is said, and the way it is said. Leaders, instructors and other supporters should avoid saying anything which could be interpreted as being aggressive, suggestive, or containing an innuendo.

Infatuation

Leaders, instructors and other supporters should discourage girls and young women from becoming infatuated with them. Situations where a participant develops a 'crush' on an adult need to be handled sensitively. While it is important not to encourage a participant with a crush, the adult should be aware of the damage caused by rejection. If an adult thinks a girl or young woman is developing a crush, she/he should mention it to the participant's Unit Leader or Commissioner, or other responsible adult Leader, so she/he does not have to deal with the situation alone.

Favouritism

Leaders, instructors and other supporters should avoid showing favouritism. There are times when an adult finds it easier to relate to one girl or young woman. However, singling her out can create a feeling of resentment from others in the group, or she can become the object of their teasing. Similarly, unrealistic expectations can be created, and the motive misunderstood.

Creating impressions

It is important that Leaders, instructors and other supporters do not create a false impression. Words and actions can be misunderstood, and care should be taken to avoid awkward situations. Should such a situation arise, it is essential to handle it with care and consideration to minimise embarrassment to Leaders, instructors and participants.

Support for Leaders

Girlguiding endeavours to cooperate fully with any external organisations which have a concern for young people's safety. Training and support is provided for Leaders and Commissioners who may have to deal with concerns about the safety of girls and young women.

Concerns about a young member

If a young person entrusts you with personal information or if you have a suspicion or concern about a young person's physical, sexual or emotional well-being, please speak to either a Leader or the local Commissioner who will be able to offer appropriate support.

If the situation arises, you must:

- listen carefully and trust that what is being said is correct
- offer immediate support, understanding and reassurance
- tell the young person that you cannot keep it a secret and explain you may need to pass the information on to keep them safe
- stay calm, and try not to show sign of anxiety or shock
- inform a Leader straight away

Digital Communication

Some young members may ask you to become their 'friend' on social networking sites - this is discouraged.

Photos and/or videos

If you wish to take photos during an activity you have been involved with you must check with a Leader that parental permission has been given for the girls' pictures to be taken.

Risk

You can help ensure that guiding activities and environments are safe by identifying potential hazards and concerns and raising them with a Leader.

Accidents and incidents

Accidents and incidents may occur during guiding activities. It is the responsibility of the Leadership Team to deal with these in an effective and timely manner. If an accident or incident should occur ask members of the Team what they would like you to do. They may for instance ask you to supervise the other members of the unit not involved in the accident or incident and ensure they are safe, allowing the Leadership Team to manage the situation.

Declaration

I agree to abide by the Girlguiding Safety and Safeguarding Policy.

Signed _____ Date _____
(for the organisation/group)

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Note: For some activities Disclosure and Barring Service Checks are required. Please see the Guiding Manual for further information.