



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Safeguarding

# A Safe Space booklet

Key messages

## Introduction

This booklet outlines the key messages from A Safe Space, Levels 1-3 training sessions. It should be used to support your notes from the Levels 1-3 workshops and e-learning modules, with the support of your local commissioner and guidance that is regularly updated on our website.

In all cases, you **must read the full guidance** to enable you to plan and develop activities in your unit.

## What is Girlguiding's commitment to safeguarding?

As a volunteer, you share an important responsibility to protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of girls, young women and adults as you help them reach their full potential through great guiding experiences.

So, it's vital that you're clear about your safeguarding responsibility, and about Girlguiding's commitment to safeguarding. All volunteers must understand the procedures for recognising, responding to and referring any concerns, allegations or disclosures of harm or abuse in accordance with the processes for receiving disclosures and for allegations and concerns.

It is Girlguiding's policy to safeguard our members, especially those who are more vulnerable. We believe everyone has a right to live free from abuse, exploitation, harm and fear and to enjoy being safe and well.

By following our Safeguarding policy and process we make safe spaces for great Girlguiding, protecting the safety and wellbeing of girls, young women and adult volunteers.

### The policy

Our policy includes the systems, structures and procedures we have in place for safeguarding. This includes both child protection and the more proactive elements of safeguarding, which ensure we create a safe space for girls and young women. It also explains our values around safeguarding and how safeguarding influences all aspects of our work.

We recognise and accept our responsibility to act in loco parentis during organised activities. We also have a responsibility towards all our adult volunteers to take your safety and wellbeing seriously.

We take steps to minimise any possibility that abuse or harm could occur and to make sure we act quickly and appropriately if a concern, allegation or disclosure arises.

We are committed to maintaining good links with the statutory safeguarding authorities. In particular, we will refer an adult volunteer if we have significant concerns about their suitability to work with children and young people or if we have had to withdraw membership.

We only share information outside of Girlguiding about individuals when we really need to, for example when we know or have concerns that someone has been abused or harmed or is at risk of abuse or harm. This applies to girls, young women and adults alike. We also share information when a crime has taken place or we are told it will take place.

Sometimes we are asked to share information about individuals with other organisations when there isn't a concern about abuse or harm. If this happens, we will only share information when we have that person's explicit consent to do so.

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is a broader term than 'child protection' and is about the action we take to promote the welfare of girls, young women and adults and protect them from harm.

It is all of our responsibility to ensure that staff, volunteers, activities and procedures do no harm to girls, young women and adults in their care.

This means that they do not expose individuals to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns, allegations or disclosures the organisation may have about a person's safety or welfare are reported to the appropriate people. Which is why creating safe spaces is one of the most important things we do.

## What is harm?

Harm can be physical and/or mental damage or injury. Harm causes someone to be hurt, broken or made to feel less valuable. A person can be harmed because of unsafe activities or practices.

## What is a safe space?

A safe space is one that helps us to live out our values and Promise. It increases self-esteem and self-confidence and provides the opportunity for adventure and challenge, while encouraging young members to think for themselves and make their own decisions. A safe space boosts confidence through relationships with non-authoritarian adults and adults who listen. It shows leaders and young leaders as role models and is an example of a mutually respectful environment. All adults within Girlguiding are responsible for creating safe, caring and inclusive spaces.

## What is safety?

Safety is about being protected from, and not causing, danger, risk, injury, loss or harm. Safety can be a feeling, a physical object or place, and an action, and sometimes refers to the laws, rules, and principles that are intended to keep people safe. Safety is not just about what happens inside the meeting place, it is also about outside the meeting place, including days out. It may also be about something that is happening at home.

## What is wellbeing?

Wellbeing refers to a person's sense of contentment and satisfaction with their conditions in life and their current circumstances. It is closely linked to emotional balance and mental health but it is also affected by an individual's attitude, values and perspective.

Girlguiding aims to provide a safe girl-only space where girls and young women feel they can develop and express themselves. Creating safe spaces means they and adult members will be able to have fun, learn new things, make friends and grow.

### How do we create a safe space?

Once we identify that something or someone is unsafe, we need to do something about it. It is everyone's responsibility to challenge unsafe practices, and to make sure that the places we meet, activities we run and people who support us do not put others at risk of harm. The Code of Conduct is a part of making sure everyone in guiding has safe spaces, because it gives us some clear guidelines on how to behave. Through the last activity, participants have been reminded of this, and have considered strategies that make things safer.

## Code of Conduct

### What is our Code of Conduct?

Creating safe spaces means girls, young women and volunteers will be able to have fun, learn new things, make friends and grow. To help us achieve this, it is important that all volunteers follow our Code of Conduct. It is part of our policy framework and provides a clear set of principles for you to follow in all your interactions with Girlguiding to ensure everyone's safety and wellbeing.

As a Girlguiding volunteer you must not act fraudulently or dishonestly, or do anything which brings (or is likely to bring) Girlguiding into disrepute or have a negative impact on Girlguiding or its reputation.

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a Girlguiding volunteer you must always:

- Be a good role model with behaviour and an attitude that are in line with our values and our Promise
- Comply with all applicable UK laws and guidance. If your unit is based outside the UK or you are part of an activity outside the UK, you must also abide by the law of that country
- Make sure you follow Girlguiding policies and procedures and re-read them from time to time as they may be amended
- Be responsible and accountable in the way you perform your role
- Be fair and treat everyone with respect and dignity in accordance with our Equality and Diversity policy
- Respect others' privacy in line with our policies and guidance
- Communicate with others in an open and respectful way whether in person, by phone, writing or digital media
- Work together with Girlguiding members, their parents/ carers and the public to promote Girlguiding's mission and values.

## How to manage challenging behaviour

We all need to be aware of behaviours 'that push your buttons'. By being self-aware, you can better manage your response when challenged by the girls, young women, parents or other volunteers. It's important to recognise that as individuals we all have different views about what is difficult or challenging. You will manage a situation better if you are aware of your views and feelings and can respond calmly.

### Useful tips

- Always set ground rules at your meetings, residential or events
- Revisit the Code of Conduct regularly
- Be clear in your instructions and keep them simple to avoid frustration and confusion
- Try not to pre judge or make assumptions
- Be inclusive in all you do and say
- Consider your language (including body language)



# Process for receiving disclosures, allegations and concerns

This process tells you as volunteers what action you must take if you receive a disclosure or allegation or if you have concerns about abuse or harm, including where you observe concerning behaviour from others in Girlguiding. This chart gives an overview of your safeguarding role and responsibilities.

## 1. Being alert to signs of abuse and neglect

Everyone should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect.

## 2. Question behaviours

The signs of abuse or neglect might not always be obvious and a vulnerable person might not tell anyone what is happening to them. You should therefore question behaviours if something seems unusual and try to speak to

the person, if appropriate, to seek further information but remain within sight and sound of other volunteers.

## 3. Seek help

Concerns about a person can vary greatly in terms of their nature and seriousness, how they have been identified and over what duration they have arisen. If you have concerns about a girl, young woman or adult that lead you to think they have been or could be harmed, you must ask for help. You should discuss your concerns with a leader in the first instance. If they are unavailable, contact the commissioner or Safeguarding team at HQ.



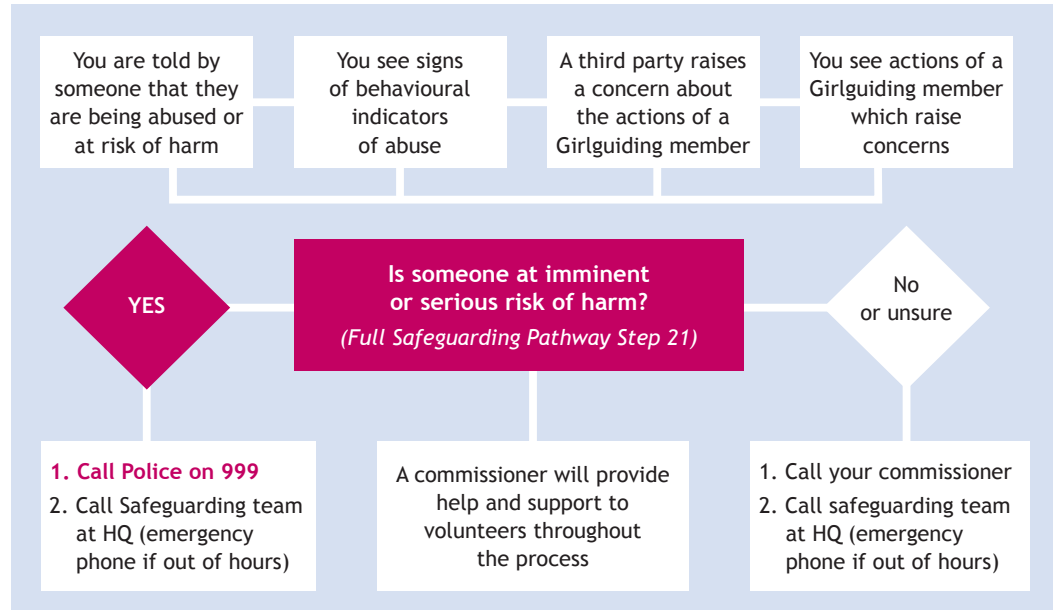
#### 4. Report to Safeguarding team at HQ

The Safeguarding team at HQ will take a lead in managing the safeguarding concern and ensuring that girls, young women and adults are protected. If in doubt about whether a concern is well founded or whether you should report, you must report anyway.

This chart sets out the process you must follow if you receive a disclosure, allegation or concern and helps you to identify the action you must take.

#### Safeguarding team at HQ contacts:

- Tel: 0207 834 6242 ext. 3037 (usual office hours)
- Out-of-hours emergency phone: 07508 032997
- Email: [safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk)



## Is someone at imminent or serious risk of harm?

In any situation where someone is or could be at imminent or serious risk of harm you must call 999 right away - any delay could result in unnecessary further harm or abuse. The person at risk could be a girl, young woman or adult within Girlguiding or an associated person such as a sibling or partner.

There are many different situations where a person may be at imminent or serious risk of harm. Here are some examples to help you identify what this means:

- They have said they intend to self-harm or are having suicidal thoughts.
- The alleged abuse or harm is being carried out at a place they are about to go to (for example, in the home).
- They have a life-threatening physical or psychological injury or condition.
- Someone who is causing them harm is coming to collect them at the end of the activity.

## How to listen and behave if you receive a disclosure, allegation or concern

Sometimes, a girl, young woman or adult will entrust you with personal information or you will have a concern about their safety or wellbeing. It is extremely important that you understand your role, including what to say and how to behave.

If someone shares information with you directly (either about themselves or about someone else) you must:

- Listen carefully and trust that what is being said is correct
- Offer immediate support and reassurance
- Tell the person that you cannot keep it a secret. Explain that you may need to pass the information on to keep them, or other people, safe

- Stay calm. Try not to show signs of anxiety or shock
- Do not investigate, but try to find out as much as you can from them, using open questions
- Record an account of the conversation immediately, using the individual's actual words wherever possible. Sign, date and keep the record safe
- Share the report with your unit leader immediately
- Contact your commissioner and the HQ Safeguarding team to report the disclosure. Your unit leader will support you
- You must refer and must not investigate.

If you believe that a girl, young woman or adult has injuries or requires medical attention, help them access emergency treatment. Inform clinical staff of the nature of the suspicions about the source of the injury, so they can take steps to ensure that relevant information or evidence is not destroyed or compromised (see Dealing with first aid accidents or incidents)

If you notice signs or behavioural indicators of abuse or harm - share them with your leader straight away. Follow the process below:

- **Give facts.** State clearly your concerns. If you also share your personal opinion, make it very clear that it is your personal point of view.
- **Don't investigate.** Don't try to find out more from the girl, young woman or adult before sharing your concerns. Don't question them or try to investigate in any way.
- **Discuss with immediate colleagues.** Share your concerns within the confidential setting of your immediate team in your unit, for instance, during your end of activity meeting. Use this time to identify if anyone else has similar concerns. This must be a confidential discussion.

Bear in mind the following when reporting your concerns:

- State very clearly if you are concerned about the person's immediate safety
- Keep fact and opinion separate
- Identify any help given to the individual to address their immediate needs or, if this is required.

## What happens next?

The Safeguarding team will make further enquiries and take further steps, if necessary, to ensure that the child, young woman or adult is protected from any further harm while the appropriate authorities are informed. They will work in partnership with both you and your commissioner to keep you safe.

## Historical information

If the information you receive relates to abuse or harm that has happened in the past you must still treat this seriously and report it straight away.

## Concerned about a volunteer or staff member?

If you have a concern or allegation against a Girlguiding volunteer, you must report them to your commissioner (where he or she is not the subject of the concern) or the HQ Safeguarding team directly.

If you raise a concern is raised but do not believe it is being dealt with appropriately you can use our Whistleblowing procedure.

## Where a disclosure of abuse, neglect or harm is made by anyone over the age of 18

We will pass that information on to the most appropriate statutory safeguarding agency (for example, police or social services) if any of the following apply:

- The individual meets the government definition of a ‘vulnerable adult’. This means that the individual:
  - Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs)
  - Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect
  - As a result of those needs, is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it
- There is reason to believe that a crime has been committed or will be committed
- The individual is at imminent risk of significant harm
- The individual requires urgent medical treatment.

Girlguiding will, in accordance with current good practice, encourage the individual who has made the disclosure to make direct contact with the relevant statutory agency. If they do not wish to do so, we will seek their consent to make a referral and share information about them with a statutory agency.

However, where any of the above circumstances exist, Girlguiding will make a referral to the relevant statutory agency even if the individual does not give their consent, as we have a responsibility to safeguard and protect all our members in accordance with our Safeguarding policy.

## Concerns about you or people associated with you

If you or an associated person (eg your partner or someone you live with) becomes involved in any police or social services investigation, you must notify your commissioner immediately as there may

be concerns that affect your suitability to work with girls and young women. This matter will be dealt with confidentially by the commissioner or Safeguarding team HQ. However, information may be shared with the Local Authority Designation Officer (LADO) or police, as appropriate.

### Concerns about another child (peer to peer abuse)

If you have concerns about the behaviour of one child or young woman to another, you must report it to the commissioner or Safeguarding team, who will determine whether behaviour constitutes bullying or a child protection concern.

### How to keep yourself safe when delivering Girlguiding

Sometimes volunteers have their own needs that may affect their behaviour, and their ability to look after the safety and welfare of others.

It is our policy to make every effort to safeguard members from physical, sexual, emotional harm and neglect while participating in guiding activities. Girlguiding takes all reasonable steps to ensure that, through relevant procedures and training, girls, young women and volunteers taking part in guiding activities, do so in a safe environment.

If you have a concern about the safety and welfare of any girl or young woman, or you have concern about the behaviour of a volunteer, you must tell someone.

#### Safeguarding team at HQ contacts:

- Tel: 0207 834 6242 ext. 3037 (usual office hours)
- Out-of-hours emergency phone: 07508 032997
- Email: [safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@girlguiding.org.uk)

## Safe activities information

### Activity finder

Girlguiding provides girls with opportunities for adventure and to try new things. However, it is vital that we run activities as safely as possible. When planning any activity, please check the activity finder on the website for current regulations guidance and ratios.

Volunteers are expected to ensure the unit's programme is carried out safely and must:

- Ensure risk assessments are put in place to allow an activity to take place safely, not to prevent the activity from happening
- Carry out risk assessments for all activities in guiding, not just those which seem the most dangerous
- Incorporate all aspects of the activity for which they are responsible into the risk assessment
- Continue to assess the risks throughout the activity and respond to any changes, for example in the weather.

Unlike many approaches to risk assessment, this system starts positively by outlining the potential benefits to the girls in doing an activity. When you establish the benefits first, it is then possible to assess the risks in context.

There are a few things you must think about when planning an activity:

- Consider if the activity is appropriate for all the members of your group and adapt it if necessary to accommodate all the needs of the group.
- Inform your local commissioner.



- Seek permission from parents if participants are under 18.
- Carry out a risk assessment for the parts of the activity that you are responsible for.
- Ensure you have the correct adult to child ratios.
- Use a qualified instructor (where appropriate).
- Use a reputable commercial activity provider (where appropriate).
- Make sure your volunteers have completed the required vetting requirements for their role. Where someone's role requires an enhanced disclosure checks, this must have been completed and accepted by Girlguiding.

There are a few activities that are prohibited by Girlguiding. For more details, please see the prohibited activities on the website.

If you are in doubt about the activity, call the Girlguiding Information team on 0161 941 2237 or email [activities@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:activities@girlguiding.org.uk)

## Risk assessment

When planning any activity or event, leaders need to consider the risks involved and how to manage them. You should always complete a risk assessment. A blank form is on the website and a copy is in your unit's emergency file. It is always advisable to carry this with you when undertaking guiding activities as it has all the information that you need in an emergency.

When assessing risk, it is useful to divide risk situations into three categories: high, medium and low. In everyday language, we often refer to high-risk activities as 'dangerous'. We also talk about relative risk. For example, crossing the road is riskier than crossing the meeting hall. When planning any activity or event, you need to consider what level of risk is acceptable as part of your risk management.

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## Inclusive risk assessment

It may seem that there is a higher risk to some members taking part in activities than to others. This could make leaders worry about including all in adventurous activities.

However, taking a person-centred approach to risk assessments will help make sure that all members can be included. Potential or perceived risk should never be used as a reason to treat a person with additional needs differently to the rest of the unit.

Involve the girl or their parents or carers. A leader's view of a person's abilities, or what would be challenging to them in the activity, will be different to how they feel about their own abilities. So, girls should be included in all decisions made.

All things in proportion. Adjustments that are made to an activity should be made in proportion to the risk.

Ongoing process of risk assessment. Assessing risk is a continuous process. Volunteers should make sure a unit meeting risk assessment is done for each venue. This will need reviewing once a year

## Basic checklist for risk assessment

- Identify hazards - Look for things that can cause injury or damage, thinking about activity, location and surroundings.
- Identify all those who may be affected by the hazards. Think about the people around, not just members, who could be injured or affected by the activity.
- Estimate the current level of risk and the precautions in place - use the matrix below. Think about how serious the risk is to people and property. What is already in place to prevent the injury or damage, and does this reduce the risk?
- Decide if new measures are needed. List actions required to reduce risk. Decide if you want to go ahead.
- Record your findings, agree actions and a timetable. Make sure everybody knows what they are going to do and by when. Make sure it is done and record it.

and amending when numbers change dramatically; when new, more risky activities are introduced or when adults or girls with any additional needs join the unit etc.

Dynamic or informal risk assessment. Informal risk assessment isn't always written down. During an activity, the conditions or circumstances can change, and you might identify another risk. So, communication between volunteers and the girls, and prompt action, are important. The leadership team should also discuss informally any risk issues as they arise at the beginning of, or during, a meeting. Effective communication means both adults and young people understand how to play their part in together ensuring everyone is safe and happy.

Away from the normal meeting place. A leader must inform their district commissioner of any activity that takes place outside the normal meeting place or time. You need information and consent forms signed by parents or guardians for these meetings.

## Dealing with first aid accidents or incidents

As an organisation, we take the safety and welfare of all girls and volunteers seriously. To provide the appropriate first aid to those who need it, when they need it, there must be at least one person with valid 1st Response or equivalent first aid training on every unit leadership team and at every event. Units should always have their own first aid provision.

There are three basic principles of first aid when handling a serious condition:

- Preserve life - by using simple life-saving skills, based on the ABC of resuscitation: airway, breathing, circulation.
- Prevent deterioration - by treating life threatening conditions such as bleeding and shock.
- Promote recovery - by reassuring the casualty, putting them in an appropriate position.

In a serious emergency, it is important to get help quickly as possible. Get someone you can trust to go call 999 or 112 (if in UK).

Make sure the information they have is clear:

- Number of casualties and description of the condition, conscious or not and whether breathing or not.
- Where you are, including any landmarks or postcode.
- What help is needed.

Where a person requires basic first aid, for small injuries, remember the basic first aid skills you have been taught during your training. Most accidents only require basic first aid, but it is important to remember to treat these accordingly and report through the Notification of accident/incident form.

When an accident has occurred or an injury, illness or medical condition needs any treatment, it is essential that a Notification of accident/incident form is completed once the incident has been dealt with. The completed form and any related documentation needs to be submitted to the Insurance department at Girlguiding and your local commissioner informed. A copy of all paperwork and receipts should be kept securely, including consent forms and risk assessments.

If an incident happens (ie break-in, security issue, fire) or something happens that concerns you, please complete a Notification of accident/incident form. Safeguarding concerns should be raised directly with the Safeguarding team.

Information regarding risk assessments, accidents/incidents and associated forms can be found in the emergency file.

## Insurance

Having the right insurance is an important part of safe guiding. Girlguiding's public liability and personal accident insurance covers all members and other persons associated with guiding while taking part. Girlguiding's employer's liability insurance covers anyone employed in a paid or voluntary position at any level within Girlguiding.

You will need to take out your own policies for travelling abroad or to cover your building and equipment. All information regarding insurance is available in the insurance pages of the website. Alternatively, you can contact [insurancesupport@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:insurancesupport@girlguiding.org.uk)

If you use your car for volunteering, you need to make sure this is covered under your insurance policy.

If you have any questions about any of these policies, please contact the Insurance department on 0845 260 1053.

# How to use social media safely

## Digital communications

You should not contact members aged under 14 directly - communication should be with the parents or carers and always from a member of the Leadership team. When you contact parents, carers or young women over 14 years by email or online you should:

- Use language that is suitable between adult leaders and volunteer. Try to avoid any words or phrases that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued
- Ensure that any images you send are appropriate and that external hyperlinks you include do not lead to inappropriate content
- Always copy a parent or carer in to any messages you send to a young member.

Individual instant messaging between girls and members of the Leadership team is discouraged.

## Social media and mobile technology

When using social media, remember that what is published online is visible publicly. This can be positive for Girlguiding and raises the publicity of the work that we do. However, there are some tips that should be considered when using social media.

- Where possible, adult volunteers should avoid 'becoming friends' with girls on social media sites.
- It may be easier for adult volunteers to communicate with girls over 14 in a Facebook group, Facebook message group or WhatsApp group, but there must be at least two leaders in the group.

- Where possible, a young girl should not use your mobile phone to take photographs or record videos (even if they are for the Girlguiding's website or social media). However, if this is the only option, you should supervise the girl using the device.
- Volunteers must carefully consider the information, images and posts that they publish on social media sites and the connection that can be made to Girlguiding.
- When using social media to publicise the work of Girlguiding, you must ensure that the relevant photo permissions have been obtained.
- If you get into trouble online, you can use the CEOP report button found on most websites.

For more information, read the Safe Cyberspace leaflet.

## Data protection

'Girlguiding conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 when processing personal data on its membership systems. It is the policy of Girlguiding that all personal information will be used for guiding purposes and will not be shared outside the organisation without consent, except in certain circumstances as required by law or a regulatory requirement or sharing or in order to safeguard a child.'

NB: From May 2018, new legislation will be applied to Girlguiding, which may change some of the way we do things, especially around retention, storage and how we share information. Please check you are using the current information by contacting your county or region.

## What do we mean by data?

'Personal data' is any pieces of information that can be used to identify a specific (living) person,



for example a name, address, number etc. There is also a second category called 'sensitive data'. This includes information that is considered more private and is expected to be treated with more care and sensitivity.

### **What do we do if we lose data or send it to the wrong person?**

If you lose a contact list or send information to the wrong person which includes personal data, first don't panic, try to recover it. Second, tell Girlguiding about it, unless we know we can't be there to offer help and advice.

For more information you can read the Keeping Data Safe leaflet or the Data Protection policy.  
Or email: [dataprotection@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:dataprotection@girlguiding.org.uk)

# Handling non-safeguarding complaints

## Definition of a complaint

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about any aspect of Girlguiding that does not fall into the remit of safeguarding or whistleblowing policies.

## What does this mean to me?

In your role as a volunteer, it is likely that you will come across conflict at some point, whether it is with another volunteer, a parent or someone externally. Although most conflicts can be resolved locally and informally, sometimes conflict can lead to a complaint. When dealing with a conflict it is important you recognise your responsibility as a volunteer to always keep girls, young women and adults safe, regardless of whether you are part of the situation or trying to solve it.

Examples of a complaint:

- A parent is unhappy with how a unit is being run.
- A parent is unhappy with how a situation has been dealt with at a unit meeting.
- You are unhappy with how a situation to do with your unit has been dealt with, eg by your commissioner

Things to consider when handling conflict and complaints:

- Keep calm and stick to facts. By talking a situation through in this way in the first instance, most conflicts can be resolved at an early stage. If an informal resolution cannot be found, speak to your local commissioner or the Complaints team at HQ for support.

If you receive a complaint in your capacity as a volunteer or want to make a complaint yourself, you should speak directly to your local commissioner or contact the Complaints team at HQ. Please also refer to the complaints policy and procedure.

Call the HQ Complaints team on 020 7834 6242 ext 3023 (during office hours), email [complaints@girlguiding.org.uk](mailto:complaints@girlguiding.org.uk) or use the contact us form on the website.



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