

A letter to all parents of Senior Branch Members under 18 years of age

Welcome to the next phase of your daughter's journey in IGG.

Senior Branch is for all members of the Irish Girl Guides (IGG) between the ages of 14 and 30.



Programme Elements

When you hear the girls talk about their programme – these are the awards they could be working on. Each member has a travel journal which details all of these awards. Please feel free to explore them.

OVERALL AWARDS

Work for the overall Bronze Star, Silver Moon or Golden Sun which includes Gaisce - The President's Award.

SPECIALISED AREA PINS

Specialise in one of the six Adventures at Bronze, Silver or Gold Level

BADGE DIVA

Complete any or all of the Ladybird, Brownie or Guide interest badges

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Your daughter is now becoming a member of Senior Branch in the Irish Girl Guides (IGG). We've asked some of our existing members to explain what Senior Branch means to them. You will see from the quotes here that girls gain hugely from being part of our Branch. We hope your daughter will too.

Senior Branch is very different from the Guide Unit structure you've been used to. It is much more girl-led and centred on teaching them the skills necessary to run their own meetings and the responsibilities that go with that.

Our programme and events allow Senior Branch members to try new activities, take up new challenges and develop into responsible citizens in the world. You will read more about the detail of these on the next page.

Guiding fosters responsibility, citizenship and maturity through activities such as mountaineering, community action, international expeditions and weekly activities at Unit level. Senior Branch encourages the development of confidence, self-reliance and interpersonal skills.



What has Senior Branch meant to me?

"The best thing about Senior Branch is the people you meet and the way you have so much in common, even before you realise that you are all unique and different. Sitting around a campfire, planning future events when the sky is the limit, is a special feeling of empowerment." - Helen

“The best part of Senior Branch is definitely the new experiences you have and making amazing friends.” - Aine

“Events like the Challenge, the belt, the SB weekend provided the environment in which ideas were nurtured, encouraged, developed and eventually became actions!” - Maria

Being able to use the Guiding skills I have been lucky enough to develop in IGG, to help others in another organisation, elsewhere in the world, was a real privilege. I suppose, really that's what Guiding is about. In Senior Branch, you get the chance to live it out, beyond your normal space. - Kate

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MEETINGS

Senior Branch is much different to what you will have been used to when your daughter was in Guides. The girls are responsible for the successful running of their Unit and are supported by a Leader rather than having the Leader run activities.

- Each term starts with a planning meeting with Leaders present when activities, events & other meetings are planned
- Arrangements are decided – how often they will meet, where they will have their meetings, what activities they will take part in, whose responsibility it is to organise particular elements
- Planning is the girls' responsibility
- Other meetings may happen in a variety of locations – hall, coffee shop, one of the girls' houses, local cinema.
- Leaders are there to facilitate and advise the girls and make sure they are making safe and responsible decisions/plans. They are always aware of plans but may not always be present. However they will be available by phone.
- One of the girls will take the lead on an activity and have the Leader's contact number and will keep the Leader updated as necessary
- Three IGG members need to be present for it to be an official IGG SB meeting
- Level of Leader supervision will be discussed with you & will vary, depending on the girls' age and maturity level

EVENTS

Events are run specifically for Senior Branch all over the country - oftentimes these are overnight events.

Girls are encouraged to attend and can travel without another girl from their own Unit, and/or without their own Leader.

Other IGG Leaders run these events and will take excellent care of your daughter. Everyone travels independently to the event itself or to a central location where they are met and taken to the event.

All IGG events are run to a high standard and within a framework of rules, guidelines and qualifications. Senior Branch events are no different.

PROGRAMME

Girls will now embark on a journey and experience a programme that helps them grow in independence, develop their organisational skills, try new activities and become the person they want to be.

Their programme takes them through six adventures – Community, Lifeskills, Change, Outdoors, Global Awareness and Guiding. They will complete challenges on each adventure.

Girls have the opportunity to gain their Gaisce President's Award as part of the Senior Branch Programme if they choose to complete the Overall Awards. They can do this at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

We also encourage our members to go and work with another branch of IGG – Ladybirds, Brownies or Guides. They can become part of the leadership team in that Unit.

We encourage the girls to make plans, assess the risks of proposed activities, work independently and oftentimes carry out activities themselves.

The Leaders will sit with them, help them plan, and discuss all the potential issues, and then help them successfully achieve what they want to achieve.

We look forward to your daughter having a wonderful adventure with us! We hope she will have a great time with us here in Senior Branch and IGG.

***Yours in Guiding,
The National Senior Branch
Committee***