



PR and Media Policy

Effective from: September 2018
Designated person responsible: Communications Officer
Overall responsibility: IGG CLG Board
Updated August 2019
Reviewed: October 2024
Next Review: October 2027

Introduction

This policy is designed to ensure that Irish Girl Guides CLG (hereafter IGG) makes the most of its media coverage and public relations activities to help protect and boost its reputation and support the organisation in its mission of enabling girls and young women to develop to their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.

As a transparent organisation, IGG supports the fostering of strong, professional relationships with different types of journalists and photographers. We recognise the significant role media coverage can play in people's perceptions of the organisation and so we aim to maximise opportunities for positive media coverage.

The Aims of this Policy are:

- To raise national and local awareness of IGG in terms of its name and role.
- To see IGG recognised as an organisation that helps girls and women develop confidence, independence, essential life-skills, and opportunities for personal growth.
- To see IGG recognised as a relevant non-political organisation that fosters youth empowerment, gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women.
- To support IGG staff and volunteers when they have any contact with the media (which includes television, radio, print and online media).

Media Interviews

The Communications Officer is the first point of contact for all national media enquiries, including both proactive (planned) and reactive (unplanned) enquiries. Should journalists from national media approach IGG staff or volunteers directly on any issue that relates to IGG or its activities, or to ask for an opinion or comment on a relevant issue, they should pass the query on to the Communications Officer who then in turn will liaise with the CEO and/or Chief Commissioner as required.

A plan will be established by the management staff and Communications Officer to cover the Communications officer when absent or on leave. This will include identified cover, who to contact in case a quote is needed for an event or comment. This plan will be agreed with the management committee in advance of actioning it.

National media opportunities will be offered to the most appropriate person as decided with the Communications Officer, CEO and/or the Chief Commissioner. If these opportunities are in relation to a specific event, then the volunteer leading the event will be contacted.

Local media interviews may be undertaken by the Communications Officer, members of the Media Panel or Unit Leaders. The Communications Officer maintains a database of Media Panel members who have either undergone media training and/or are nominated spokespeople who are able to speak confidently about IGG.

Media Statements

Media statements are official responses from IGG to negative or controversial media enquiries or anticipated enquiries. Media statements are written by the Communications Officer and signed off by the Chief Commissioner and/or CEO.

Press Conferences & Spokespersons

In the unlikely event that IGG would need to disseminate important critical information to the public, the Communications Officer will organise a Press Conference. The official spokesperson for the organisation will be one of the following: the Chief Commissioner, the CEO, the Communications Officer, or someone else designated by this team.

Proactive (planned) media relations

One of the roles of the Communications Officer and Communications Committee is to maximise publicity for good news stories, provide necessary information to the media and identify suitable spokespeople for interviews. Ideas for positive stories include World Thinking Day, A-wear-ness Day, An Taisce Spring Clean, international camps, Chief Commissioner's Award, International Day of the Girl and National Guide Awards. New initiatives as they occur such as National Good Turn Week can be particularly good for securing coverage.

Their roles also include being creative about developing new ideas, ways, and forums in which to promote the work of Irish Girl Guides and the benefits of membership to girls and women.

Press Releases

Press releases are the main way in which good news stories are highlighted to the media. The Communications Officer is responsible for writing press releases to be issued to national media.

Press releases for local media may be initiated by the Communications Officer, members of the Communications Committee and Media Panel or Unit Leaders. Coming up to big events, like World Thinking Day/A-wear-ness Day, National Good Turn Week, the Communications Officer prepares a template press release that Leaders are encouraged to adapt and distribute to their local media.

IGG uses MediaHQ to disseminate press releases, diary notices and photo call notices. The Media HQ licence is issued to an individual user., the Communications Officer is responsible for the access to the account and is the only person who can use the service as per agreement with them. If the Communications Officer is absent or on leave the CEO will assume responsibility.

Media filming and photography requests

Where possible, the Communications Officer or a member of the Communications Committee will be present to oversee filming or photography of IGG members for national use. Before filming/photographing takes place, the relevant Leader(s) must check their girls' *Personal Registration Forms* to ensure the relevant parents have given permission for

filming and photography of their daughter(s). Leaders and girls being filmed must wear full IGG uniform.

IGG has a YouTube channel and produces video for sharing.

Use of Images of IGG Members

Photos and videos are an indispensable tool in the promotion of IGG. It is our policy that all images used would present a positive image of the organisation and, with this in mind, Leaders are asked to adhere to the *IGG Guidelines on the Use of Images*, which are designed to protect the personal information of IGG members, to safeguard against the inappropriate use, reproduction or adaptation of photographs or film of those members and to respect their dignity.

Good Practice

IGG is a signatory of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and it is our policy to only use images and messages that are based on the paramount principles of:

- Respect for the dignity of the people concerned.
- Belief in the equality of all people.
- Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity, and justice.

Ambassador/VIP visits

The Communications Officer in liaison with the President is responsible for managing visits by ambassadors/celebrities/VIPs to IGG events. It is vital that guests are well looked after as well as, of course, aiming to gain maximum online and traditional media coverage for such visits. If the Communications Officer is on leave, the Operations Manager will support this role.

Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an incident that presents a significant danger to IGG members and the public or which has the potential to significantly disrupt or harm the reputation of IGG. Critical incidents could attract significant media interest.

In the case of a critical incident, it is the role of the Communications Officer, in consultation with the CEO and Chief Commissioner, to manage internal and external communications (keeping members, parents, the public and other stakeholders informed) with reference to IGG's Critical Incident Plan.

A major incident will attract immediate and probably large-scale media interest, depending on the nature of the incident or emergency IGG is dealing with. Dealing effectively with the media is therefore critical to the effective handling of the major incident. This is especially important as the public will turn to the media immediately for information during such an incident. It is therefore essential that information given out to media is accurate, timely and delivered through easily accessible channels to prevent the media from going elsewhere for information which may be from a less reliable source.

Social Media & Group Messaging

The Communications Officer has overall responsibility for IGG social media with volunteers from the Communications Committee and Media Panel heading up activity on some platforms e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest. Members are asked to adhere to IGG's *Social Media Procedures* when utilising social media, including no tagging of under 18s.

Any local Units, Regions or Properties operating a social media profile should adhere to the *Social Media Procedures* to protect both themselves and IGG.

Members who are temporarily given access to IGG's social media channels while they are representing IGG abroad or at an event are asked to follow the *Guidelines for the Use of IGG Social Media Accounts*.

Some Units use social media platforms e.g., Messenger, for group messaging parents and members. Due to Data Protection legislation, certain requirements must be followed to protect people's privacy e.g., phone numbers and email addresses. All Units and users of such groups for IGG purposes should follow the *Guidelines on Use of Group Messaging*.

A close eye is kept on comments made on our social media and IGG removes any inappropriate comments on Facebook and, where necessary, bans offenders. Offensive tweets are reported to Twitter with the request that the offending tweets be removed.

IGG Logo

It is essential that the IGG logo is used correctly and consistently in all its applications and that all members adhere to the *Guidelines for Use of IGG Logo* in order to create a professional, recognisable identity for IGG at national and local level. Reproducing the logo on any clothing, bags or items needs approval from the CEO.

Data Protection

IGG is very conscious of protecting people's personal data, including emails and their photographs. As such, all staff and volunteers must follow the *Data Protection Policy* of the organisation as it applies equally to all acting in the name of Irish Girl Guides. The Policy is available on the website and a set of *Data Protection Guidance Notes for Volunteers*. Further information is available from National Office.

IGG Website

The IGG website is managed by Data and Membership Officer with input from Communications Officer. It has both a Public and Leaders' section. It provides information on IGG's structure and governance, a Unit Locator, information for parents along with the IGG online *Handbook*, policies, guidelines, forms, and resources for Leaders. The Leaders' area is password-protected, and the password can be obtained from National Office or your Commissioner.

Publications & Leaflets

The Publications Officer is responsible for producing professional quality leaflets and promotional material. These are available on the IGG website for Leaders to download and add their details to for local use. Paper copies can be ordered by contacting National Office.

The Publications Officer is responsible for producing IGG publications, including the Leaders' resource *Trefoil News* and the Senior Branch annual magazine *The Welly*.

All IGG publications and leaflets must follow the *Style Guide for Publications* to ensure consistency across the IGG brand.

References

Available on the IGG website:

Social Media Procedures

Guidelines on the Use of Images of IGG Members

Guidelines on the Use of Group Messaging in IGG

Guidelines on the Use of IGG Logo

Style Guide for Publications

Data Protection Policy

Data Protection Guidance Notes for Volunteers

IGG online *Handbook*

Available from the Communications Officer in National Office:

Critical Incident Plan

Guidelines on the Use of IGG Social Media Accounts