



Guide Dogs for the Blind

800.295.4050 | guidedogs.com

GDB Social Media Guidelines for Volunteers

Updated March 2021

Social Media Channels

- Facebook – Official GDB: <https://www.facebook.com/guidedogsfortheblind>
- Facebook - GDB Puppy Central: www.facebook.com/gdbpuppycentral
- Twitter: @GDB_official
- Instagram: @GDB_official
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/guidedogsaregreat
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/guide-dogs-for-the-blind
- Blog “No Bones About It”: <https://www.guidedogs.com/blog>
- Flickr images:
 - [Group Photo Pool \(uploading images\) - www.flickr.com/groups/guidedogsfortheblind](http://www.flickr.com/groups/guidedogsfortheblind)
 - [Public GDB Galleries \(accessing GDB photos\) - www.flickr.com/photos/guidedogsfortheblind](http://www.flickr.com/photos/guidedogsfortheblind)

Helpful Way You Can Help Strengthen Our GDB Brand on Social Media

Social media is a powerful brand-building tool and a great way to shine a light on the amazing things happening at Guide Dogs for the Blind. It’s wonderful that volunteers, employees, and other constituents connect using social media, because it ultimately creates a stronger network and community that supports the GDB mission. ***This document outlines best practices and guidelines for social media accounts related to your role as a volunteer for GDB.***

PROFILES

Profiles

- In your social media profiles it’s helpful to disclose that you are a volunteer for GDB.
- Please feel free to engage and be part of the GDB online community, especially when it comes to liking and sharing posts as this helps expand the GDB footprint.
- Pictures of GDB pups in their coats and/or guide dogs in harness that show GDB’s name/logo are wonderful to share (we encourage you upload any favorites to the GDB Flickr photo pool – link above).

Profile Photos

- Please do not use GDB’s primary logo or any commemorative logos (for example, the 75th anniversary logo) as your profile picture. Doing so can be confusing or potentially misleading because every time you post, the logo will appear and imply the post is being published by GDB.
- Do feel free to use any GDB-produced Facebook frames in tandem with your profile photos.
- Puppy Raising clubs: when your club goes through the rebranding process, you will be provided with a specific icon to use as your club’s Facebook account profile photo. Instructions will be provided at that time.

Puppy Raising Club Accounts

- For a club’s social media accounts, please clearly reference that the club raises puppies **for** GDB and link to our Facebook page and/or website.
- Clubs and volunteers may not promote any non-GDB related products (toys, dog equipment, etc.) with GDB-branded puppies or with the use of hashtags (e.g., #guidedogsfortheblind), as it should not appear that GDB itself is endorsing those products. In other words, raisers and current guide dog puppies in training are not permitted to serve as brand



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ambassadors for any companies that are not GDB partners – even if your intent is to raise money for GDB or one of its puppy clubs. GDB’s Development and Marketing Departments are responsible for identifying strategic corporate partners for the organization.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo and Video Guidelines: General

- GDB clients, employees, volunteers, and visitors to campus, as well as GDB puppies and dogs, should not be photographed, cited, or obviously referenced without the person’s approval. Please do not post pictures of clients until they have completed class.
- Make sure photos and videos depict dogs being handled in an appropriate manner (e.g., don’t show a puppy being held upside down or a dog looking scared or with “squishy eye” when wearing a gentle leader).
- Consider the situation/setting: avoid posting images of a dog with medical conditions, undergoing surgery, recovering from anesthesia, or wearing an e-collar, for example.
- Avoid showing things that are too graphic, polarizing, or potentially damaging to our reputation. For example, there is often poop and vomit when dogs are involved– but neither are appropriate to show in social posts.
- Avoid and/or minimize showing the bars in GDB’s kennels or vehicles (including the puppy truck and trailer, and the training vans). We are accustomed to seeing certain things, but some of those images might be polarizing or upsetting. It’s a good idea to think about how someone outside GDB might perceive them because we want to make the best possible impression on the public and our community.
- Do not use social media to communicate the status of program dogs (e.g., career change, passing final test) until you receive word through official GDB channels. These formal communication channels exist for the purpose of sharing information when appropriate (e.g., phase reports). Phase reports can be posted on social media as long as the update includes only dogs that have been raised by or are affiliated with the raiser or club. Please do not post the entire list of phase reports.

Photo and Video Guidelines: Puppy Raising

- GDB puppies should only be shown with GDB-approved toys, food, and equipment. Equipment includes puppy coats, leashes, and collars.
- Do not obscure the branding on the GDB puppy coats, or add extra adornment to the dog. This includes the pup wearing bandanas, adding pins or decals to the coat, etc. Exceptions may include GDB Fun Days and holidays when themed costumes are appropriate in controlled environments. It is not appropriate to go on walks and regular outings with the dog in costume.
- Puppy raisers should consult their club leaders prior to posting videos with a GDB puppy on social media.
- Do not promote any non-GDB related products (toys, dog equipment, etc.), brands, or non-affiliated organizations with video or images of GDB puppies or with the use of hashtags (e.g., #GuideDogsForTheBlind), as it should not appear that GDB itself is endorsing those brands. In other words, breeder dogs are not permitted to serve as brand ambassadors for any companies that are not GDB partners – even if your intent is to raise money for GDB. GDB’s Development and Marketing Departments are responsible for identifying strategic corporate partners for the organization.

Photo and Video Guidelines: Breeder Custodians

- Be sure to show the dog wearing its Breeder scarf in your photos and social posts when possible.
- Do not promote any non-GDB related products (toys, dog equipment, etc.), brands, or non-affiliated organizations with video or images of GDB breeder dogs or with the use of hashtags (e.g., #GuideDogsForTheBlind), as it should not appear that GDB itself is endorsing those brands. In other words, breeder dogs are not permitted to serve as



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brand ambassadors for any companies that are not GDB partners – even if your intent is to raise money for GDB. GDB’s Development and Marketing Departments are responsible for identifying strategic corporate partners for the organization.

Photo and Video Guidelines: Campus Volunteers

- Taking photos in the course of your work on campus (like iPhone photos) – if approved by your supervisor – is absolutely fine and encouraged provided you use your best judgment. For example, staging formal photo shoots; lingering beyond the scope of your work to capture candid photos; or interrupting staff and/or other volunteers to participate in personal photography is not appropriate.
- Do not use social media to communicate the status of program dogs (e.g., career change, passing final test) until you receive word through official GDB channels. These formal communication channels exist for the purpose of sharing information when appropriate (e.g., phase reports). Phase reports can be posted on social media as long as the update includes only dogs that have been raised by or are affiliated with the raiser or club. Please do not post the entire list of phase reports.
- Please do not send photos directly to GDB constituents. It’s important that GDB staff communicate directly with the appropriate parties prior to this type of information being released in a public forum.

Photo and Video Guidelines: Foster Care Providers

- Please use discretion when posting pictures of dogs in foster care or dogs that have previously been in foster care – especially if they are placed there because of a medical challenge.
- In order to maintain client privacy, do not identify the handler of any dogs that are currently in foster care or have previously been in foster care.
- Do not include the dog’s name when posting any pictures of dogs currently in foster care or previously in foster care.
- Do not promote any non-GDB related products (toys, dog equipment, etc.), brands, or non-affiliated organizations with video or images of GDB program dogs or with the use of hashtags (e.g., #GuideDogsForTheBlind), as it should not appear that GDB itself is endorsing those brands. In other words, program dogs are not permitted to serve as brand ambassadors for any companies that are not GDB partners – even if your intent is to raise money for GDB. GDB’s Development and Marketing Departments are responsible for identifying strategic corporate partners for the organization.

Photo and Video Guidelines: On Our Campuses

- GDB allows photography for personal use on our campuses (limited to the areas included on our public tours) and at our graduation ceremonies.
- Do not take photos and/or post images of people on our campuses without their explicit permission. That includes staff, volunteers, and clients.
- When taking photos of dogs on our campuses, please do not use the names of puppies, breeders, dogs in training, or dogs in the care of our vet clinics in your post.

Photo and Video Guidelines: Graduations

- We ask that you refrain from taking photos that would disrupt the graduation ceremony, or distract other attendees. Photos taken from your seat in the audience are fine (no roving photography please).
- We respectfully request that you not take or post photos of GDB puppy raisers, volunteers, clients, staff, or attendees at graduation without their explicit permission.



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Photo and Video Guidelines: Commercial Photography and Media

- The sale, rental, or commercial use of GDB-related photography is prohibited (this includes photos or video of our facilities/grounds, dogs, clients, volunteers, and staff).
- Professional editorial photography or videography must be approved in advance by GDB's Marketing Department.
- Similarly, please do not provide images to media without explicit permission from GDB's Marketing Department.
- GDB's grounds are not available for staged photo shoots.
- We would greatly appreciate it if you notify GDB if you have been contacted to be part of a media opportunity, so that we can support you (provide talking points, logos, imagery, etc.).

GENERAL

Observe Copyright Laws

- It is critical to properly respect the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others.
- Always attribute content you share to the original author/source.
- It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect the Audience and Guide Dogs for the Blind

- The public in general, and GDB's volunteers, employees, and constituents, reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. Please be respectful of that diversity.
- It is important that all posts by volunteers are consistent with GDB's website, policies, or publications.
- Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully and think about potential consequences. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive/defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.), but also the proper consideration of privacy and topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory – such as politics and religion.

Handling Controversial Issues

- Avoid online arguments relating to GDB; don't try to settle scores or bring others into inflammatory debates.
- Ensure that what you are posting is factually correct. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of GDB.
- Refrain from sharing medical and/or training advice regarding GDB puppies or dogs.
- GDB puts a lot of time and expertise into matching the right dogs with the right people, so it's good to remember that if/when a volunteer thinks that a certain puppy/dog might be a good match for someone, to refrain from any "matchmaking" and leave those decisions to the staff at GDB.

Posting Etiquette: Protect GDB Clients, Employees, Volunteers, Visitors, and Dogs

- Never identify a client, employee, or volunteer by name without permission.
- Please do not use the names of dogs that have not yet graduated; might have been recently career changed; are in foster care; have been removed from class, or have just retired. It's important that GDB staff communicate directly with the appropriate parties prior to this type of information being released in a public forum.
- Do not post images or use names of dogs that are in the kennels and reminder to not send photos directly to GDB constituents. It's important that GDB staff communicate directly with the appropriate parties prior to this type of information being released in a public forum.



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Appropriate #s

- Hashtags can set either a positive or negative tone in a social media post. Please be mindful when using them.
- Examples of preferred hashtags; #IAmGDB #RaiseAPuppyChangeALife #GuideDogsForTheBlind #GDBSchoolSpirit
- Examples of discouraged hashtags #guidedogfail #gdbdropout

Protect Your Own Privacy

- Set privacy settings to “limited access” to avoid allowing others to post information or view personal information.
- Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

- Do not post or blog anonymously about GDB, using pseudonyms or false screen names, or say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading.
- What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Be the First to Respond to Mistakes

- If you make an error, please be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly.
- If an earlier post is modified, make that clear. Remember, you have the option to edit or delete posts.
- If someone accuses you of posting something improper (copyrighted material or a defamatory comment), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.
- It is never a bad idea to have someone proofread to catch any spelling/factual errors.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Need Help?

Contact Guide Dogs for the Blind’s Marketing Department at marketing@guidedogs.com

- Social media questions or concerns
- GDB Social media policy questions
- Interesting story ideas

These guidelines are not exhaustive. Policy violations will be evaluated and potentially subject to disciplinary action.

Thank you for supporting the GDB brand in the best possible way!