



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

800.295.4050 | [guidedogs.com](http://guidedogs.com)

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 guidelines for social media accounts related to your role as a volunteer for GDB.***

## SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

### 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 credit or 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 when posting and commenting.
- We will not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, transphobic, or hateful language or comments.
- It is important that all posts by volunteers are consistent with GDB's website, policies, or publications.

### Accessible Posting:

- The GDB community is large and diverse. We strongly encourage volunteers to use best accessibility practices when posting on social media:
- Add alt text (short for alternative text) or image descriptions to your post to describe the image or video that you are sharing.
- Avoid text as image whenever possible, and if you must, be sure to copy the text of the image into your caption so everyone can access the same information.
- Avoid special fonts and overuse of emojis as they are hard for screen readers to detect

### Appropriate Hashtags:

- 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
- Examples of discouraged hashtags #guidedogfail #gdbdropout
- Whenever possible, consider using CamelCase (or capitalizing the first letter in each word) to make your hashtags more accessible and easier to read. #GuideDogsForTheBlind not #guidedogsfortheblind

### 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.

### Protect the Privacy of GDB Clients, Employees, Volunteers, Visitors, and Dogs

- Never identify a client, employee, or volunteer by name without permission.



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- 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.

## 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

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### Need Help?

Contact Guide Dogs for the Blind's Marketing Department at [marketing@guidedogs.com](mailto: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!**