

# Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways Policies and Procedures



2025-2027

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# Membership & Volunteer Policies

## Membership

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is open to all who identify with the Girl Scout experience. Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN) is committed to fostering an inclusive environment. We welcome children from across the gender spectrum, including cisgender girls, gender expansive youth, transgender youth, non-binary youth, gender non-conforming youth, genderqueer youth, any girl-identifying human, and those who are in transition or questioning their gender identity. The Girl Scout mission is to hold space for those who, on the spectrum of gender identity, are not cisgender boys (those whose gender identity is boy, and the sex assigned at birth is male.) Consequently, Girl Scouts is not appropriate for cis-gender boys. We use the term "girl" inclusively to speak to everyone who identifies with the Girl Scout experience.

### Procedure:

- All girls and adults participating in Girl Scout programs must be registered members of GSUSA.
- Annual membership dues apply to all members unless they are lifetime members or serving in a short-term advisory role.
- Financial assistance is available for girl membership and, when required for safety, for adult membership.
- Membership registration can be completed online or through the council.

## Commitment to Volunteers

GSNYPENN strives to enrich the volunteer experience by matching individuals to appropriate roles and ensuring all volunteers understand and uphold the values, policies, and standards of Girl Scouts.

## Anti-Harassment

**Policy:** GSNYPENN maintains a harassment-free environment. Harassment can include unwelcome verbal or physical conduct, as well as unwelcome jokes, comments, or actions that create a hostile or offensive environment.

Girl Scouts has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual or any other unlawful harassment. This includes unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that affects someone's role, interferes with their performance, or creates a hostile environment. It is against Council policy for any volunteer or staff to physically, sexually, emotionally, mentally, or verbally abuse or neglect a girl member. Such behavior will be referred to the proper authorities for further investigation and prosecution. The volunteer's position will be terminated.

### Procedure:

Volunteers who witness or experience harassment must report the incident using the **GSNYPENN [Incident Report Form](#)**.

Upon receipt of a report:

1. **Initial Review** - Council staff will acknowledge receipt of the Incident Report and initiate a preliminary review to determine whether the report involves harassment, abuse, or other misconduct requiring formal investigation.
2. **Investigation Process** - A prompt, fair, and confidential investigation will be conducted, following GSNYPENN's standard procedures for **Conflict Resolution**, **Corrective Action**, and **Anti-Harassment**. This may involve:
  - Interviews with involved parties and witnesses
  - Review of any relevant documents or communications

- Evaluation of the incident in context with council policy

**3. Corrective Action** - Based on the findings, the council may:

- Issue a verbal or written warning
- Reassign or suspend the volunteer
- Terminate the volunteer's position
- Refer the matter to law enforcement when required

**4. Zero Tolerance for Retaliation** - Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal.

Volunteers found to have engaged in harassment may face immediate dismissal and could be subject to legal and financial liability. If the harassment involves a girl member, the matter will be referred to appropriate authorities for further investigation and prosecution.

## Background Checks & Volunteer Eligibility

**Policy:** To maintain a safe environment, all volunteers must pass a background check before working with Girl Scouts. All volunteers undergo a background check every **three years**.

**Procedure:**

- Criminal background checks are provided by an independent third-party vendor to review the National Sex Offender Registry and all criminal records, including motor vehicle criminal records.
- Pennsylvania residents must complete additional background screening in compliance with state laws.
- Volunteers must renew their background check every three years.
- Adults involved in meetings, events, or trips must have completed the background check process.

## Conflict of Interest

**Policy:** Volunteers must avoid situations where personal interests could conflict with their responsibilities to Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways. A conflict of interest exists when a volunteer's decisions or influence could result in personal benefit—direct or indirect—through council-related business or partnerships.

Examples include receiving gifts, special treatment, or financial gain from vendors or organizations doing business with the council. Volunteers must disclose any potential conflicts and recuse themselves from related decisions.

## Conflict Resolution

**Policy:** GSNYPENN has an established conflict resolution policy for volunteers to address disagreements respectfully and productively. The general process involves initial discussion between the parties involved, followed by support from volunteer leadership or council staff if needed. If a conflict persists, a formal grievance procedure can be initiated, and the resolution determined by the council's senior leadership will be final.

**Procedure:**

**Initial Discussion:** Volunteers are encouraged to first discuss the conflict directly with the other party involved, seeking an acceptable resolution. This should be done in a calm and nonjudgmental way, focusing on the issue rather than personal attacks.

**Seeking Support:** If the initial discussion doesn't resolve the issue, the parties can seek help from volunteer leadership or council staff, who can provide guidance and support in finding a resolution.

**Formal Grievance Procedure:** If the conflict remains unresolved, a formal grievance procedure can be initiated. This procedure may involve a review by the council's senior leadership or another designated body. It typically includes steps for gathering information, reviewing documentation, and making a final decision.

GSNYPENN has a ***Conflict Resolution Quick Guide*** in the appendix of this document

## Volunteer Appointments & Reappointments

**Policy:** Volunteers are appointed to roles based on their skills, availability, and the needs of the council. The council reserves the right to modify or deny appointments, as necessary. While some roles may have terms of one to three years, all volunteer appointments are contingent upon annual membership renewal and annual review or reappointment.

**Procedure:**

- Placement prioritizes the volunteer's skills and the council's operational needs.
- If a volunteer cannot be placed in their preferred role, alternative positions may be offered.
- Troop co-leaders and service team members must complete a live orientation before the appointment.
- Volunteer role reappointment is based on performance and mutual agreement.

## Volunteer Code of Conduct & Expectations

**Policy:** As a representative of Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, volunteers are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, safety, and inclusivity.

**Procedure:** The following expectations apply to all volunteer roles:

1. Act in alignment with the Girl Scout Promise and Law: Model respect, honesty, and inclusion in all interactions with girls, families, staff, and the community.
2. Maintain a safe and supportive environment: Follow all safety guidelines, policies, and procedures, including those outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials. Report safety concerns or violations promptly.
3. Protect confidential information: Respect the privacy of members, families, and the organization. Do not share non-public personal, financial, or operational information without authorization.
4. Use funds responsibly: Manage troop/group finances with transparency and in accordance with council financial policies. Maintain accurate records and submit required reports on time.
5. Communicate effectively and respectfully: Maintain open, respectful communication with girls, families, other volunteers, and staff. Address conflicts constructively and in a spirit of cooperation.
6. Represent Girl Scouts positively: When wearing the uniform or acting in a volunteer capacity, represent the organization with professionalism, refraining from behavior that could harm the reputation of Girl Scouts.
7. Avoid conflicts of interest: Make decisions in the best interest of girls and the organization. Disclose any potential conflicts to council staff.
8. Comply with GSNYPENN and GSUSA policies: Abide by all council and GSUSA guidelines, including those related to conduct, safety, social media, and required training.

## Volunteer Supervision & Support

**Policy:** Each volunteer is assigned a supervisor and a support team to ensure success.

**Procedure:**

- Supervisors provide guidance on expectations, performance goals, and problem-solving strategies.
- Progress is monitored, and achievements are recognized.

## Volunteer Training & Development

**Policy:** Volunteers are required to complete training to ensure safe, informed, and effective participation. GSNYPENN ensures all volunteers receive the necessary training to fulfill their roles effectively and safely.

### **Procedure:**

- Each volunteer completes a general orientation covering the Girl Scout mission, council operations, and available resources.
- Role-specific training must be completed within a designated period, including required certifications (e.g., CPR, First Aid, safety courses).
- Training may be conducted virtually or in-person, individually, or in a group setting.
- See the appendix of this document for more details.

## Volunteer Use of Social Media

**Policy:** Volunteers are encouraged to celebrate Girl Scouts online in ways that are safe, respectful, and aligned with Girl Scout values. When using social media in a volunteer role or referencing Girl Scouts in a personal account, volunteers are expected to follow these guidelines.

### **Procedure:** Guidelines for Social Media Use

1. Protect girl privacy: Do not post identifiable photos or information (name, location, school, etc.) about girls without prior written consent from a parent or guardian.
2. Represent Girl Scouts positively: Speak respectfully and supportively about the Girl Scout mission, volunteers, staff, and families. Avoid posting content that could be perceived as discriminatory, inflammatory, or inappropriate.
3. Use official branding with care: Do not alter the official Girl Scout logo or create your own version. Contact [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org) for approved branding tools if needed.
4. Stay within scope: Do not speak on behalf of the council or GSUSA. Use “I” statements and clarify that personal posts reflect your views, not those of Girl Scouts.
5. Keep communication transparent: When using digital platforms (e.g., group texts, social pages) for troop communication, always include at least one other approved volunteer or parent. Avoid one-on-one direct messaging with girls.
6. Report misuse: If you see posts that misrepresent Girl Scouts, compromise safety, or violate this policy, report them to council staff or email [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org).

## Volunteer Corrective Action and Release

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN) may take corrective action or release a volunteer from their position when necessary.

Grounds for release may include, but are not limited to:

- Position restructuring or elimination.
- Failure to meet role expectations or complete required training.
- Refusal to comply with council or GSUSA policies.
- Conduct that materially affects the reputation or integrity of the Girl Scout Movement.

Immediate release occurs without warning for:

- Aggressive behavior toward staff, volunteers, or members.
- Misconduct, misappropriation of funds, or fraudulent actions.
- Compromising girl safety or violating GSUSA safety standards.

- Engaging in malicious gossip or making derogatory or harmful statements about others.
- Soliciting or accepting gratuities.
- Arrest and charges for a misdemeanor or felony.
- Any immoral, unethical, or improper conduct impacting Girl Scouts' reputation.

Volunteers suspended due to arrest must reapply with official legal documentation if charges are dismissed.

Volunteers convicted of a felony are ineligible for reappointment.

Volunteers convicted of a misdemeanor must wait seven years without further charges before resuming direct-service roles.

Release from a volunteer position does not cancel GSUSA membership unless the volunteer no longer meets membership requirements.

### **Procedure: Volunteer Corrective Action Steps**

#### Step 1: First Warning

- Conduct an initial verbal warning (in person or by phone) by volunteer leadership or council staff.
- Follow up with a written summary from council staff.
- If three attempts to contact the volunteer fail, send a first-warning letter.

#### Step 2: Final Warning

- Conduct a second and final verbal warning in person.
- Follow up with a written final warning issued by council staff.
- If three attempts to make contact are unsuccessful, proceed to Step 3.

#### Step 3: Release

- If corrective actions are not successful, issue a formal release letter via Certified Mail from council staff.

## **Workplace Hostility**

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is committed to a safe, respectful environment for all members, volunteers, and staff. Hostile behavior—including bullying, intimidation, or verbal aggression—is not tolerated.

Volunteers must treat others with professionalism and courtesy. Incidents should be reported using the council's conflict resolution or incident reporting process. Repeated or serious violations, including threats or violence, may lead to immediate dismissal and be reported to law enforcement. Criminal acts may result in prosecution or civil action.

## **Safety & Risk Management**

Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) is used by volunteers and council staff overseeing youth. GSNYPENN's local version offers a comprehensive approach to providing safety for all our council volunteers.

The first section of SAC, Standard Safety Guidelines (p. 1-25), provides overarching safety guidelines for all Girl Scout activities. The second section is an Activities-at-a-Glance chart, which abbreviates the key elements like the grade level of participation, any specific instructor qualifications, and whether volunteers are instructed to contact their local council for prior approval before taking girls on the activity. The third section has specific activity chapters, categorized by activity type.



## Health & Safety

**Policy:** All Girl Scout volunteers are responsible for ensuring that activities are planned and conducted to safeguard participants' health, safety, and well-being. All activities must comply with the most current Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) and council policies.

**Procedure:**

- Use the most up-to-date SAC for activity planning, emergency preparedness, and risk management.
- Contact [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org) to ask questions or request guidance.
- Activities requiring council approval (as listed in SAC) must be submitted in advance—allow 2 weeks to 18 months, depending on risk and complexity.

## First Aid & Emergencies

**Policy:** At least one volunteer certified in First Aid/CPR must accompany the troop/group to all activities as stated in SAC.

**Procedure:**

- Check Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) for required first aid qualifications based on activity type and location.
- Keep a fully stocked first aid kit accessible during Girl Scout activities.
- Respond promptly to medical emergencies:
- Provide immediate care and seek emergency assistance as needed.
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of all participants at the scene.
- Once the emergency is managed, complete and submit an [Incident Report](#) as soon as possible, following council guidelines.

### In the event of Serious emergencies – Follow These Steps:

#### 1. Care for the Injured

- Provide immediate care and seek medical assistance as needed.
- Ensure the safety of all participants at the scene.

#### 2. Notify Parent/Guardian and Report the Emergency

- Contact the parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Clearly identify yourself, explain the nature of the emergency, and provide the condition and location of the injured person.
- Ask for the parent/guardian's preferences regarding treatment, transportation, and attendance.
- In the event of a fatality, do not notify the family directly. Contact the Girl Scout Emergency Line immediately—only the CEO will notify the next of kin.

#### 3. Notify the Council

- Call 1-800-943-4414, then Press #4.
- Leave your name, phone number, and a brief message.
- A staff member will return your call promptly.

#### 4. Limit Public Statements

- Do not make statements—verbal or written—that imply responsibility for the incident.
- Refer all media inquiries to the Vice President of Marketing and Communications.

## Medication Administration

**Policy:** Girl Scout volunteers may not administer medication unless licensed; all participants must self-administer unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider.

**Procedure:** Full documentation and training on medication handling is provided in GSNYPENN travel and overnight training resources.

All medications must be in their original, labeled containers. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications must be labeled with the participant's full name.

Emergency medications (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers) should be carried by the individual. All other medications will be collected and stored in a secure, locked location accessible only to a designated volunteer. Controlled substances must be double-locked.

- The designated volunteer collects and secures medications at check-in, verifying them against the health history form and a written provider order (required for all prescription and OTC medications).
- The volunteer supervises self-administration: The participant identifies and takes the correct medication, and the volunteer logs the date, time, dosage, and witness.
- Self-administration is based on cognitive ability, not age, and the individual must be able to identify the medication, understand its use, and decline if uncertain.

## Child Abuse Prevention

**Policy:** Upon Girl Scout membership, registrants agree to adhere to all abuse prevention policies and procedures as set forth by Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways. Policies and procedures may be amended occasionally, and the following do not include all supporting processes and training available in Girl Scouts to prevent abuse.

The pertinent policies and procedures to prevent abuses in Girl Scouts include:

- **No Tolerance for Physical or Sexual Abuse:** Physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse of youth is forbidden. Sexual pressure, sexual advances, improper touching, sexual communication, including text messaging, and sexual activity of any kind with Girl Scout members is not tolerated. If you witness or experience any behavior of this nature, including between youth, notify appropriate council staff immediately. Incidences of abuse of any kind will result in immediate council intervention and law enforcement notification when necessary. Volunteers are responsible for following their council guidelines for reporting any direct information or concern around physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse with respect to members.
- **No Tolerance for Youth Violence and Bullying:** Youth violence or bullying is not tolerated in Girl Scouts. Youth violence occurs when young people intentionally use physical force or power to threaten or harm others. Bullying is a form of youth violence. Volunteers should become familiar with the signs, risk factors, and preventive measures against this type of behavior. If you witness or experience any behavior of this nature, notify the appropriate council staff for guidance. The CDC provides excellent resources on this topic.
- **Child Abuse Reporting:** If you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, always notify the appropriate council staff immediately and report your concerns to the proper agency within your state.
  - To report abuse, call New York State's Office of Children and Family Services 24-hour hotline at 1-800-342-3720 or to report child abuse in Pennsylvania, call: 1-800-932-0310.
  - If this is an emergency, for example, young children are currently alone or you witness a child being beaten, call 911 or your local police department, as they can respond immediately.

- Notify Council. If appropriate, file an incident report. You can also notify council staff by phone or email to discuss the incident and report.
- **Adult Supervision Requirements:** Girl Scouts requires that whenever youth members meet, whether in person or virtually, there are to be at least two unrelated, registered, and Girl Scout-approved adults who have been background checked, and one of whom is female, supervising Girl Scout members. A registered, Girl Scout-approved adult volunteer is someone who has passed a background check and has been through the council volunteer onboarding and training process. The two adult volunteers must not be related to each other (for example, not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or anyone who would be considered a family member) and may not live in the same residence.
  - This requirement applies to every Girl Scout gathering, including troop meetings (in person and virtual), day trips, camp, sleep-away travel, special events, activities, and projects. Members should be advised of this policy so that they can report to the council if there is a violation.
  - Troop leaders must always be adults. Youth or youth members are not permitted to substitute for adult supervision. This rule applies to every Girl Scout gathering, including troop meetings (in person and virtual), day trips, camp, sleep-away travel, events, activities, and projects. There are no exceptions to this rule.
  - All adult volunteers in Girl Scouts must successfully pass a background check in accordance with GSNYPENN procedures.
- **Adult-to-Child Communications:** In Girl Scouts, adults are not permitted to make one-to-one contact with youth members. This also applies to social media and electronic/online communications such as e-mail, text, IM, chat, etc. Girl Scout volunteers and adults should not make private direct contact with youth members. There should always be at least one other supervising adult or parent involved when contacting troop members.
- **Child Abuse Prevention Training:** In Girl Scouts, adult volunteers will receive periodic mandatory child abuse prevention training to promote the health and safety of children, to create a safe environment for children, and to learn how to recognize, respond, and report concerns of physical or sexual abuse. Volunteers are expected to receive and abide by the mandatory abuse prevention training course according to the training cadence offered by GSNYPENN.

## High-Risk Activities & Prohibited Actions

**Policy:** Certain activities require prior council approval or are not permitted at all. The Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) provides a detailed list of prohibited activities and an "Activities-at-a-Glance" chart identifying those that require council approval.

Important: Girl Scout insurance does not cover accidents or injuries during activities prohibited or conducted without required council approval. Additionally, for legal and ethical reasons, Girl Scouts and their volunteers are prohibited from participating in certain actions while representing the organization. These include:

- Endorsing commercial products or services
- Soliciting financial contributions for non-Girl Scout purposes
- Participating in political campaigns or legislative activities without prior council approval

**Procedure:** High-risk activities require special permission from the council and may also require a Certificate of Insurance and additional certifications or verifications. Refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints early in your planning process. Allow adequate time to verify safety protocols and obtain any necessary approvals or insurance.

## Registered Sex Offenders

**Policy:** Registered sex offenders are not eligible for GSUSA membership and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scout programs. They are prohibited from attending Girl Scout meetings, events, or activities—whether in person or virtual—and are not permitted on Girl Scout properties. Volunteers may not knowingly host or hold Girl Scout activities where a registered sex offender is present, including in private homes or dwellings.

## Sleeping Arrangements & Overnight Policies

**Policy:** The following policies apply to all overnight experiences involving Girl Scouts to ensure safety, privacy, and compliance with Girl Scout standards:

- Male volunteers may not sleep in the same space as girl members.
- Men must have separate sleeping quarters and restrooms that do not require them to pass through girls' sleeping areas.
- Youth and adults do not share a bed; exceptions may be made for family members (e.g., mother and daughter).
- Each participant must have their own bed.
- If a woman sleeps in the same area as youth, two unrelated adult females must be present.
- An adult is not required to sleep in the youth sleeping area unless program needs dictate.

**Procedure:** For full overnight planning guidance, adult-to-girl ratios, and sleeping arrangement requirements, refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

- Involve Girl Scouts in planning overnight activities so they know what to expect.
- Family overnights may allow shared accommodation within designated family areas, with permission.
- Parent/guardian permission is required if girls choose to share a bed.
- If adult women share a sleeping area with girls, two unrelated adult females must be present.

## Venue Selection & Facility Use

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is committed to providing safe, inclusive, and age-appropriate environments for all Girl Scout activities. Troop meetings, events, service unit gatherings, and product sales must take place in venues that uphold the values and image of Girl Scouting and safeguard youth participants. Venues must be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the Girl Scouts involved.

**Procedure:** Guidelines for selecting safe and suitable locations.

Inappropriate venues may include, but are not limited to, establishments that Girl Scouts themselves cannot legally patronize, such as:

- Marijuana dispensaries
- Casinos and other venues where betting occurs
- Bars, breweries, or wineries
- Select venues that are appropriate and align with Girl Scout values. Confirm the following:
- Appropriateness: Venues must be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the Girl Scouts.
- Disability Accommodations: Reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities should be available.
- No Smoking: Smoking is prohibited in areas where Girl Scouts are present.
- Pets: Pets must be kept in a safe and secure location separate from the Girl Scouts.

## Weapons, Tobacco, Alcohol, & Substance Use

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and substance-free environment for all members and participants.

**Weapons:** Firearms, handguns, and other weapons are strictly prohibited at all Girl Scout activities and properties unless explicitly authorized in writing by the CEO or Board of Directors.

**Tobacco:** The use or display of tobacco products—including electronic and vapor cigarettes—is prohibited in all council-owned or operated facilities and during any Girl Scout activities. Participants may not smoke during Girl Scout activities.

**Alcohol and Substances:** Possession or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any substances used to alter consciousness is strictly prohibited at Girl Scout properties or events. Prescription or over-the-counter medications may only be used for their intended purpose. Participants at any youth, Girl Scout-sponsored event may not consume alcohol.

**Procedure:** Questions about this policy or exceptions for special events or weapons will be directed to the council's senior leadership, and requests can be made via [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org).

Participants may not be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, or any impairing substance at any Girl Scout activity or event.

If a volunteer observes illegal drug use or substance abuse, they must report it immediately to the person in charge of the event, who will contact the council's emergency line.

## Financial Management

Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, committed to using funds wisely, honestly, and in ways that support our mission. We follow the rules that come with our nonprofit status to make sure every dollar helps build girls of courage, confidence, and character.

### Tax Exemption

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is a tax-exempt nonprofit organization in New York and Pennsylvania. Troops and groups may use the council's state sales tax exemption only for purchases directly supporting Girl Scout activities. Tax exemption does not apply to personal purchases.

**Procedure:** To use the sales tax exemption status, download the NY or PA exemption form from council staff or volunteer leadership.

- The volunteer making the purchase must sign the form, confirming it will be used only for troop-related expenses.
- All items in the GSNYPENN Store are tax-exempt when purchased by an authorized user using a debit card from a GSNYPENN-authorized troop or group bank account.
- Exemption is only valid in New York and Pennsylvania, not in other states

### Troop & Group Financial Management

**Policy:** Girl Scout troop and group funds are the property of Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways and must be managed with integrity, transparency, and compliance with council and IRS requirements.

**Procedures:** All Girl Scout money must be deposited into a bank account before use. Girl Scout volunteers are responsible for the annual financial reporting, the appropriate use of banking tools, and the responsible stewardship of funds when troops disband or girls transfer. Financial misconduct may result in removal and legal action.

- **Bank Accounts & IRS Compliance**
  - Troops, groups, and service units must open council-approved bank accounts using the council's tax ID with one of our partner banks or, with prior approval, another bank, and

submit a Payment Policy Agreement.

- Two unrelated, registered adult Girl Scout volunteer signers are required.
- Bank information must be shared with the council for tracking and compliance.
- To open, close or make changes to a GSNYPENN Troop, Group or Service Unit bank account, contact [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org) or use the request form <https://form.jotform.com/GSNYPENN/bank-account-request-form>

- **Online Banking & Debit/Credit Cards**

- Online transaction tracking is allowed; online bill-pay services are not.
- Debit cards are permitted if allowed by the bank. Credit cards and loans are not permitted.
- All transactions must be documented with receipts.

- **Use of Girl Scout Funds**

- All funds must be used for Girl Scout-related purposes that directly benefit the troop or group.
- Funds may not be distributed to individuals or used for personal expenses or adult-only activities unless approved as part of a Girl Scout program.

- **Annual Financial Reporting**

- Troops, Groups and Service Units must submit their annual financial report online by May 31 for the period of May 1–April 30, including a reconciled bank statement as of April 30.
- Keep all receipts and bank statements from Girl Scout-related transactions for three (3) years.

- **Debt Collection & Financial Misconduct**

- Unresolved debt or financial mismanagement can result in removal, collections, or legal action.
- Returned check fees and other penalties may not be paid with troop funds.

- **Disbanded Troops & Unused Funds**

- If no new leadership is identified, unused funds revert to the council for future troop development.
- Girls should help determine how to use the remaining funds before disbandment (e.g., end-of-year activity, donations, bridging gifts).

- **Troop-to-Troop Transfers**

- When girls transfer, a pro-rated share of troop funds (based on the number of girls in the original troop) is donated to the new troop.
- Transfers occur after product programs conclude to ensure accurate records.

- **Bridging & Transitioning Funds:** It is recommended that troop funds be used to support the girls' continued participation in Girl Scouting before they bridge to a new level. If that's not possible, a portion of the funds may be transferred to the troop the girls are joining, based on the number of girls bridging. For guidance, contact council staff.

- **Closing Troop, Group, or Service Unit Bank Accounts**

- Notify your Membership Staff when a group disbands, or new leadership is appointed.
- Prepare and submit the final financial report, including:
  - A copy of the final bank statement showing the account has been closed
  - A summary of income, expenses, and remaining funds
- When the account is closed, all remaining undesignated funds will be transferred to the council and placed in a restricted fund to support new troops or service units

- Volunteers may choose to track expenses incurred while performing Girl Scout-related duties (e.g., uniforms, mileage, meals). For questions about potential tax deductions, volunteers

should consult a tax professional or the Internal Revenue Service.

## Fundraising and Product Sales

### Council-Sponsored Product Sales

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN) follows GSUSA standards for council-sponsored product programs (Cookies and Fall Product), with the following specific requirements:

- Troops must have at least one trained representative for each product program, and no sales may occur before the official start date.
- All participating girls must have signed parent permission slips. Receipts must be used for all product or money exchanges, including between the council, service units, troops, and families.
- Payments must be made by the stated deadlines. Missed payments may trigger a reminder and collections process, which can lead to dismissal or legal action. Troop funds may not be used to cover unpaid caregiver balances; a caregiver collection form and documentation are required.
- Booth Sales must follow council safety ratios and registration procedures. All booth sales must be recorded in eBudde.
- Troop proceeds must be reported on the annual financial report. Misappropriation of funds may result in removal and legal action.

**Procedure:** Detailed procedures for each product program season are provided in council-issued manuals, Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC), and Volunteer Essentials. These resources include guidance on selling timelines, booth sale procedures, troop proceeds, documentation requirements, and payment deadlines. Volunteers are expected to follow the current season's instructions and use the most up-to-date materials provided.

### Fundraising, Donations, Sponsorships, and Public Support

**Policy:** Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways is committed to maintaining ethical, mission-aligned fundraising practices that support the Girl Scout experience. All fundraising efforts must comply with GSUSA standards, the Blue Book of Basic Documents, IRS regulations, and council policies. Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary.

The following principles apply:

- Cash fundraising may only be conducted by staff and volunteers to benefit the council. Youth members may not request or accept cash gifts.
- Troops/groups may not fundraise on behalf of other organizations, though they may donate a portion of troop funds by group consensus.
- Collaborations with businesses or organizations must align with Girl Scout values and be approved by the council. Organizations that promote alcohol, tobacco, firearms, or other inappropriate products/activities are not permitted.
- The council must process in-kind donations over \$100. Unless otherwise restricted, donations under \$100 may be accepted at the troop/group level. Only donations processed through the council will be tax-deductible.
- Youth members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from a council designee. Requests are submitted via [Request for In Kind Donation or Monetary Donations](#)

**Procedure:** Follow these guidelines to engage with fundraising and support opportunities



## 1. In-Kind Donations

- Donations under \$100 can be accepted directly by troops/groups.
- Donations over \$100 must be approved and processed by the Fund Development Department.
- Submit an In-Kind Donation Request Form at [Request for In Kind Donation or Monetary Donations](#)

## 2. Cash Gifts & Donor-Designated Gifts

- Cash gifts must be secured through the council. Volunteers may not solicit cash directly.
- If a donor wishes to support a specific troop/group, they must send the donation to the council with troop details. The council will process and distribute the funds accordingly.
- If a troop-generated lead results in a donation, a percentage (up to 100%) may be shared with the troop.

## 3. Sponsorships & Business Collaborations

- Contact Advancement [advancement@gsnypenn.org](mailto:advancement@gsnypenn.org) before engaging with businesses or organizations.
- Submit opportunities for approval at least two months before the event or project.
- Do not pursue partnerships that conflict with Girl Scout values.

## 4. Fundraising Requests

- Troops and groups will submit a [Money-Earning Activity Request](#) form when planning an additional money-earning activity outside product programs.
- Adults may host fundraising ventures (e.g., product parties) and donate proceeds to Girl Scouts—girls may not participate in promotion, sales, or solicitation for these ventures.

# Troop Money-Earning Activities

**Policy:** Troops and groups may conduct additional money-earning activities only after participating in both council-sponsored product programs (Fall Product and Cookies). These activities must align with Girl Scout values and be approved in advance. All activities must be age-appropriate, safe, and free from commercial endorsements, internet sales, gambling, or direct cash solicitations by girls.

### Procedure:

- **Request Approval:** Complete and submit the [Money-Earning Activity Request](#) form, available at [gsnypenn.org](http://gsnypenn.org), for council staff review.
- **Allowed Activities** include:
  - Collections/Drives (e.g., bottle drives, used ink cartridges)
  - Food Events (e.g., pancake breakfasts, themed dinners)
  - Services (e.g., babysitting, yard work, badge workshops)
  - Handmade item sales (no reselling of commercial goods)
- **Prohibited Activities** include:
  - Online fundraising or reselling
  - Raffles, games of chance, product parties (e.g., Pampered Chef)
  - Use of the Girl Scout name or images to promote non-Girl Scout fundraising events

Troops must comply with applicable local ordinances and consult council staff with any questions.



# Transportation and Travel Policies

## Contracts for Travel & Activities

**Policy:** Only a council-authorized designee may sign contracts involving transportation of girls, high-risk activities, or hold harmless clauses. Volunteers are not permitted to sign contracts on behalf of Girl Scouts.

**Procedure:** Submit the contract for council review and authorization at least six weeks before engaging any vendor whose services involve transportation, high-risk activities, or a hold harmless clause. Council staff will review and determine appropriate approval.

## Extended & International Trips

**Policy:** Extended trips (more than 3 days) and international travel are enriching opportunities for girls and must align with Girl Scout progression and safety standards.

- All extended and international travel must be approved by council staff.
- Extended travel is only appropriate for Juniors and above who have demonstrated readiness through prior overnight experiences.
- International travel is recommended only for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, and should follow a progression of increasingly challenging trips.
- Trips must comply with Safety Activity Checkpoints, especially in terms of transportation, accommodations, supervision, insurance, and health and safety.

**Procedure:** These opportunities require approval and preparation. For detailed planning requirements, safety standards, and progression guidelines, refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSNYPENN's Simply Successful Overnights and Camping training.

### 1. Request Council Approval

- Submit a Troop/Group Activity Application at least:
  - 4 months in advance for extended trips (U.S. & Canada)
  - 1 year in advance for international trips (outside Canada)
- Include documentation of Girl Scout readiness and planning progression.

### 2. Complete Required Training

- At least one leader must complete the Extended Trips Training (available via webinar or in person).

### 3. Secure Additional Insurance

- Submit the Additional Insurance Request Form at least two weeks before traveling.

### 4. Collect Health Documentation

- Ensure Health History Forms (dated within the last 24 months) are on file for all participants.

### 5. Meet International Travel Requirements (if applicable)

- Our staff will assist volunteers in submitting the Intent to Travel form to GSUSA (3–6 months in advance).
- Register the group with the U.S. Embassy in the destination country.
- Secure two notarized Permission to Travel with Minor forms per girl, signed by both legal guardians.

## Motor Vehicles & Safe Driving Guidelines

**Policy:** To ensure the safety of Girl Scouts during travel, all vehicles used must meet state regulations and council and GSUSA standards. Volunteers providing transportation must:

- Be registered, background-checked adults age 21 or older.
- Hold a valid driver's license.
- Operate a **licensed, insured, and safety-inspected** vehicle.
- **15-passenger vans** may not be used for transporting Girl Scouts.
- Ensure **seat belts are worn** by every passenger while the vehicle is moving.
- Avoid use of **cell phones or other distractions** while driving.
- Never use **uninsured vehicles** for Girl Scout purposes.

Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways does not assume responsibility for insuring personal vehicles or other personal property used during Girl Scout activities.

**Procedure:** Vehicle use and safety. Refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) for full vehicle use and transportation safety protocols.

Approved drivers must:

- Confirm their vehicle is properly registered, insured, and maintained.
- Keep emergency contact information, Permission Forms, and Health History forms for all passengers readily accessible.
- Carry a first aid kit, flashlight, and trip directions in the vehicle.
- Report any accidents within 24 hours to GSNYPENN using the [Incident Report](#) and Emergency Procedures and report the incident to their insurance provider.

Safety reminders:

- Pull over and park before using a phone or navigation device.
- Do not lease or use 15-passenger vans under any circumstances.
- Ensure drivers are listed as approved volunteers and meet SAC requirements.

## Renting, Leasing, or Borrowing Vehicles

**Policy:** To ensure the safety and liability coverage for Girl Scout members, only council-authorized representatives may sign agreements to rent, lease, or borrow vehicles for Girl Scout purposes (except personal rental car agreements for approved volunteers).

All rented, leased, or borrowed vehicles must:

- Be licensed, registered, and insured (including liability and collision/comprehensive coverage).
- Pass all state-mandated safety inspections.
- Be in safe operating condition, free of obvious defects.
- Be equipped with the required safety gear, including a first aid kit and warning lights or reflectors.

**Procedure:** Full guidelines for vehicle use can be found in the Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC).

Submit Contracts for Approval

- Email a copy of the rental/lease/borrow contract agreement to the council designee at least six weeks before the trip or event.
- Only a council designee may sign vehicle use agreements (except individual car rentals).

Confirm Vehicle Safety and Readiness

- Ensure the vehicle owner/operator maintains:
  - Valid license and registration
  - Up-to-date insurance (including Workers' Compensation if applicable)
  - Proper emergency equipment (e.g., first aid kit, flashers, working lights, cell phone or other communication device)

## Transportation & Driver Requirements

**Policy:** Adults who transport Girl Scouts must be registered, background-checked members (approved adult volunteers) and at least 21 years old. Girl Scout youth members may not drive other members at any time during Girl Scout activities.

**Procedure:**

- Drivers must have a valid license, a safe driving record, and use a registered and insured vehicle that meets council and SAC safety standards.
- Two unrelated approved volunteers (one female) are required in a single-vehicle group trip.
- In multi-vehicle caravans, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated approved volunteers, with one female adult across the group.
- In a medical or safety emergency, a licensed minor or non-member adult may drive only if no other safe option exists.

Refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints for complete transportation safety guidelines and the *Checklist for Drivers*.

## Emergency Procedures & Insurance

### Emergency Response Plan

**Policy:** Leaders must follow emergency procedures and report incidents. The Emergency Chain of Command begins with the report of the incident or accident.

When Girl Scouts travel, an in-town Emergency Contact must be arranged for all day and overnight trips. Troop leadership is responsible for providing the Emergency Contact person with a troop/group emergency instruction sheet and a phone list of girls and adults participating in the event/activity.

**Procedure:** Follow the Safety & Risk Management section above and the steps for responding to emergencies outlined in the appendix.

### Accident/Liability Insurance Coverage

**Policy:** All registered Girl Scout members and guests are covered under basic activity accident insurance through Mutual of Omaha when participating in approved and supervised Girl Scout activities, including travel to and from those activities, when travel is part of the activity. The council also maintains liability insurance to protect registered adults acting within council policies and safety standards. Insurance is invalid if activities are not conducted in compliance with council policies or Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC).

**Procedure:** To ensure proper insurance coverage and response, volunteers must follow these steps when planning or responding to incidents at Girl Scout activities:

- Activities involving overnight, high-risk elements, or travel over 200 miles round trip require prior council approval and additional insurance. Email [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org) at least two weeks in advance.
- In an accident or injury, immediately contact the council emergency line.
- Submit a completed claim form within 72 hours (about 3 days) to council staff (not directly to Mutual of Omaha) and file an [Incident Report](#).
- Additional insurance may be purchased in advance for a fee.

## Non-Approved Events & Activities

**Policy:** Events or activities that do not meet Girl Scout safety requirements or are denied council approval are not considered Girl Scout-sanctioned. Girl Scout insurance does not cover these events, and the council assumes no liability.

**Procedure:** To ensure transparency and protect all participants, the following steps will be taken if the council denies approval of an event or activity:

- If an event is denied approval, troop leadership must notify all participating families in writing that it is not a sanctioned Girl Scout event.
- Volunteers who proceed with a non-approved event may be subject to dismissal from their role for failing to follow council policy.
- For questions about approval status, contact [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org) or council staff.

## Program-Specific Policies

### Activities in Private Homes/Private Property

**Policy:** Girl Scout meetings in private homes are discouraged but may be allowed with prior council approval to ensure the safety and suitability of the space.

**Procedure:**

1. Review the [Annual Safety Checklist for Troop Meetings in the Home](#)
2. Submit a request for approval to hold Girl Scout activities in the Home to [info@gsnypenn.org](mailto:info@gsnypenn.org).
3. Provide required documentation, including homeowner/renter's insurance proof.
4. All adults over 18 residing in the home must have a current, clear background check through GSNYPENN.
5. Await written council approval before hosting any meetings.

### Girl Scout Uniforms

**Policy:** The Girl Scout uniform symbolizes membership, belonging, and pride. While a full uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities, wearing the official uniform is expected for ceremonies, formal events, and public appearances. Uniform guidelines are based on GSUSA recommendations and adapted by Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways for consistency across programs.

**Procedure:** For complete uniform guidelines, details on proper insignia placement, and uniform updates, refer to the GSUSA Uniform Guide at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org).

- Girl Members:
  - All girls are encouraged to wear their grade-level tunic, vest, or sash with their official insignia and earned recognition.
  - These items may be worn over a solid white shirt with khaki pants, skirt, or shorts for formal occasions.
  - High school-level Girl Scouts may also wear a scarf symbolizing global sisterhood.
- Adult Members:
  - Adult volunteers may wear navy blue business attire with the official Girl Scout scarf (women) or tie (men) and membership pins during ceremonies or when formally representing Girl Scouts.
- General Notes:
  - Uniform components are available at council shops or through the official Girl Scout online store.
  - Uniforms should be worn respectfully and in alignment with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

## Permission from Parents/Guardians (Written or Electronic)

**Policy:** The annual membership registration form includes a photo release and documented authorization from a parent or legal guardian for their child to participate in Girl Scouts. In addition, parents or legal guardians will provide health history information and permission to treat youth members in an emergency.

## Sensitive Issues in Programming

**Policy:** Girl Scout programming may occasionally include discussions or activities related to sensitive issues that reflect girls' interests and developmental needs. These topics must be approached with care and are intended to be **educational and preventative**, not therapeutic or crisis-intervention focused.

Caregiver awareness and consent are required before addressing any sensitive issues during programming. Participation must always be voluntary.

**Procedure:** Plan and gain consent for programming that includes sensitive topics.

- Notify families in advance when programming includes sensitive topics (e.g., mental health, body image, relationships, bullying, cultural awareness).
- Provide a written program outline and secure caregiver permission using the appropriate form.
- Ensure participation is optional, and girls know they may choose not to participate in all or part of the discussion.
- If unsure whether a topic qualifies as “sensitive,” err on the side of transparency and use a permission form.
- Refer to Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints for guidance and examples.

## Troop/Group Size

**Policy:** A Girl Scout troop/group must have at least five Girl Scout youth and two approved adult volunteers. Use the volunteer-to-youth ratio table in the appendix to ensure you have the correct number of adults present for group meetings, events, travel, and camping. Adults and youth registering in groups of fewer than five Girl Scout youth and two approved adult volunteers who are not related to each other or in a relationship, at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to reflect their status and program experience accurately. Individual members are always welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

# Appendix:

## Appendix A: Volunteer Training Requirements by Role

Volunteer Role	Required Training	Recommended Training	Format	Expiration
<b>Troop Co-Leader</b>	Volunteer Orientation, Role-Specific Training	Simply Successful Overnights, First Aid/CPR	gsLearn, Webinar	N/A
<b>Troop Support Volunteer</b>	Volunteer Orientation	Product Program Training (if assisting), First Aid	gsLearn	N/A
<b>Service Unit Team Member</b>	Volunteer Orientation, Role-Specific Training	Conflict Resolution, DEIB in Action	gsLearn, In-Person	N/A
<b>Product Program Coordinator</b>	Product Program Training (Cookies/Fall)	eBudde or M2 System Demos	Webinar	Each season
<b>Encampment Director</b>	Encampment Director Certification	First Aid/CPR, Risk Management	In-Person	Valid 3 years

<b>Troop Camp Volunteer</b>	Simply Successful Overnights and/or Camping	Outdoor Cooking, Fire Building, Leave No Trace	gsLearn, In-Person	N/A
<b>Travel/Trip Coordinator</b>	Volunteer Orientation, Extended Trips Training	International Travel Prep	Webinar	N/A
<b>First Aider</b>	First Aid/CPR Certification (hands-on)	Wilderness First Aid (Level 2 situations)	In-Person	Valid 2 years

## Appendix B: Conflict Resolution Quick Guide

Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways encourages volunteers to resolve conflicts early and respectfully to maintain a positive experience for all members.

### 1. Initial Discussion: Addressing the Issue Together

- **Speak Directly:** Volunteers are encouraged to first talk directly with the other party involved.
- **Stay Calm and Respectful:** Approach the conversation in a calm, nonjudgmental way, focusing on the issue — not personal attacks.
- **Focus on Solutions:** Listen actively, be open-minded, and work together to find a resolution that is acceptable to all parties.
- **Document:** After the conversation, it's helpful to briefly summarize the agreement or next steps in writing (e.g., email).

Most conflicts can be resolved at this stage with honesty, respect, and goodwill.

### 2. Seeking Support: When You Need Help

If the initial conversation does not resolve the issue, the next step is to seek assistance:

- **Contact Volunteer Leadership:** Reach out to your Service Unit Manager or Troop Leader.
- **Council Support:** If needed, council staff can help facilitate further discussion.
- **Guidance Meeting:** A neutral third party may schedule a meeting to help guide everyone toward a solution.

### 3. Formal Grievance Procedure: If Conflict Remains Unresolved

When direct discussion and support intervention do not resolve the conflict:

- **Submit an [Incident Report](#):** Each party submits an Incident Report to council staff.
- **Council Review:** Council staff will review, research, and provide a resolution plan.
- **Appeal:** If unsatisfied, a formal appeal can be submitted in writing to a higher level of council leadership.
- **Final Decision:** The CEO or member of the council's senior leadership makes the final, binding decision.

### Quick Tips for Successful Conflict Resolution

- ✓ Focus on facts, not feelings.
- ✓ Assume good intentions.
- ✓ Aim for a “win-win” outcome.
- ✓ Keep Girl Scout values of respect, fairness, and kindness at the center.

## Appendix C: Responding to an Emergency

Volunteers are expected to respond quickly, calmly, and according to Girl Scout procedures in an emergency. Follow the steps below:



## Emergency Procedure – Follow These Steps

### 1. Care for the Injured

- Provide immediate care and seek medical assistance as needed.
- Ensure the safety of all participants at the scene.

### 2. Notify Parent/Guardian and Report the Emergency

- Contact the parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Clearly identify yourself, explain the nature of the emergency, and provide the condition and location of the injured person.
- Ask for the parent/guardian's preferences regarding treatment, transportation, and attendance.
- In the event of a fatality, do not notify the family directly. Contact the Girl Scout Emergency Line immediately—only the CEO will notify the next of kin.

### 3. Contact the Council Emergency Line

- Call 1-800-943-4414, then press #4.
- Leave your name, phone number, and a brief message.
- A staff member will return your call promptly.

### 4. Limit Public Statements

- Do not make statements—verbal or written—that imply responsibility for the incident.
- Refer all media inquiries to the Vice President of Marketing and Communications.

## Reminder:

Check Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) for required first aid qualifications based on activity type and location.

Keep a fully stocked first aid kit accessible during Girl Scout activities.

## Appendix D: Safety Ratios at A Glance

From troop meetings to camping weekends and cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure Girl Scouts have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level. If you are unsure about the number of adults you will need for your activity, the charts below break down the *minimum* number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of Girl Scouts.

<b>Troop/Group Meeting Adult-to-Girl Ratios</b>	<b>TWO</b> unrelated, registered and background checked adults (at least one must be female) per this number of girls	<b>Plus ONE</b> additional registered and background checked adult for each additional number of this many girls
Daisies	12	6
Brownies	20	8
Juniors	25	10
Cadettes	25	12
Seniors/Ambassadors	30	15

<b>Events, Camping and Travel Adult-to-Girl Ratios</b>	<b>TWO</b> unrelated, registered and background checked adults (at least one must be female) per this number of girls	<b>Plus ONE</b> additional registered and background checked adult for each additional number of this many girls
Daisies	6	4
Brownies	12	6
Juniors	16	8
Cadettes	20	10
Seniors/Ambassadors	24	12