



Policies, Procedures, and Standards (PPS) 2023-2024

***Serving all of Rhode Island, Attleboro, Bellingham, Blackstone, Fall River,
Millville, North Attleboro, Plainville, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset,
Swansea, Westport, Wrentham, MA, and Pawcatuck, CT***

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INTRODUCTION

The Policies, Procedures, & Standards of Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England (GSSNE) is a publication that brings together all council written procedures for easy reference. The PPS are established upon the principle that the direction and success of Girl Scouting rests in the voluntary participation of its adult members. This document is not intended to repeat national policies, but instead clarifies areas for local use and provides reasonable and consistent guidance for our volunteers. The policies and procedures contained herein are reviewed annually to ensure they reflect GSSNE's volunteer management goals, current Girl Scout policies and trends, and current legislative requirements and are subject to change at the discretion of the council leadership. --

All members of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) are responsible for reviewing and adhering to the policies, procedures, and standards in GSUSA's Blue Book of Basic Documents, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Checkpoints. These documents are published by GSUSA and are used throughout the national organization. Membership with Girl Scouts implies acceptance of all policies and standards of GSUSA and GSSNE.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA)

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England is part of a larger organization, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., headquartered in New York, NY.

420 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 800-478-7248
Web: www.gsusa.org

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England (GSSNE)

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England is the local council for all of Rhode Island and 14 adjacent communities: Attleboro, Bellingham, Blackstone, Fall River, Millville, North Attleboro, Plainville, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset, Swansea, Westport and Wrentham, MA, and Pawcatuck, CT.

GSSNE's Customer Care Team

GSSNE's Customer Care Team is a group of council professionals dedicated to answering your council-related questions and providing resources, direction, and assistance. Representatives are available Monday – Friday 8:30 am – 5:00 pm throughout the year (see our website for announcements about holiday and special circumstance closings). Please reach out to our Customer Care Team via email or phone for the quickest response to your inquiry.

Girl Scouts Southeastern New England Phone: 401-331-4500 / 800-331-0149

**500 Greenwich Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886**

Email: Customercare@gssne.org



facebook.com/gssne



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tiktok.com/@girlscoutsofsne



linkedin.com/girl-scouts-of-southeastern-new-england/

GSSNE Service Units and Service Unit Teams

Each GSSNE geographical area (service unit) has a committee of volunteers called the service unit team which supports the Girl Scouts in that area, grows membership by connecting the local community and Girl Scouts, provides mentoring to new leaders, and organizes local activities and events. The Service Unit Manager (SUM) is the head volunteer and is the first point of contact for volunteers in need of support for issues, questions, or situations that arise. Council appointment is required for an individual to serve in a service unit role and appointment is at the discretion of GSSNE. Contact GSSNE Customer Care if you'd like to get in touch with a service unit team member.

GIRL SCOUT PROMISE & LAW

At the time Girl Scout memberships are secured, members agree to uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law at all times.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
to serve God* and my country,
to help people at all times,
and, to live by the Girl scout Law.

**Members may substitute for the word "God" in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do
and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

BECOMING A GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER

To safeguard the health, safety, and general well-being of the members we serve, and prior to having any contact with youth including access to their personal information or managing Girl Scout funds, each potential volunteer is required to become adult member of GSUSA and complete a thorough criminal background check process as outlined below. Additionally, potential Massachusetts volunteers are required to submit to a Massachusetts' Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check in accordance with Massachusetts state law Chapter 6 Section 167 (G.L. c. 6 §167). For some volunteer positions, further screening may be required including reference checks.

Volunteer candidates whose records indicate a history of child abuse, violent crime, or sexual crimes will be denied a position. At the discretion of GSSNE, volunteer candidates may be denied a position due to financial irresponsibility, drug and alcohol related offenses, or other serious offenses or history that is not conducive with the organization's mission, values or the safety and well-being of its members. Volunteers will be required to submit to and complete the online national background screening process through STERLING Volunteers (an online national screening partner) once every three years. Approved volunteers are required to immediately report any arrest or conviction to the Senior Risk & Compliance Manager. Volunteers will be provided with a complete copy of their criminal background check results upon request.

- **Become a member of GSSNE (the cost is \$25.00 for adults)**
To register visit GSSNE.org, click "Volunteer with Us: Get Started", then click "Sign Me Up", follow the steps
- **Authorize and pass a criminal background check (CBC) – there is no cost to the volunteer**
Once your volunteer registration is complete, you will receive an email from our partner STERLING Volunteers containing a link to the national background screen application. Once processed, your GSSNE membership record will be updated.
- **CORI Screening**
In addition to the national background screening through STERLING, Massachusetts requires a CORI screening for Massachusetts volunteers and non-Massachusetts volunteers working with Massachusetts children. The form can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- All volunteers, regardless of position, will be re-screened on a three-year rotating schedule for a criminal background check (and CORI in MA).

Criminal Background Screening Policy

Where Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks and national background screenings through STERLING Volunteers are part of a general background check for employment, volunteer work, or licensing purposes, the following practices and procedures will generally be followed:

- I. CORI checks will only be conducted as authorized by the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). All applicants will be notified that a CORI check will be conducted and will complete a CORI form. If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the Criminal Background Check Policy.
- II. An online national criminal background check will be completed during the onboarding phase through STERLING Volunteers (an online national screening). If requested, the applicant will be provided with a copy of the Criminal Background Check Policy.
- III. An informed review of a criminal record requires adequate training. Accordingly, all personnel authorized to review or access CORI in the decision-making process will be thoroughly familiar with the educational and relevant training materials made available by CJIS.
- IV. Unless otherwise provided by law, a criminal record will not automatically disqualify an applicant. Rather, determinations of suitability based on CORI checks and the national background check through STERLING Volunteers (an online national screening) will be made consistent with this policy and any applicable law or regulations.
- V. If a criminal record is received from CJIS or STERLING Volunteers (an online national screening), the authorized individual will closely compare the record provided by CJIS with the information on the CORI Form and any other identifying information provided by the applicant to ensure the record belongs to the applicant.
- VI. If GSSNE is inclined to make an adverse decision based on the results of the CORI check, the applicant will be notified within 5 days in writing. The applicant shall be provided with a copy of the criminal record and Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England's Criminal Background Check Policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that make the individual unsuitable for the position, and given an opportunity to dispute the accuracy and relevance of the criminal record.
- VII. Applicants challenging the accuracy of the CORI or the national background check record shall be provided a copy of CJIS's Information Concerning the Process in Correcting a Criminal Record. If the CORI record provided does not exactly match the identification information provided by the applicant, Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England will decide based on a comparison of the CORI record and documents provided by the applicant. Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England may contact CJIS and request a detailed search consistent with CJIS policy.
- VIII. If Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England reasonably believes the record belongs to the applicant and is accurate, based on the information as provided in section IV of this policy, then the determination of suitability for the position will be made. Unless otherwise provided by law, factors considered in determining suitability may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Relevance of the crime to the position sought
 - b. The nature of the work to be performed
 - c. Time since the conviction
 - d. Age of the candidate at the time of the offense
 - e. Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense
 - f. The number of offenses
 - g. Whether the applicant has pending charges
 - h. Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof
 - i. Any information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority
- IX. Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

Training & Adult Learning

GSSNE is committed to setting up our volunteers for success. Therefore, in addition to completing membership and CBC, all GSSNE troop co-leaders are required to complete new leader training and follow Girl Scout troop standards. Once membership is complete and the CBC has cleared, council will assign training to the volunteer through gsLearn, GSSNE's online learning platform. Because training is assigned, the volunteer must inform GSSNE of their intention to become a troop leader (CustomerCare@gssne.org) so we can help guide through the onboarding process.

gsLearn can be accessed by logging into MYGS at the GSSNE.org homepage. Volunteers who completed leader training prior to 2020 and who were inactive for more than 1 year and wish to re-engage as a leader or are taking on a new troop will be required to complete current leader training requirements. Any volunteer who does not complete required training for the positions held or does not refresh their training when requested by GSSNE may be removed from their volunteer role.

While all training is highly recommended, the following modules are required to be granted Troop Leader status and should be completed within 30 days of assignment:

- **Volunteer Essentials (read the document)**
- **Volunteer Essentials Attestation form (sign the form electronically)**
- **Troop Finances**

Once all requirements are successfully completed, the volunteer will receive a confirmation email from council connecting them to their local Service Unit Manager (SUM).

Once a volunteer receives their leader confirmation email, they are ready to lead their troop. Some troop leadership positions and activities require further training. gsLearn, our on-demand online training platform allows GSSNE volunteers to engage in required trainings and enrichment opportunities whenever and wherever it works best for them. Currently registered volunteers should login to MYGS to access gsLearn and see what opportunities await. Some trainings, like Troop Camp Training, must be conducted in person because they require skills evaluations. Volunteers can register for these types of trainings by visiting the GSSNE Activities calendar at www.GSSNE.org or by Contacting Customer Care to request a training. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to complete First Aid/CPR, camp trainings, and travel trainings as early as possible to ensure they are prepared for troop adventures.

Each volunteer is required to complete adult learning courses designated for her/his position to ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed to perform successfully in the position for which they have been appointed. Refusal or inability to participate in the required courses can result in a volunteer's release from, or non-appointment to, a position. Contact Customer Care if you have questions about trainings.

TYPE OF TRAINING	ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO
<p><u>TROOP LEADER TRAINING</u> (Online)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer Essentials (read document) • Volunteer Essentials Attestation (sign electronically) • Girl Scout Finance Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start a troop • Organize troop meetings • Attend council-sponsored events • Borrow program materials from council • Participate in fall and winter product programs
<p><u>TROOP OR SERVICE UNIT BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORY</u> (Online)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girl Scout Finance Training 	<p>Act as a signatory on the troop or service unit's bank account</p>
<p><u>ASHI FIRST AID/CPR/AED TRAINING</u> (Online & in-person)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Safety and Health Institute-sponsored blended training offered by GSSNE • Online First Aid training (approx. 3 hours) • In-person practicum for CPR + AED training • Other organization's cards may be submitted for reciprocity consideration. Submit to Customer Care a copy of your valid certification card from issuing organization. Certification MUST include First Aid and a hands-on CRP practicum. Basic Life Saving (BLS) does NOT include First Aid and will only be considered if accompanied by the individual's current nursing or advanced medical practitioner license. Reciprocity is at GSSNE's discretion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended for all troop leaders • Recommended for all day trips • Required for some activities (see Safety Activity Checkpoints) • Required for troop camping / hiking / backpacking / Wilderness First Aid • Required for all overnights
<p><u>TROOP CAMP TRAINING</u> (Online, classroom & overnight required; pre-requisite = Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary online Skills Checklist • Classroom session: (3 hours) • Group overnight at GSSNE camp (Saturday to Sunday) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for camping at GSSNE AND non-GSSNE camp sites • Schedule a troop Outdoor Day at a GSSNE camp • Hold a troop activity that includes fire-building
<p><u>BACKPACKING / HIKING TRAINING SERIES</u> (Classroom and overnight required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with classroom sessions and hikes • The first sessions are listed in the Program Guide and may be taken by Ambassador troops and/or just adult leaders • The final workshop is a Backpacking weekend for Adults/Ambassadors 	<p>Qualifies troop leaders to take troops on hiking and backpacking trips.</p>

TYPE OF TRAINING	ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO
<p><u>WILDERNESS FIRST AID TRAINING</u> (16 hours) (Overnight required Saturday to Sunday; pre-requisite – current FA/CPR certification) This ASHI course (American Health & Safety Institute) is a 16-hour comprehensive certification course covering a wide-range of rescue scenarios. It is taught over a weekend at a GSSNE camp and certification is valid for 2 years.</p>	<p>Required to take a troop on a hike, a backpacking trip, or to an off-trail camping site which is more than 30 minutes from 911.</p>
<p><u>GRADE LEVEL ESSENTIALS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daisy Grade Level Essentials (online: gsLearn) • Brownie Grade Level Essentials (online: gsLearn) • Junior Grade Level Essentials (online – gsLearn) (Additional grade levels to be released by GSUSA) 	<p>Recommended for all leaders transitioning from one program age level to another.</p>
<p><u>TROOP TRIPS TRAINING</u> (3 hours) (pre-requisite = Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for all overnight trips (including museum overnights) or any activity requiring an Intent-to-Travel form. • Recommended for Brownie and Junior leaders.
<p><u>ADVANCED TRIPS TRAINING</u> (2-2.5 hours) (pre-requisite = Troop Trips Training)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Cadette, Senior and Ambassador level leaders who are planning extended trips (3+ nights) or geographically distant trips (outside of New England) • Especially helpful for troops planning on extensive fund-raising activities.
<p><u>BRONZE AWARD WORKSHOP TRAINING</u></p>	<p>Prepares Junior troop leaders to lead their troop through the Bronze Award.</p>
<p><u>STRIVE FOR SILVER/GO FOR GOLD TRAINING</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workshop for Girl Scouts (required), caregivers, and leaders explaining how to pursue a Silver/Gold award • The session covers information on prerequisites, typical projects, guidelines, timelines, and standards. Reviews GSSNE paperwork requirements and council procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required for Cadettes planning to earn their Silver Award and Seniors-Ambassadors planning to earn their Gold award. • Training should be taken before work begins.

Volunteer Policy

When volunteer performance, behavior, attendance, and/or productivity does not meet the council's standards, it is the council's goal to provide a volunteer a reasonable opportunity, appropriate to the circumstances, to correct the problem and sustain performance.

From a volunteer perspective, nothing in this policy affects the “at-will” nature of the council-volunteer relationship and, in certain instances, immediate release of a volunteer may be determined to be appropriate. This is also true for other unpaid staff and support. In general, any act by a volunteer which the council believes, in its sole discretion, may result in harm to or interference to the council, its ability to operate effectively and/or efficiently, its business interests, or its reputation, may be cause for disciplinary action up to and including immediate discharge.

Employees, volunteers, and members represent GSSNE and Girl Scouts at large. When representing GSSNE, everyone must observe reasonable standards of conduct and may be disciplined when they do not do so. Some examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Any form of dishonesty
- Disruption of the “workplace”
- Failure to comply with a council policy or practice
- Failure to properly safeguard confidential business or customer information
- Use of alcoholic beverages in the presence of or at Girl Scout events that include Girl Scout youth
- The use of illegal/intoxicating drugs at any Girl Scout event or on company property
- Taking company or personal property of others without expressed permission
- Refusal to follow council instructions or direction
- Absence without communicating to council
- Violation of the company's equal employment or harassment prevention policies

- Refusal to cooperate in an investigation conducted by the company
- Threats, acts of violence, or inciting violence in others
- Sleeping on the job
- Accessing and distributing confidential information (other than in the normal performance of one's job duties)
- Engaging in other actions that could be reasonably construed fraudulent or an act of misrepresentation

When infractions occur, the council may follow a system of **progressive discipline**. The council staff person and volunteer discuss the specific problem, possible solutions, and set a time frame by which goals must be met to consider improvement acceptable. Failure to maintain sustained improved performance after disciplinary action may result in termination.

Following are examples of various forms of disciplinary action that may be used at the discretion of the council.

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Performance improvement plan (may include professional development/training)
- Termination/release

In some instances, leadership may choose a more appropriate hybrid model utilizing various components listed above in addition to:

- Suspension
- Probationary period
- Change in volunteer position or duties

It is GSSNE's plan to be proactive and positive thinking in our self-improvement structures, as well as transparent in our decision-making process and timeline. In a case where the volunteer member believes otherwise, the sitting Board Chair will provide the role of ombuds.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROTOCOL

One key aspect of leadership is the ability to work with others and effectively use communication and teamwork to achieve the desired goals and outcomes. Differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts are natural parts of life and inevitably happen in all relationships. Not all conflict is bad - it can lead to new ideas and approaches, it can bring important issues to light, and it can provide an opportunity for people to come together to create a solution. GSSNE has developed a procedure for resolving conflicts. If there is no clear breach of a Girl Scout policy or guideline, the following conflict management essentials should be favored when resolving a conflict:

STEP 1: Attempt Self-Resolution

If there is no clear breach of a Girl Scout policy or guideline, the individuals involved in the conflict have a face-to-face conversation during which each party expresses their perspective of the conflict and how it impacted them. It is very important and beneficial to address conflict in person - many times, one party is unaware of the concern or how it has impacted the other person. See "Conflict Management Resources" on the [Volunteer Resources](#) page at GSSNE.org.

STEP 2: Invite an Unbiased Third Party to Join

Request insight from or invite a service unit manager, or other service unit team member, to join you at the face-to-face discussion. This person may lend new perspective or ask questions not previously explored that may help all parties reach a solution. If you are mediating between two parties, hear both parties out separately prior to the meeting then bring them together. If you're one of the parties involved, try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and work together to uncover solutions that could result in mutual gain and have the best possible outcome for all.

STEP 3: Decide on a Solution

Explore a mutually agreeable solution to the issue(s) contributing to the conflict. It will be up to the individuals to determine if and how they continue working together.

STEP 4: If GSSNE Needs to Be Involved

If all previous steps above have been taken to resolve the situation informally, but the matter is still not resolved, the member or volunteer may contact CustomerCare@gssne.org to escalate the conflict for council intervention. Please note that a conflict may be escalated to GSSNE at any point in the process if necessary.

GSSNE TROOP STANDARDS

Forming a New Troop

- Once a new troop has two trained leaders OR 1 trained leader and at least 1 registered troop support volunteer (TSV) in place, leaders should complete and submit the TROOP NUMBER ACTIVATION FORM and the TROOP INFORMATION UPDATE FORM. Once council receives the completed forms, they will issue the new troop a number and will list the troop in the Participation Catalog for families to see during the registration process.
- Most troops serve one age level, but GSSNE has had great success with multi-level troops. Special standards for troop leadership apply for these larger troops ([see Youth-Adult Ratios: Multi-Level Troops on page 11 for details](#)).
- Troop leaders will be able to utilize the Volunteer Toolkit to monitor registrations, plan troop meetings and activities, and communicate with families throughout the year.

Types of Troops

- **Standard troops** are those with members of the same age level (Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, etc.) and the troop standards above apply.
- **Multi-level troops** are those who have youth members from two or more age levels in the same troop (e.g., Brownies and Juniors). The standards listed above also apply to these troops, but in some cases the situation is more complex ([see Youth-Adult Ratios: Multi-Level Troops on page 11 for details](#)).

Troop Size Standards

GSSNE's standard troop size is 5-12 Girl Scouts. A minimum of 5 Girl Scouts is required to be considered an active troop and all troops should be open to register at least 12 Girl Scouts. The number can be increased by indicating the desired troop size on the Troop Information Update form found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.

Troops with fewer than 5 Girl Scouts are not recognized by GSUSA as an active troop and should work to increase their membership to at least 5 youth members or merge with another troop as soon as possible. Operating with less than 5 youth members may affect product program proceeds and incentives, is considered "personal gain" by the IRS, and has shown to deprive Girl Scouts of the cooperative experiences that are offered in troops with at least 5 members. If it's not possible to merge with another troop or reach 5 members, the Girl Scouts in that troop should be moved to Individually Registered Member status.

NOTE: When Troop Leaders are comfortable leading a larger number of members as they secure the support from additional adult volunteers, the benefit to troop members can be enormous. One benefit is that Girl Scouts can be broken into smaller groups to work on the badges or activities they wish to pursue because there can be choices. When every Girl Scout does the same badge or activity it can be hard for members who find themselves not enjoying what the majority wants. Questions about troop assignments and size should be referred to Customer Care.

Girl Scouts with Special Needs

Girl Scouts with special needs, who receive special education services, may be enrolled as a Girl Scout until the age of 21. When questions of appropriate placement arise, GSSNE is committed to maximizing the developmental, educational, emotional, and social needs of every Girl Scout. If you have questions, please contact Customer Care.

ADULT SUPERVISION / LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

The "Buddy System"

As a general rule, Girl Scouts should never go anywhere alone and should always take a buddy along. Additionally, at no time may one leader/adult be alone with one Girl Scout. There should always be at least two youth with one adult or two adults with one youth.

The adult supervision rule at Girl Scouts is a strict standard that requires whenever Girl Scouts gather for a troop meeting, activity, day trips, camp, sleep away travel, or event, whether in person or virtually, there must be at least two registered, approved adult volunteers who are unrelated (for example: not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, child, or anyone who would be considered a family member through blood or marriage) and who do not live in the same residence, with a minimum of one who is female. If the co-leaders are related in any way, are married or reside in the same household, a third, unrelated, adult must be present at all meetings and activities. This additional adult must be a registered and background screened volunteer.

There are no exceptions to this rule and more vetted adults may be required if indicated in the youth-adult ratio chart shown below (see page 26 for youth-adult ratios for events, travel, and camping):

	Youth-Adult Ratio: Troop Meetings (see pg. 26 for youth-adult ratios for events, travel, and camping)	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female and leader trained) for every:	One additional volunteer for each additional:
Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6
Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8
Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10
Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	1-12
Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15
Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	30	1-15

Youth-Adult Ratios: Multi-Level Troops

In addition to each troop having a minimum of two trained leaders OR 1 trained leader and at least 1 registered troop support volunteer (TSV), GSSNE requires a minimum of one registered adult volunteer for each grade level in the troop. The additional volunteers are responsible for providing appropriate badge, Journey, and leadership programming for the specific level they lead. For example, in a Daisy/Brownie troop, one registered volunteer would provide Daisy programming and the other would provide Brownie programming.

If the number of Girl Scout youth at any one level is more than six, then additional volunteers are required to provide proper supervision at troop meetings and activities. Where this is the case, the number of registered volunteers **may exceed the minimum number required** to meet the GSUSA Youth/Adult Ratio standard. When in doubt, the Youth/Adult ratio should be based on the youngest age level in the troop.

Deciding on the correct number of leaders needed for each troop is more an art than a science, but the objective is to make sure that Girl Scouts at any given age level have enough adult supervision to provide a safe and fulfilling program. If unsure, contact Customer Care for guidance.

Example #1: If a Daisy/Brownie troop had 9 Daisies and 3 Brownies, the troop would require two leaders to work with the Daisies and one to work with the Brownies, for a total of three.

Example #2: If a Brownie/Junior/Cadette troop had 6 Brownies, 7 Juniors and 4 Cadettes, the troop would need four leaders – one to work with Brownies, 2 to work with Juniors, and 1 to work with Cadettes.

Other Adults Involved with the Troop

Any adult regularly interacting with the troop, participating in troop activities, or handling troop money (such as a Product Program Coordinator, driver, parent helper, chaperone, etc.,) must have a current GSSNE membership and background screening(s) on file with GSSNE ([see Becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer on pg. 5 for details](#)).

Where adult volunteers have financial responsibilities for the troop treasury or product programs, the troop leadership team should take special care to select reliable and trustworthy individuals. Troop leadership is responsible for making sure deposits are made on time, that all checks clear, receipts and records are balanced and accurate.

Guest “experts” (for example a firefighter to explain fire safety procedures) do not need to be registered as Girl Scout adult members or processed as a volunteer if the troop leaders supervise all activities / interactions between the Girl Scouts, and the expert and leaders ensure Girl Scout youth are never alone with the adult.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

Troop activities such as service projects or field trips may include Girl Scouts at all age levels, but each age level should be working on their own age level badges, Journey recognitions, and leadership program as part of a fully planned troop program.

No cross-over badge work is allowed: for example, Brownie Girl Scouts work on Brownie badges and recognitions, not on Daisy petals or Junior badges.

Older Girl Scouts may gain leadership experience working with younger Girl Scouts in the same troop (working as part of the leadership program: Junior Aide, LIA, Program Aide, LIT), but they should also work on age-level appropriate program badges and recognitions.

Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Boy Scout program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. Local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past will now expose our membership enrollment and brand to risks.

To protect the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and reinforce our programming as unique and best-in-class, we must ensure that activities in which Girl Scouts participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and Girl Scout-led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of GSSNE.

Therefore, by becoming a member of Girl Scouts, volunteers agree to respect the program and mission branding guidelines of GSSNE and GSUSA with respect to program and mission and will not share with Boy Scouts any of our program or training materials.

MEETING PLACE STANDARDS

Meeting Sites

Regular troop meetings or any program or activity organized, sponsored by, or produced by Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England must meet the following site standards:

- Accessible to all members and their caregivers
- Large enough for a variety of activities
- Accessible by telephone (landline or cell phone)
- Safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated and heated, free of hazards, and has at least **two exits**
- Emergency exits are functioning, easily accessible, adequate, and **well-marked**
- Adequately lighted
- First Aid equipment is available
- Have accessible toilets and sanitary facilities, including those designed to accommodate people with disabilities
- Pets are restrained and away from meeting area while Girl Scouts are present (check health history forms for allergies)
- Any additional requirements as indicated by state laws

Troops should avoid using troop funds to rent space for regular troop meetings. Girl Scout troops should seek schools, churches, community centers or other local public spaces that are free. Local service unit members can help new leaders locate such sites.

Meeting in Homes

Whenever possible, Girl Scout troop meetings should take place in safe, community settings that are accessible to all members. To support troops who cannot find a public meeting space, GSSNE may grant permission for in-home Girl Scout meetings to those who meet the criteria. For guidelines or to request permission to meet at home, please use the [MEETING IN HOMES](#) link on the [FORMS](#) page at [GSSNE.org](#).

Safety in the Meeting Place

Leaders have a legal obligation to see that Girl Scouts leave the meeting with their custodial caregiver(s) or their designated alternative. Leaders must have written instructions to release a Girl Scout to anyone other than a custodial caregiver (this includes carpools). GSSNE recommends each troop develops a sign-in/sign-out system supervised by a troop leader at the beginning and ending of each meeting and/or activity to monitor the drop-off/pick-up process at each Girl Scout event.

FISCAL STANDARDS

Financial Support – Overview

When a youth or adult registers as a Girl Scout, the registration fee (\$25) and council service fee (\$10 for youth only) goes directly to GSUSA and GSSNE respectively, to fund national and state staffing, programs, property maintenance, insurance, and communication.

Youth and/or adults may request a membership scholarship by completing an online application and submitting it to GSSNE. Proof of family income and participation in council product programs may be factors in determining the amount awarded.

Girl Scout troops do not receive any of the fees described above so they must build their troop treasury in one of the following ways:

- Sharing in the profits from council-sponsored **Product Programs** (fall and winter)
- Charging **troop dues**

Troop/Service Unit Treasury

GSSNE is legally responsible for all Girl Scout banking within its jurisdiction. Legally, all money coming into the troop/service unit treasury is the property of GSSNE and is not the property of individuals, troops, geographic units, subordinate units, or communities within the GSSNE council. Every Girl Scout troop and service unit should keep troop funds in a federally insured bank or credit union CHECKING ACCOUNT which is opened in the name of GSSNE. Girl Scout funds should NEVER be kept in a personal account or at a residence. Service Units or troops who have savings accounts should contact GSSNE for guidance on transferring funds from the savings account to a checking account. All funds coming into and being paid by the troop/service unit should go through the checking account. Girl Scout funds should NEVER be kept in a personal account or at a residence. Troop leaders/service unit managers and account signatories should take all measures possible to limit liability, ensure full transparency, and verify that all signatories are currently registered volunteers.

Banks, credit unions, and GSSNE policies require an authorization letter (bank letter) from GSSNE's Chief Financial Officer to open a troop/service unit CHECKING ACCOUNT (NOT a savings account). The bank letter identifies the signatories on the account (those with permission to access the account and account information) and authorizes the account to be opened in the name of GSSNE using the council tax ID number and the **primary signatory's** (the volunteer to whom the bank sends monthly statements and communications) home mailing address. Troop CHECKING accounts should never be opened in an individual's name or with GSSNE's mailing address.

Council will issue a bank letter to troop/service unit leaders under the following conditions:

- The troop meets the council troop leader standard of a minimum of two registered, background screened, and fully trained troop leaders OR 1 troop trained leader and at least 1 registered troop volunteer and, if necessary, additional leaders as required by the youth/adult ratio chart.
- Volunteers request the bank letter using the online Bank Letter Request form on the GSSNE website on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org
- There must always be a minimum of 2 but no more than 3 signatories on the CHECKING account. One of the signatories must be a Troop co-leader (or SUM if service unit) and the other(s) may be a co-leader or a support volunteer who is active with the troop/service unit.
- Volunteers may be signatories on no more than **two** troop/ service unit accounts at a time
- Keeping with the troop standard for adult leadership, the (1) and (2) signatories on the account may not be related in any way or reside in the same household

Bank Account Registration

Within 14 days of the CHECKING account being opened or information being changed, volunteers must register the account with GSSNE using the Register Your Bank Account form found on the found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. By doing so, volunteers provide GSSNE with important account information that allows us to 1) report on the number of accounts open under our tax ID, 2) support volunteers should the bank reach out to us directly about the account, and 3) to ensure signatory information is current. Bank account registration is required before any special permission requests can be approved.

Troop Income

As stated above, troops can build their individual treasury in the following ways:

- GSSNE's council-sponsored **PRODUCT PROGRAMS**
Fall product program (magazines, candy, and nuts) and the traditional Girl Scout Cookie product program. Troops receive a percentage of the funds they generate during each program. The exact amount is described in the product program training materials distributed before each program begins. Troop leaders should present the product program materials to all troop families and explain how important the sale is to support council programs and troop finances. If a family chooses not to participate, that is their option, but each troop must make the effort to support council in this way.

- Charging **TROOP DUES**. Guidance on determining troop dues can be found in the Generating Troop Funds module of Troop Leader training.

Additional Sources of Income / Council Participation Standard

The two sources of income outlined above usually provide all the money needed to support a full range of troop activities. However, if needed to fund major trips or other big-ticket activities, additional sources of income are available through **MONEY-EARNING ACTIVITIES, DONATIONS, AND GRANTS**. Brownie Troops and age levels above, as well as service units may apply to council for participation approval (per GSUSA standards, Daisy troops are not eligible to participate). Troops/service units must meet the **Council Product Program Participation Standard** in order to apply for additional sources of income and participation will be a factor in the review process:

COUNCIL PRODUCT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION STANDARD:

Fall Product Program: The per-registered-Girl Scout troop average should be:

Sale of any five (5) items AND submission of fifteen (15) valid online email addresses, **OR** Sale of any twenty (20) items

Cookie Program: the per-registered-Girl Scout troop average should be 180 packages or more (2023's council average sold was 266 boxes)

Money-Earning Activities

A money-earning activity is one where the Girl Scouts perform a service / do the work necessary to make the activity happen. The proposed money earning project should be a good match for the age of the Girl Scouts participating and should be related to the skills they have already developed through Girl Scouting activities. Games of chance are not allowed.

The troop must apply in advance to GSSNE for approval (use the Additional Money-Earning Request application on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org). Because Girl Scout product programs provide critical funding for council programs, camp upkeep, financial scholarships, camperships, volunteer training, and more, additional money earning projects should not overlap with council product program seasons. Blackout dates for the 2023-2024 troop year are:

Fall Product Program: September 14, 2023 – October 27, 2023

Cookie Program: December 22, 2023 – March 30, 2024

If the troop or service unit would like to hold a money earning project that falls within these blackout dates, please contact Customer Care to discuss. Exceptions may be made in special cases.

GSSNE troops may apply for a proposed money-earning activity if they meet the following guidelines:

- Troop/service unit meets participation standards in council product programs (listed above)
- Troop/service unit has a dedicated bank account (account must meet all fiscal standards including being registered with GSSNE)
- Troop/service unit filed the Annual Troop Finance Report for the previous year
- Troop/service unit members participate voluntarily with parent/guardian permission (Troop leaders keep signed permission slips on file)
- Troop/service unit members have a full understanding of why the money is needed and how it will help them achieve a goal
- Troop/service unit members participate in money-earning activities which are age-appropriate and meet all safety guidelines
- Troop/service unit submits a Money-Earning Report to council within 14 days of the activity. The form can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org

Donations

From Friends & Family

Troops/service units may also receive occasional **donations** from outside sources such as “troop family” or corporate volunteer programs. To be eligible to receive donations, the troop/service unit must meet the following requirements:

- Troop/service unit meets participation standards in council product programs (listed above)
- Troop/service unit has a dedicated CHECKING ACCOUNT (account must meet all fiscal standards including being registered with GSSNE)
- Troop/service unit filed the Annual Troop Finance Report for the previous year (if applicable)

- While troop members may explain what they plan to use donations for, only adults may do the actual asking for donations or in-kind gifts

From Cookie Booths

At cookie booth sales, donations may be accepted and should be used for the “Cookie Share” program to support local military service members, first responders, food pantries, etc. “Tip jars” are not allowed at booth sales.

From Troop Volunteer-Organized Events

Where troop/service unit volunteers organize an adult event to raise money for the troop, and the event does not or cannot include Girl Scouts, the following guidelines apply:

- The money should come into the troop/service unit bank account as a donation (and usual donation rules apply)
- Because it does not include Girl Scout participation, an application to the council for approval is not required
- The Girl Scout logo, branding, or sponsorship **cannot** be included in the promotion of the event, nor can it be publicized on troop websites, service unit websites, or calendars. It may be promoted through personal social media accounts or fliers, but the Girl Scout name cannot be used.

From Corporate Volunteer Programs

When corporate volunteer donations are above levels the IRS consider de minimis (which has a \$250 threshold), what the proceeds are used for will be subject to heightened IRS scrutiny. Particular attention has already been paid by the IRS to the specific use of funds to underwrite a trip involving the volunteer’s family members, and the US Tax Court held that such use constituted a private benefit. In worst case scenario, there could be many unfortunate consequences of an adverse IRS determination, including taxable income to the volunteer, loss of the charitable donation for the corporation making the donation, and even jeopardy to the tax-exempt status of the council.

As a result, on December 19, 2016, the GSSNE Board of Directors approved a policy to address the allocation of grants made to GSSNE from corporate volunteerism programs, effective January 1, 2017.

Donations from corporate volunteerism programs must meet the following requirements:

- IRS rules require all corporate volunteerism donations be processed through the GSSNE finance department as the only 501©(3) entity. If the donation check is sent to a volunteer, the volunteer must send the check to GSSNE for processing and allocation.
- The funds will be allocated by council to general operating purposes unless the volunteer, on whose generosity the funds were contributed to council, requests to be involved in the allocation process. If the volunteer wishes to guide the allocation of the funds, the following options could be considered:
 - General Operating fund
 - Camperships
 - Membership assistance
 - Camp Hoffman endowment
 - Camp operations
 - Capital projects
 - Troop program assistance (newly established)
- If the corporation’s volunteer program allows, and the volunteer wishes to request funds be allocated to a particular troop or service unit, the volunteer **MUST** submit a copy of the donor corporation’s volunteerism program. If the donor corporation has no restrictions on the donation and gives permission for the volunteer to designate its use, then the volunteer can direct council to disperse the money, as long as it conforms to the IRS rules outlined in the following section (designation parameters). If the donor corporation has restrictions or directions on the donation, council will follow its guidelines exactly.

Designation Parameters

If the corporation allows, the volunteer may designate the allocation of the money, keeping these parameters in mind:

- The volunteer may assign the funds to specific accounts administered by council
- The volunteer may assign part of the funds to a specific troop (as long as the troop has met “full participation” in council product programs [as listed on page 14 above](#) and has the most recent year’s Annual Troop Finance Report on file with GSSNE) or to a local service unit following these rules:
 - The first \$250 may go directly to the troop or service unit
 - The remainder of the grant must be allocated between the troop or service unit and the council up to an annual maximum from all grants equaling \$250.00 per registered Girl Scout member of the troop or service unit (as of the time of allocation) up to a maximum of \$5,000, in aggregate, to the troop or service unit, including the first \$250. Annual Maximums are calculated for the Girl Scout year (October 1 through September 30 of any given year).

- Donations in excess of the maximum limits remain with the council
- The maximum allocation limits are annual limits
- If the volunteer has not designated how the allocation should be used, the full amount will be designated as GSSNE general operating funds

Grants

Troops/service units may apply for **grants** to fund troop activities, but they must receive pre-approval from the council. To begin the pre-approval process, **please send a copy of the grant proposal to Customer Care before submitting to the granting organization.** To have your grant proposal reviewed and considered for approval, troops must meet the following requirements:

- Troop meets the “full participation” standard in council product programs
- Troops must have the previous year’s Annual Finance Report on file with council
- If grant money is received by a troop, grant awards under \$250 may be deposited directly in the troop bank account and reported on the Annual Troop Finance Report. Grants over \$250 must be processed through the GSSNE accounting office and must also be reported on the Annual Troop Finance Report

Financial Records and Reporting for Troop & Service Unit Accounts

Either troop co-leaders or a designated member of the troop committee should keep accurate and current financial records with accompanying receipts. Because the troop checking account cannot be the leader’s personal account but instead must be a council account, troop financial records and bank account information are not confidential and are shared with troop caregivers through the Finance tab on the VTK. The Finance tab provides an up-to-date, point-in-time, financial picture of the troop for leaders, volunteers, and caregivers, and reduces the need for regular financial updates.

GSSNE recommends that each troop and service unit create a comprehensive spreadsheet using the reporting categories in the Finance Report to detail income and expenses for the entire troop year (these income and expense forms are available through gsLearn). This information will help keep track of finances and will provide information needed for future budgeting **and should be kept for seven years.**

By August 31, all troops must submit their Annual Finance Report using the Finance tab in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) which is accessible by the Troop Leader from the “MYGS” tab on the council website. A report should be filed whether there were financial transactions that year. All submissions should include a copy of the most recent bank statement. Troops and their leaders who miss the August 31 deadline may be subject to temporary deactivation, will be unable to claim any incentives and will not be approved for money-earning, travel, or special permission requests until the report is received.

An active and healthy service unit should have a CHECKING ACCOUNT and must file an end-of-the-year report whether they had any financial transactions that year. SUMs are responsible for filing the report for the service unit. Please use the SERVICE UNIT FINANCIAL REPORT found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Service Unit Managers of service units who miss the August 31 submission deadline may be subject to temporary deactivation until the report is received.

Delinquent Bank Accounts

When troop accounts are delinquent, banks may reach out to GSSNE instead of the volunteer signatories. Due to privacy laws, their communication may contain limited information making it difficult or impossible for GSSNE to identify the troop in question. To remedy this, GSSNE asks all troops and service units to register their bank accounts with GSSNE upon opening a troop account or after making any changes to an account so the troop/service unit can be contacted. GSSNE reserves the right to take ownership of an account at risk of being closed by the bank. Signatories will be removed from the account and GSSNE will be the sole owner.

Disbanded Troop Treasury

Whenever a troop is disbanding, they must complete and submit to GSSNE a Troop Disbandment form (found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org). Within 30 days of submitting a Disbandment form and prior to 9/30 of that year, the following steps must be taken:

- A signatory on the account withdraws the remaining funds in the form of:
 - Cashier’s check
 - Personal check
 - Money order
- Troop account is closed, and leader obtains proof of account closure from the bank
- The following items must be submitted to GSSNE within 10 days of closing the account:
 - Withdrawn money (check or money order)
 - Final bank statement showing the last withdrawal and zero balance

- Proof of account closure from bank
- End-of-year finance report showing all transactions up to closing the account

The remaining money can be re-distributed by council under certain conditions:

- If youth members from a disbanded troop transfer to other troops, the remaining funds are divided equally between the number of youth members that were in the disbanded troop, and that share is given to the troop of the transferring Girl Scouts. To access the funds, the youth member/caregiver must contact Customer Care to request the fund transfer to the new troop. For example: the treasury of a disbanded troop was \$100.00, it had 10 Girl Scouts. The Girl Scouts moving to new troop would each take \$10.00 with them to the new troop. The remaining treasury balance stays with council to fund other Girl Scout activities.

If, using that example, Girl Scouts decide to re-register but not with a specific troop, they could use their \$10.00 for program or camp registration fees, or travel credit. To access the money, the Girl Scout must request it through Customer Care.

- If Girl Scouts leave a troop to create a new troop or join another troop, but the original troop remains, the question of what happens to the money in the troop treasury depends on whether:
 - The troop was saving for some later trip or event
 - There was a lot of money in the treasury (documented in the Troop Annual Finance Report)

In general, a troop treasury is not allocated per person, but is owned by the entire troop. However, being “honest and fair” suggests that some distribution should occur. Where there is a disagreement on dispersal and/or division of funds, SUMs should consult with GSSNE’s CFO or a member of GSSNE’s leadership team.

When the money from a disbanded troop comes into council and no distribution is requested by youth members from the disbanded troop, then the money goes into a special account for one year (in case a late request by a Girl Scout is made); after that it reverts to council to support other Girl Scout activities.

If a troop or group decides to spend the remaining troop funds before closing the bank account, the expenses MUST be:

- Decided by the troop members
- Directly tied to the Girl Scout experience including but not limited to:
 - campouts, end-of-year celebrations, awards ceremonies, lifetime memberships, Girl Scout regalia or shop items, field trip, or service unit events
- Spent by September 30 of the year troop disbanded
- Noted on the end-of-year finance report

Bad Debt Policy

A debt is defined as:

- insufficient funds fee for any withdrawal from a financial institution
- unpaid product program funds to the organization or the troop/group
- non-payment of fees promised
- any amounts owed to the organization for products or services

Debts to GSSNE or debts incurred in the name of the troop to outside vendors, banks, or for services rendered which become past due may be processed for collection. Unpaid funds collected for product sales, events, or misuse of troop/group/service/the organization’s funds are considered mishandled funds.

When a debt is incurred, individuals may be released from volunteer positions and/or subject to legal action, including but not limited to potential criminal prosecution for misappropriation of funds. A volunteer who repays a past due debt may be re-appointed as a volunteer but will not be allowed to hold a money handling or leadership position.

In instances of bad checks or unpaid debt, GSSNE will make every effort to contact the person/troop involved and collect payment and/or develop a payment plan. All payment plans need to be approved by the CFO.

- The SUM will be notified the adult/troop is under restriction on handling money for a minimum of one year. Release date will be one year after debt is paid off.
- Volunteer status will be restricted in Salesforce with a restriction of “cannot handle finances” and “not product eligible”. If a troop, restrictions will be applied to all registered troop co-leaders.
- Scholarships will not be available to the adult(s) and may not be available to youth member(s) until the debt is paid in full.
- Camp Cookie Credits may not be applied for the youth member(s) until the debt is paid in full.

- Adult(s) or youth member(s) may not be allowed to register for programs or training until the debt is paid in full or a payment plan is in process and up to date with payments.
- Additional troop money-earning requests will not be approved
- Intent to travel requests will not be approved

When debt recovery occurs, GSSNE accounting will notify appropriate departments and applicable service team members. In the case of camp cookie credit, when the debt is paid in full, the troop will receive the camp cookie credit.

Financial Accountability Overview

Volunteers assuming responsibility or oversight for any Girl Scout monies within GSSNE (including all bank account signatories and troop leaders of a troop account, and SUMS and account signatories if service unit account) are accountable to GSSNE for those funds and as of October 1, 2023, must complete GSSNE Finance Training. All adults handling money must be registered members of GSSNE and have valid background screenings on file including the national background check and the CORi screening for Massachusetts residents and volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for complying with all financial, fund raising, and money-earning policies and procedures including those related to, but not limited to:

- Money handling
- Banking
- Record keeping
- Timely reporting
- Money-earning activities
- End of the year financial reporting

Financial Reporting Policy

GSSNE staff or authorized volunteers have the right to conduct a mid-year financial review of any troop/service unit accounts to ensure that they are on track to meet their financial year-end goals. In addition, each troop/service unit is required to submit an Annual Troop Financial Report / Annual Service Unit Financial Report and a copy of the most recent bank statement to GSSNE no later than August 31. GSSNE may require, at its sole discretion, troop/service units provide more frequent financial reporting on demand. Troops/service units who miss the August 31 finance report deadline may be subject to temporary deactivation until the report is received.

Tax-Exempt Status

As a non-profit organization, GSSNE is tax-exempt. Troop leaders can take advantage of this exemption when purchasing items for troop activities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. New troop leaders receive a copy of the tax-exempt forms at the conclusion of their training. Replacement forms can be requested from Customer Care.

SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS (SAC)

GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) document lists safety standards for Girl Scout activities. Updated annually, it can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Leaders must check the document each time they plan a troop activity and throughout their event planning process to make sure all requirements are met. If an activity you wish to participate in requires council approval or falls outside your troop's grade level, volunteers must submit a "Special Permissions" form to council for approval to participate. The form can also be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.

Some activities have age eligibility standards and certain activities are discouraged. Details on specific activities are listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. If an activity is not listed in the SAC, check with Customer Care.

PERMISSION SLIPS

There are many occasions where permission slips are needed:

- Each time a group **meets at a time and location different from the regular group meeting**
- For travel (please refer to the Travel Section for details on permission slips for travel)
- To participate in **council product programs** (permission slips are provided with the product program materials)
- For Girl Scout youth or adults to have their **pictures** on any social media, electronic, or print publications
- For Girl Scouts to participate in troop **money earning activities** (the guardian permission slip will be attached to your money-earning approval)
- Troop discussion involving a **"sensitive" topic** (ex: bullying, drugs, puberty, suicide, or breast cancer awareness for example) – permission slips should be created and maintained by troop leadership
- Permission to dispense medication (NOTE: medication must always be locked up with the exception of emergency lifesaving medication like epi pens, diabetic medication, inhalers, Benadryl, etc.,)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Everyone using email or social media for Girl Scouts must read and accept the [Girl Scouts Internet Safety Pledge](#). When using social media in conjunction with Girl Scout affairs the following procedures and standards apply:

Emails

- Girl Scouts under 13 years of age cannot receive emails to a personal address; all communication must be sent to an adult address or to a family address
- Girl Scouts older than 13 may, with permission from their parent or guardian, receive communications at a personal email address

Permission to Post

On any social media site, Girl Scout volunteers should be socially responsible and adhere to the highest standards of good taste, civility, and honor. Because volunteers are role models for Girl Scouts, the responsible and friendly use of social media creates a wonderful example for Girl Scout youth. Girl Scouts, whether adults or youth, should always use the Girl Scout Law as their guide.

- As part of the registration process to become a member of Girl Scouts, caregivers may give GSSNE permission to use photos of their child on its social media, electronic, or print publications.
- If they do not give permission, that is honored. The same rule applies to Girl Scout camp registrations in the summer.
- An additional permission slip from guardians is required for Girl Scout youth to have information and/or photos posted on a troop or service unit website/Facebook page. A sample [Social Media Release form](#) can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- If a troop or service unit does not have a website/Facebook page but wants to post photos of a troop trip or activity on any form of social media, guardians must give specific permission for this. It can be included on the trip permission slip or may be a separate form.

Creating a Service Unit Facebook Group

A troop or service unit Facebook group may be created following these requirements:

- It is a private group
- The troop leader, SUM, or adult designee is the site administrator and responsible for posting all information and pictures
- On any troop website/Facebook page or other GSSNE-related social media sites, the site administrator must avoid the use of personal information of any kind
- GSUSA has strict standards and guidelines on computer and social media use. Consult the Safety Activity Checkpoint, "Computer/Online Use" before setting up any site. If you have questions, please reach out to customercare@gssne.org.

GSSNE Cookie Product Program

Special protections are in place for activities associated with the Cookie Product Program. Please use the Internet Safety Pledge and other guiding standards in the Cookie/Fall product program training materials.

INSURANCE

Coverage

- Every registered Girl Scout (youth and adult) is automatically covered by accident insurance through Mutual of Omaha's Basic Plan 1 (included with membership fee) when injured during any approved and supervised program activity. Coverage is automatic for all youth and adults upon member registration and payment of the registration fee. The Basic Plan 1 also covers travel directly to and from the covered activity.
- Sickness is not covered in Basic Plan 1. Only medical expenses arising from accidents during an approved, supervised activity are covered. Sickness is covered when purchasing additional insurance for domestic or international trips.

Coverage Update

Effective October 1, 2023 – additional insurance for non-members and/or overnight trips (within the USA), will no longer be required. The coverage enhancement will be automatic in two scenarios:

- **Non-member participation.** Non-member participation is automatically covered under Mutual of Omaha's Basic Plan 1. A non-member participant is any person invited to attend or participate in a Girl Scout approved/supervised event. Adults who have regular interaction with Girl Scouts or travel with Girl Scouts must be currently registered Girl Scout volunteers.
- **Trips longer than two overnight stays.** All domestic trips within the USA, regardless of time duration, are automatically covered under Basic Plan 1. There is no longer a time element involved.

Member Claims

- Accidents during an adult-supervised Girl Scout activity that require medical treatment must be promptly reported to council by troop/service unit leadership using the Confidential Crisis Report form found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- An insurance claim form for medical reimbursement is available in English and Spanish on the FORMS page at GSSNE. Once there, use the search box to find “GSUSA Claim form” (either English or Spanish). The claimant completes their portions of the form before sending it to GSSNE for signature. GSSNE will send it back to the claimant for submission to Mutual of Omaha.
- When injuries result in medical treatment, the insurance company will pay for expenses incurred that are medically necessary. * When the \$140 deductible in benefits has been paid for covered accident medical or dental expenses, any subsequent benefits for the same accident will be payable only for expenses incurred that are not compensable under any other insurance policy or service contract. (* Please see the Activity Accident Insurance brochure for exact language and full explanations of coverage. Contact Customer Care to obtain a brochure copy.)

Insurance FAQs

For more details, visit the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Once there, use the search box to find “Mutual of Omaha Insurance Brochure” (either English or Spanish). For assistance in selecting proper additional insurance for your situation, contact GSSNE’s Customer Care. For questions about an existing claim, contact Mutual of Omaha directly at 1-800-524-2324 between the hours of 8am to 4:30pm Central time.

Travel Insurance

The purchase of additional insurance for travel is only required for international trips (outside the contiguous USA) and covers accidents and illness. At least three weeks before the trip, please submit the Mutual of Omaha Purchase of Additional Insurance form found at the bottom of the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Mutual of Omaha’s Basic Plan 1 covers accidents for all domestic trips regardless of duration. To obtain insurance that includes coverage for sickness, please select Plan 3B for “Domestic Travel”.

Non-Registered Participant Insurance

At a Girl Scout event (such as a bridging ceremony or a “Bring-a-Friend” event), non-members who are invited to the event by a troop leader or council staff member and attend the event, are covered under Mutual of Omaha’s Basic Plan 1. Please note, if an adult has regular interaction with Girl Scouts, they must be a registered member.

Siblings/Tagalongs

For tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends) to be present at a Girl Scout meeting or event, the following conditions must be met:

- A designated adult must be assigned to their supervision and care during the meeting time. This adult may NOT be involved in conducting the Girl Scout meeting but must be solely involved with the tagalong(s).
- The non-members are automatically covered by Mutual of Omaha’s Basic Plan 1 if they are at the troop meeting or event.
- Tagalongs are NOT permitted to participate in any troop or service unit meeting, event, or activity unless it is a Bring-a-Friend event.

Other Types of Insurance (personally owned vehicles, vehicle rentals, certificates of insurance)

• Personally Owned Vehicles

Only owner-insured cars should be used for troop/group activities. GSSNE recommends drivers review their personal automobile liability limits.

- Rhode Island law requires \$25,000 per person and \$50,000 per accident
- Massachusetts requires \$20,000 per person and \$40,000 per accident
- GSSNE recommends coverage beyond these minimums

Under certain circumstances, if an accident occurs when the driver is on official Girl Scout business, GSSNE’s umbrella policy may provide excess liability coverage when needed, once the owner’s liability limits are exhausted.

Senior/Ambassador Scouts with a current driver’s license may drive themselves and siblings to troop meetings and activities. They may not drive other Girl Scouts.

• Vehicle Rentals

There are times when you may wish to rent a car or minivan to transport Girl Scouts for troop, group, or service unit events or activities. **Council pre-approval is not required.** Please refer to GSUSA’s Safety Activity

Checkpoints for standards on TRANSPORTING GIRL SCOUTS. Please see GSUSA's Safety Activity Checkpoints for guidance on 15 passenger vans.

Bus companies should have a certificate of insurance on file with the council office. Please contact Customer Care to confirm whether such a certificate is on file.

- **Certificates of Liability**

When GSSNE troop meetings, events, or activities are held at locations not owned by GSSNE, the facility owner often wants proof that GSSNE carries liability insurance. To request a certificate of liability, submit a request using the Certificate of Liability Insurance request found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Allow at least 10 business days for processing.

If a troop or service unit rents/uses a facility for a troop event or activity (other than the regular troop/group meeting facility), a certificate of liability insurance for the site may be required by council. This applies to camping sites, as well as hotel/motel accommodations.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Definitions and Types of Child Abuse

There are many types of child abuse. Girl Scout volunteers are mandated reporters **and MUST** be aware of the following kinds of abuse:

- **Physical:** An injury or pattern of injuries that happens to a child that is not accidental. These injuries may include beatings, burns, bruises, bites, welts, strangulation, broken bones, or death.
- **Neglect:** Neglect occurs when adults responsible for the well-being of a child fail to provide for or protect the child. Neglect may include not giving food, clothing, or shelter, failing to keep children clean, lack of supervision, and withholding medical care.
- **Emotional:** Any chronic and persistent act by an adult that endangers the mental health or emotional development of a child including rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, corrupting, constantly criticizing, making mean remarks, insulting; and giving little or no love, guidance, or support.
- **Sexual:** Sexual abuse is the sexual assault or sexual exploitation of children. Sexual abuse may consist of numerous acts over a long period or a single incident. Children can be victimized from infancy through adolescence. Sexual abuse includes rape, incest, sodomy, fondling, exposing oneself, oral copulation, penetration of the genital or anal openings, as well as forcing children to view or appear in pornography. The perpetrator keeps the child from disclosing through intimidation, threats, and rewards.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

Unfortunately, child abuse is a problem in every community and Girl Scout volunteers must be informed about current laws and council procedures. Girl Scout volunteers are mandated reporters just like schoolteachers and coaches. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut each have slightly different regulations.

Legal Requirements for Reporting:

- **Rhode Island**

ALL persons in Rhode Island are required by law (RIGL 40-11-3) to report known or suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families within 24 hours of becoming aware of such abuse/neglect. Call the Hotline at 1-800-RI-CHILD (1-800-742-4453) to report child abuse and/or neglect! http://www.dcyf.ri.gov/child_welfare/reporting.php

- **Massachusetts**

When you suspect that a child is being abused and/or neglected, you should immediately telephone the local DCF Area Office and ask for the Screening Unit. You will find a directory of the DCF Area Offices at the end of this Guide and on the DCF web site. Offices are staffed between 9 am and 5 pm weekdays. To make a report at any other time, including after 5 pm and on weekends and holidays, please call the Child-At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200. <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dcf/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>

- **Connecticut**

Mandated reporters must report orally to the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Careline or a law enforcement agency within 12 hours of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected and must submit a written report (DCF-136) to DCF within 48 hours of making the oral report.

When the Mandated reporter is a member of the staff of a public or private institution or facility that provides care for children or a member of a public or private school, they must also provide written notification to the head of the facility or institution where the alleged victim is enrolled or registered. DCF is required to tape record all reports to the Careline.

The Department has a single point of contact statewide for the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. This Child Abuse and Neglect Careline operates 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Anyone who suspects that a child has been abused or neglected or is in danger of abuse or neglect should be strongly encouraged to call the Careline at 1-800-842-2288.

GSSNE Procedures

- Girl Scout volunteers should report any suspected abuse following the guidelines for their state and IMMEDIATELY contact GSSNE through the council crisis line (212-903-4472 / 800-476-0293). The CEO or COO will contact you for information and provide support.
- Senior Management will review the information, and, in the event the reported incident involves a program volunteer, employed staff, or GSSNE member, the CEO will immediately, without exception, suspend the volunteer or staff person until an investigation is complete.
- The caregivers of the child or children involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions of the relevant state or local agency. If more than one set of caregivers is involved (e.g., child-on-child abuse), GSSNE's responsibility is to keep the names and contact information of those involved confidential. People may learn that information some other way, such as through other children, but staff and volunteers should not provide it. GSSNE must protect itself from disclosing information on a minor.
- GSSNE will make a report in accordance with relevant state or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved
- Reinstatement of the program volunteer, employed staff, or GSSNE member will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the CEO or designate
- **All staff and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in handling this information and therefore should discuss the incident only with the CEO or designate**

General Guidelines for Showing Affection to Children

Girl Scouts encourages staff/volunteers who interact with children to be affectionate in a manner that is safe for the children and the adult. And remember, at no time may one leader/adult be alone with one Girl Scout. There should always be at least two youth with one adult or two adults with one youth.

Guideline 1: Child Initiated

A child may choose to do something that a staff person/volunteer never would. In some circumstances, that makes the behavior acceptable. Examples include a child choosing to hold hands with the staff/volunteer or climbing into a staff/volunteer's lap. Other circumstances remain unacceptable. An older child spontaneously kissing a staff/volunteer for example is to be discouraged, and staff/volunteer should respond briefly (although warmly) to full frontal hugs. Forcing affectionate behavior on a child is never acceptable. Even asking for a hug can be considered force when you're discussing young children who are easily influenced by adult expectations.

Guideline 2: Age Appropriate

Consider the age and developmental stage of the child. Is this behavior typical of that group or cause for concern? Children who display overly affectionate or inappropriate touching behavior may be victims of child abuse.

Guideline 3: Gentle Limits

Gentle yet firm limits are the way to make children's spontaneous affectionate behavior safe for you. There are many natural ways to move on to another activity without making the child feel rejected. For instance, after a minute of hand holding or lap sitting, ask the child to sit next to you, distract the child with something to do, or encourage him or her to return to an interrupted activity.

Guideline 4: Have Witnesses

When a situation merits having unusual physical contact with a child, make sure that you have witnesses to verify your appropriate actions and responses. This circumstance comes up frequently when a young child needs help with clothing or in programs where physical contact is part of the instruction, like aquatics, youth fitness, gymnastics, and other selected sports. The key is to balance your need for corroboration with the child's need for dignity in front of an audience.

Touching Policy

Touching should be in response to the need of the child and not the need of the adult.

- Touching should be with the child’s permission; resistance from the child should be respected
- Touching should avoid breasts, buttocks, and groin
- Touching should be open and not secretive
- Touching/physical contact should be governed by the age and developmental stage of the child

GSSNE TOUCHING POLICY	
APPROPRIATE	
Pat on the shoulder	Definitely—a great way to show affection
Hugging	Use a sideways hug if you initiate
High fives	A great way to be affectionate at work
Secret handshake	Great team builder if used wisely
Resting head on your shoulder	Use guidelines 1, 2, and 4
Squeezed together on a couch	Use guideline 1 and think about safety
Applying sunscreen to a child	Only with parent’s permission and only in areas described in training; let child apply sunscreen elsewhere
INAPPROPRIATE	
Caressing	Too intimate
Kiss (on the cheek, mouth, top of head)	Tell child, “Kisses are for family”
Piggyback rides	Too much contact and favoritism
Back rub	Too intimate
Wrestling or roughhousing	It’s not safe
Playing mercy or uncle	Games that injure are not fun
Carrying a child on your hip	Too much contact and favoritism
Shoulder rides	Too much contact and favoritism
Touching where swimsuits cover	Too intimate
Spider swing	Too much contact and favoritism
Child hanging on your body	Unsafe; you need to be able to move in a crisis
Playing airplane	Unsafe

GSSNE TRAVEL STANDARDS

Trips are a worthwhile extension of activities done within the regular troop program. Trips are an opportunity for Girl Scouts to have fun, experience adventure, and enrich the ongoing Girl Scout program. The decision to travel, establish a budget, and finalize plans should be made by leaders and troop members in consultation with caregivers and GSSNE.

Notification

Whenever a troop is NOT meeting at its regular time and place, one of the troop leaders must notify the local Service Unit Manager (SUM) in advance. Permission slips are required for any such activity. Additional paperwork, and sometimes council pre-approval, may also be required.

One exception to this rule is a meeting-time “walk out” where the troop leaves their meeting site and walks to an adjacent park, playground or facility and then returns to their regular meeting site. Since the activity begins and ends at the regular meeting site and time, it is covered by the Parent Consent form which caregivers sign when their daughter first joins Girl Scouting. If doing a “walk out” activity, notify your SUM before the meeting and leave a sign on the meeting place door stating destination and return time.

Readiness and Destination

Taking day or overnight trips is an exciting and rewarding experience for Girl Scouts and sharpens their skills in planning and evaluating. Trips of progressively greater distance and length keep members interested and involved. Starting with short, local day trips and progressing to week(s)-long international travel is part of the Girl Scout travel pathway. GSSNE follows the national standards on progression in travel and has developed the [Troop Travel Guide for US Trips](#) to help volunteers assess Girl Scout travel readiness and identify age-appropriate travel options. The guide is available on the VTK’s Resource tab.

Day Trips

- **Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies. GSSNE encourages any type of local trip or travel to council events. GSSNE's distance standard is a maximum of one-hour car drive from meeting site to activity location.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal). Younger Girl Scouts can select locations and do much of the trip-planning while never being too far from home. GSSNE's distance standard for Brownie troops is within 100 miles of the troop meeting site.

Daisy Independent & Troop Camping

Daisies who have completed kindergarten may **independently** participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights.

Daisies who have completed first grade may **independently** participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.

Daisy Girl Scouts may have **troop** overnights, as supported by the Daisy Buddy Camper badge and the GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoint for Camping. GSSNE recommends the following steps be followed:

- The troop has had a progression of successful trips and activities of increasing length and distance from home. For example, day participation in a community camping event or council program events.
- Troop leadership believes Daisies are mature enough to handle an overnight away from family
- All GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints are followed, with particular attention to required youth-adult ratios ([see Youth-to-Adult Ratios; Events, Travel, Camping on pg. 26](#))
- All participants understand that GSUSA standards require separate sleeping accommodations for adults and youth; and male volunteers must have separate sleeping accommodations and restroom from all females
- For each overnight, the two pre-camping steps of the Buddy Camper badge are followed: Daisies help plan a camping trip and help pack for the trip
- GSSNE's distance standard states the overnight site should be no farther away than a one-hour car drive

Overnight Trips (Brownies and Older): One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. GSSNE's distance standard for Brownie troops is the within 100 miles of the troop meeting site. Troops requesting trips at the maximum distance must have a record of previous successful overnight trips.

Extended Overnight Trips (Juniors and Older): Three- or four-nights camping or a staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the Girl Scouts' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Many large museums offer unique opportunities for Girl Scouts to spend the night on museum grounds which makes for an exciting experience. GSSNE's standard is within 150 miles of their community, but all locations within New England and adjacent New York State are usually approved. Troops requesting trips at the maximum distance must have a record of previous successful overnight trips.

National Trips (Cadettes and Older): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips Girl Scouts might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Troops requesting trips where the destination is outside of the region must have a record of previous successful overnight trips.

International Trips (Cadettes and Older): Travel to other parts of the world often requires one-two years of preparation. International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have a record of previous, successful overnight Girl Scout trips, some of more than three nights.

Leader Training – Troop Travel

Preparing a troop to travel involves additional leader training. At least one member of the troop leadership team must have the training described below for the troop to travel.

Type of Trip	Training Required
Day trip (not at a campsite)	New leader training
Day trip to a camp site	New Leader training, Outdoor Day Training/Troop Camp Training, First Aid, CPR recommended
Overnight (not camping) 1-2 nights within New England	Basic Trips Training, Troop Trips Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – camping at GSSNE sites	Basic Trips Training, Troop Camp Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – camping at a non-GSSNE site	Troop Trips Training, Troop Camp Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – off trail camping	Troop Camp Training, Wilderness First Aid Training, Hiking or equivalent, First Aid/CPR
Overnights (not camping) 3+ nights or for geographically distant trips (outside of New England) within the contiguous US	Troop Trips Training, Advanced Trips Domestic Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight (not camping) 3+ nights outside of the United States or to a non-contiguous US state (Hawaii, Alaska) or overseas or on a cruise	Troop Trips Training, Advanced Trips International Training, First Aid/CPR

Paperwork

In general, day trips do not require advance approval if the leader checks the applicable Safety Activity Checkpoints. SUMs, however, must be notified of the troop's plans before the trip.

Overnights require reservations and paperwork, depending on the location, duration, and destination:

- **Overnights at Museums:** reservations are made through the organizing institution, for example - Mystic Aquarium, Roger Williams Park Zoo, etc. However, the Museum of Science, Boston reservations are processed through GSSNE online program reservation system. Leaders need to notify SUMs of their travel dates.
- **Other Non-Camping overnights** – for example, a trip to New York city or a YMCA local lock-in require council pre-approval which is done by filing the Intent to Travel form (fillable online). SUMs are copied on the approval email, so leaders do not have to notify the SUM themselves.
- **Camping overnights at a GSSNE camp** – reservations made through the Property Rentals section on the council website. The troop leader needs to notify the SUM of their travel plans.
- **Camping overnights at a NON-GSSNE site** – for example use of a campsite in Vermont - requires council pre-approval which is done by filing the Intent to Travel form (fillable online). SUMs are copied on the approval email, so leaders do not have to notify the SUM themselves.

Travel Permission Slips

Every trip requires a signed permission slip from the parent/guardian for the Girl Scout to attend. A sample permission slip is available on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org (“Parent/Guardian Form for Girl Scouts”), but you may elect to create your own. Permission slips for trips should contain the following information:

- Troop number & age level (ex: Junior troop 123)
- Date & time of the activity
- Place of the activity
- Travel plans, including type of transportation and who arranges it (family or troop)
- General agenda or topic of activity
- Cell phone or contact number where the leader can be reached during the activity
- Caregiver telephone numbers (as many as can be listed) where they can be reached **during the activity time**
- Additional emergency contact information (neighbor, friend, relative)
- Permission to dispense medication (NOTE: Medications must always be locked with the exception of emergency, lifesaving medications: epi pens, diabetic medications, inhalers, Benadryl, etc.)
- **PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE AND DATE**

You may also want to include:

- Recommended amount of spending money (especially for older Girl Scouts)
- If you have a troop Facebook group or other type of social media contact system, permission to take and publish photos and/or videos of the Girl Scout at the activity

Leader Travel Kit

The troop leader should carry a **Travel Kit** on all trips, excursions, or events which should include the items listed below. It's recommended that a second set be carried by another adult chaperone attending the trip, and a third set be left at home with the contact person so the information can be sent to the leader if other copies are lost or misplaced. If traveling in a several cars, the driver of each car must carry copies of the roster, contact information and health forms for people in their car, plus driving directions:

- **Troop Roster** with contact information for everyone on the trip
- **Health History Form** for anyone on the trip who has a special medical condition requiring monitoring or supervision, the family should complete HEALTH HISTORY form which can be found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Once there, use the search box to find the document name.
- **Medications** in original containers to be dispensed by the leader or assigned adult. Caregivers must sign the PERMISSION TO DISPENSE MEDICATION form and submit it with the medication container in a plastic bag with the Girl Scout's name on it. **EXCEPTIONS:** Self-administered lifesaving medications like Inhalers, Epi-pens, and diabetic medications may be carried and administered by the Girl Scout. This form is on the GSSNE website under Forms.
- **Permission Slip** (parent/guardian signed) for each youth participant
- **GSSNE Confidential Crisis sheet.** Download from the FORMS page at GSSNE.org. Reporting an incident must be done online using the council form, but a paper copy can be carried by the leader to fill in at the time of the incident when the details are fresh.
- **Mutual of Omaha insurance claim form.** Download from the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.
- **Passport copies for all attendees** if going outside the country
- **Trip Itinerary** in detail including contact information for transportation, accommodations, and all activity locations, who is staying in which rooms and who is assigned to each car/driver if transporting by automobile. Be as specific as possible. A preliminary itinerary should be part of the Intent to Travel submission to council; a final itinerary should be submitted to council before the trip.
- **Driving directions.** Although most adults have GPS, be prepared if batteries die or service is poor

Transportation

Girl Scout troops have two different ways to provide transportation to troop activities. In either case, a full description of the transportation mode must be included in the permission slip.

- **FAMILY TRANSPORTATION** - Troop leadership asks each family to provide transportation for their Girl Scout to and from the activity location. For efficiency, families may form carpools, but the troop leadership team does NOT make the arrangements. Once Girl Scouts are delivered to the activity site, the troop leader assumes responsibility for the Girl Scouts in the troop. The permission slip should clearly state that transportation is provided by the families. **NOTE:** Senior/Ambassador Girl Scouts with a valid driver's license may drive themselves and siblings to Girl Scout activities, but they may not drive other Girl Scouts.
- **TROOP CARPOOLS** - Troop leadership arranges carpools to and from the troop activity. The permission slip should clearly state that transportation is arranged by the troop. GSUSA requires that drivers of troop-arranged carpools meet the following standards (troop leaders are responsible for ensuring the first 3 items for each driver):
 - Be 21 years old
 - Hold a current, valid driver's license
 - Have insurance on the car they will be using which at least meets these minimum amounts:
 In Rhode Island, \$25,000 per person and \$50,000 per accident
 In Massachusetts, \$20,000 per person and \$40,000 per accident
 (GSSNE recommends coverage beyond these minimums)
 - Have a clear driving record (Volunteer background check includes this)

Youth-Adult Ratio (Events, Travel, and Camping)

The number of adults required for events, travel, and camping is governed by the chart below (see page 11 for youth-adult ratios for meetings).

	Youth-Adult Ratios for Events, Travel, and Camping (see pg. 11 for youth-adult ratios for meetings)	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of Girl Scouts:	One additional volunteer for each additional:
Daisies (grades K-1)	6	1-4
Brownies (grades 2-3)	12	1-6
Juniors (grades 4-5)	16	1-8
Cadettes (grades 6-8)	20	1-10
Seniors (grades 9-10)	24	1-12
Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	24	1-12

In addition, to troop leaders, additional adults may be required. Each chaperone must have a current GSSNE membership and background screening(s) on file. Troop leaders should ensure that every chaperone is familiar with Girl Scout safety requirements and fully understands their role and responsibilities as a troop volunteer.

Girl Scout Identification

When traveling, each Girl Scout must always carry an identification card with them. When possible, identification cards should be laminated or carried in a plastic name tag holder; wristbands are also an option. It's best to have identification cards on the inside of a jacket or shirt so personal information is not public. The information on each should include:

- Full Legal Name (versus preferred name)
- Girl Scout council and troop #
- Telephone contacts
 - Leaders' cell phone(s)
 - GSSNE crisis line number
- Pertinent medical information such as allergies

TRAVEL CHART

Grade Level	Type of Trip	Screenings/Trainings	Notifications/Approvals	Forms	Timeline	Adults
Daisy Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	DAY TRIPS A council-sponsored event Any site within approved age-level distance: Daisy+ = 1 hour Brownie+ = 100 miles Junior+ = 150 Miles Senior+ = domestic or intr'n'l	LEADERS • Troop Leader Training • First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS • Current GS membership & background check • Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, and insurance	SUM notified in advance	Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC		• Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines
Daisy Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OUTDOOR DAY AT CAMPSITE	Same as above plus: • Troop Camp Training • First Aid/CPR	• Reservation through Property Rentals tab on the council website • SUM notified in advance	• Sign-off documents at Property Rentals site • Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC	At least two weeks in advance	Same as above plus: • Camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes GSSNE's Troop Camp Training • The FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer who is nationally certified; valid certification must be on file with GSSNE
Daisy (1 st grade) Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	NON-CAMPSITE OVERNIGHTS (1-2 nights) (lock-ins, hotels, motels, museums (including council-sponsored events), zoo overnight) NON-CAMPSITE OVERNIGHTS (3+ nights) (NOT AT A CAMPSITE)	LEADERS • Troop Leader Training / Basic Trips • Troop Trips training • First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS • Current GS membership & background check • Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance LEADERS • Advanced Trips Training OTHER ADULTS • Current GS membership & background check • Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance	• Intent-to-Travel form • SUM notified in advance	• Intent-to-Travel form • Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC	At least two months in advance	• Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines • Trips trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes GSSNE's Troop Trips Training (or Advanced Trips Training) • The FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer who is nationally certified; valid certification must be on file with GSSNE
Daisy (1 st grade) Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHT CAMPING At NON-GSSNE sites (backyard sleepovers, other Girl Scout council camps, commercial camp sites)	LEADERS • New Leader Training / Basic Trips • Troop Trips Training • Troop Camp Training (TCT) • First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS • Current GS membership & background check • Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance	• Intent-to-Travel form	• Intent-to-Travel form • Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC	At least one month in advance	• Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines • Trips trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes GSSNE's Troop Trips Training • Camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes GSSNE's Troop Camp Training • FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer nationally certified; certification must be on file with GSSNE

TRAVEL CHART

Grade Level	Type of Trip	Screenings/Trainings	Notifications/Approvals	Forms	Timeline	Adults
Daisy (1 st grade) Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHT CAMPING At a GSSNE campsite	LEADERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Leader training / Basic Trips • Troop Camp training • First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current GS membership & background check • Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservation through Property Rentals tab on the council website • SUM notified in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-off documents at Property Rentals site • Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC 	At least one month in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines • Camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes GSSNE's Troop Camp Training • FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer nationally certified; certification must be on file with GSSNE
Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHTS: Off-Trail Camping or Backpacking	Same as above plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSSNE Hiking/Backpacking course or equivalent 	Intent-to-Travel form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent-to-Travel form • Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC 	At least one month in advance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines • Camp trained or hiking/backpacking certified adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completed GSSNE training • FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer nationally certified; certification must be on file with GSSNE