



Policies, Procedures, and Standards (PPS) 2020-2021

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

Table of Contents

Contact Information.....	4
Becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer	5
Membership & Background Screenings.....	5
Training	5
Forming a New Troop	5
GSSNE Troop Standards	6
Girl/Adult Ratios.....	6
Other Adults Involved with the Troop	6
Types of Troops.....	6
Leadership Standards.....	7
Program Standards	7
Fiscal Standards.....	7
Troop Size Standards	7
Girls with Special Needs.....	8
Girl Scout Participating with Other Scouting Organizations	8
Meeting Place Standards	8
Meeting Sites	8
Safety in the Meeting Place	9
Finances	9
Financial Support Overview	9
Troop Treasury.....	9
Troop Income	9
Additional Sources of Income / Council Participation Standard.....	10
Money-Earning Activities.....	10
Donations (from Individuals, Cookie Booths, Corporate Volunteer Programs).....	10
Grants.....	11
Records and Reporting for Troop Accounts.....	12
Delinquent Troop Accounts	12
Disbanded Troop Treasury.....	12
Bad Debt Policy	13
Tax Exempt Status for Troops	13
Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC)	13
Permission Slips.....	14

- Social Media 14
- Insurance..... 15
 - Member Coverage 15
 - Member Claims 15
 - Insurance FAQs 15
 - Trips..... 15
 - Non-Registered Participant Insurance 15
 - Siblings / Tagalongs..... 16
 - Other Types of Insurance (Personal and rental vehicles, certificates of insurance) 16
- Working with Children 17
 - Child Abuse Reporting Procedures 17
 - Definition and Types of Child Abuse 18
 - General Guidelines for Showing Affection to Children..... 18
 - Touching Policy / Chart 19
- GSSNE Travel Standards..... 19
 - Notification 20
 - Readiness and Destination (Day Trips, Daisy Camping, Overnights) 20
 - Leader Travel Training..... 21
 - Paperwork 21
 - Permission Slips 22
 - Leader Travel Kit 22
 - Transportation 23
 - Adults on the Trip 23
 - Girl Identification 23
 - Travel Chart..... 25
- Adult Learning for Volunteers..... 27

INTRODUCTION

GSSNE's Policies, Procedures, and Standards (PPS), 2020 - 2021 is a publication that brings together all council written procedures for easy reference. It's updated annually so volunteers should review it at the beginning of each new Girl Scout season and refer to it throughout the year.

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
800-478-7248
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, directions, 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
500 Greenwich Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: 401-331-4500 / 800-331-0149
Email: Customercare@gssne.org



facebook.com/gssne



[@GirlScoutsofSNE](https://twitter.com/GirlScoutsofSNE)



Instagram [@gssne](https://www.instagram.com/gssne)



pinterest.com/girlscoutsSNE



youtube.com/gssne



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

GSSNE Service Units

Each GSSNE community has a committee of volunteers called the Service Unit team which 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. Contact GSSNE Customer Care to be put in touch with a Service Unit team member.

BECOMING A GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER

Membership and Background Screenings

All adult Girl Scout volunteers **must** have a current membership and clear background screening(s) on file with GSSNE.

- Become a member of GSSNE (the cost is \$25.00 for adults)
To register, visit GSSNE.org, click on the “Volunteer Today”, then click “Be a Volunteer” and follow the steps.
- Authorize and pass a criminal background check (CBC) – there is no cost to the volunteer.
Once your registration is complete, you will receive an email from our partner organization STERLING / THE ADVOCATES, containing a link to the National Background Screen application. Once processed, your GSSNE membership record will be updated. In Massachusetts an additional CORI form is required and can be found on the FORMS tab on the GSSNE website.
- All volunteers, regardless of position, will be re-screened on a three-year rotating schedule for a criminal background check (and CORI in MA)

Training

GSSNE is committed to setting up our volunteers for success. Therefore, in addition to completing membership and the 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. gsLearn can be accessed by logging into MYGS at the GSSNE.org homepage.

While all training is highly recommended, the following modules are required in order to be granted Troop Leader status and should be completed within 28 days of assignment:

- **GSUSA Foundations 1-4**
(The Girl Scout Way, The Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Well-Being and Development, and Understanding Troop Operations)
- **GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit**
- **Troop Finance Pathway**
(Intro to Troop Finances, Opening a Bank Account, Generating Funds)

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

Forming a NEW Troop

- Once a new troop has two trained leaders in place, leaders will be sent links to the TROOP NUMBER ACTIVATION FORM and the TROOP INFORMATION UPDATE FORM. Once council receives both completed forms, they will issue the new troop a number and will list the troop in the Participation Catalog for families to consider during the registration process.
- The standard troop size in the GSSNE council is 5-12 Girl Scouts. The number can be increased by indicating the desired troop size on the Troop Information Update form.
- 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 Leadership Standards on page 7 for details).
- Troop leaders will be able to utilize the Volunteer Toolkit to monitor registrations and communicate with families throughout the year.

GSSNE Troop Standards

Troop Meetings – Girl/Adult Ratios

For any given troop meeting, activity or event, a minimum of two registered, unrelated adult members with current background screenings are required – only one of which needs to be trained as a leader. More vetted adults may be required if indicated in the girl/adult ratio chart shown below.

	Group Meetings	
	<i>Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:</i>	<i>One additional volunteer to each additional:</i>
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1-6
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1-8
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1-10
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1-12
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	1-15
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	1-15

Because the female role model is essential to fulfilling the purpose of Girl Scouting, at least one member of the leadership team must be an adult 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.

At no time may one leader be alone with one Girl Scout.

Other Adults Involved With the Troop

Any adult involved with, regularly interacting with the troop, or participating in troop activities (such as a Product Program Coordinator, driver, parent helper, chaperone, etc.) must have a current GSSNE membership and background screening(s) on file.

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, accounts are up-to-date, and that all checks clear.

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

Types of Troops

Standard troops are those with girls of the same age level (Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, etc.) and the troop standards above apply.

- In the GSSNE council, the size of a standard troop is 5-12 girls
- Troops may be larger in size, but more troop leaders may be required (see Troop Standards on page 6)
- To increase the troop size, complete the TROOP INFORMATION UPDATE FORM to ensure the online Participation Catalog reflects the updated information.

Multi-level troops are those who have girl 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.

Leadership Standards

There is a minimum of one trained leader for each age level who is responsible for providing appropriate badge, Journey, and leadership programming. For example, in a Daisy/Brownie troop, one leader would provide Daisy programming and the other would provide Brownie programming.

If the number of girls at any one level is more than six, then additional leaders are required to provide proper supervision at troop meetings and activities. Where this is the case, the number of leaders **may exceed the minimum number required** to meet the GSUSA Girl/Adult Ratio standard. When in doubt, the Girl/Adult ratio should be the one for 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 then the troop would need to have two leaders to work with the Daisy scouts and one to work with the Brownie scouts, for a total of three.

Example #2: If a Brownie/Junior/Cadette troop had 6 Brownies, 5 Juniors and 4 Cadettes, the troop would need three leaders – one to work with each age level. The Girl/Adult ratio for a Brownie troop is two leaders for 20 Girl Scouts, but this troop would need three.

Program Standards

Troop activities such as service projects or field trips may include girls at all age levels, but Girl Scouts at any 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 girls may gain leadership experience working with younger girls 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.

Fiscal Standards

Troop money belongs to the troop, not the girl. Decisions about money allocation should be developed ahead of time and be fair to every age level. With council permission, older girls may take part in separate money-earning activities to help fund trips or other big ticket items.

Troop Size Standards

The GSSNE Participation Catalog sets a standard troop size of 5-12.

Troop minimums (5 Girl Scouts) are important as one of our key processes is cooperative learning and this needs a group of at least five to work well.

All GSSNE troops are open to register 12 Girl Scouts. The troop standard is a minimum of 5 and each troop must accept 12 girls; but this is not a maximum number.

If a troop wishes to add more girls, the troop leader should complete the Troop Information Update Form found on the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org. GSSNE's goal is to place every registered Girl Scout in a troop (if that is her wish) and expects troop leaders to be open to taking additional girls into their troop as long as there are fewer than 12 girls registered.

Questions about troop assignments and size should be referred to Customer Care.

Girls 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.

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, girl-only, and best in class, we must ensure that activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and girl led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scouts.

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.

We believe that Girl Scout participation in Boy Scout activities creates confusion and will contribute to the misperception that Girl Scouts has merged, or is somehow interchangeable, with Boy Scouts. GSSNE strongly discourages this type of arrangement.

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 parents/guardians
- 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 girls 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.

Whenever possible, Girl Scout troop meetings should take place in safe, community settings that are accessible to all members e.g. schools, community centers, libraries, churches/synagogues, etc. We recognize that due to the extenuating circumstances presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, your troop's access to public settings may be limited or impossible. To help support troops who wish to meet in person, GSSNE has elected to grant **TEMPORARY** permission for in-home Girl Scout meetings to those who meet the criteria. For the most up-to-date information and guidelines, or to request temporary permission, please visit [GSSNE.org](https://www.gssne.org) > Our Council > Covid-19 Information.

Safety in the Meeting Place

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

Finances

Financial Support – Overview

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

Girls 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 are factors in determining the amount awarded.

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

- Sharing in the profits from the Council sponsored **Product Programs** (fall and winter)
- Charging **troop dues**. See the “Troop Leadership” manual for a discussion of how to determine troop dues.

Troop Treasury

Legally, all money coming into the troop 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 should keep their funds in a bank or credit union account which is opened in the name of GSSNE.

Banks, credit unions, and GSSNE policies require an authorization letter (bank letter) from GSSNE’s Senior Director of Finance and Administration to open a bank account. The bank letter identifies the signatories on the account and authorizes the account to be opened in the name of GSSNE using the council tax ID number. Bank accounts should never be opened in an individual’s name.

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

- The troop meets the council standard of a minimum of two registered, background screened, and fully-trained troop leaders and, if necessary, additional leaders as required by the Girl/Adult ratio chart
- If an existing troop, council has a Annual Troop Finance Report for the previous troop year which includes the most recent bank statement
- Leaders request the bank letter using the online Bank Letter Request form on the GSSNE website on the FORMS tab
- The two signatories on the troop bank account should be the 1) Troop co-leader and 2) the other co-leader or a troop support volunteer
- Troop co-leaders may be signatories on no more than **two** troop/Service Unit accounts
- 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

Troop Income

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 must 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 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:

COUNCIL PRODUCT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION STANDARD:

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

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

Cookie Program: the per-registered-girl troop average should be 140 packages or more (2020’s council average sold was 180+ boxes)

TROOP 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 Money-Earning Project application on the FORMS tab of the GSSNE website). Because Girl Scout product programs provide critical funding for council programs, camp upkeep, financial scholarships, camperships, volunteer training, and more, troop money-earning projects should not overlap with council product program seasons. Blackout dates for the 2020-2021 troop year are:

Fall Product Program: September 19, 2020 – October 28, 2020

Cookie Sale: Dec. 14, 2020 – March 28, 2021

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

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

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

DONATIONS

From Troop Friends & Family

Troops may also receive occasional **donations** from outside donors such as “troop family” or corporate volunteer

programs. To be eligible to receive donations, the troop must meet the following three requirements:

- Troop meets participation standards in council product programs (listed above)
- Troop should have filed the Annual Troop Finance Report for the previous year
- While girls 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 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 leadership or troop 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 treasury 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

Donations from corporate volunteerism programs must meet the following requirements:

- IRS rules require all corporate volunteerism donations be processed through the GSSNE accounting department
- The check must be accompanied by a copy of the donor corporation’s policy guidelines. 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.

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 10 above and has an Annual Troop Finance Report from the previous year on file 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 a maximum of \$250.00 per registered girl 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.
 - 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 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

Records and Reporting for Troop 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 bank 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 parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians, 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. This information will help keep track of finances and will provide information needed for future budgeting. Records of troop expenditures should be kept for seven years.

By June 30, all troops must submit their Annual Finance Report using the Finance tab in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) which is accessed from the “MYGS” tab on the council website. All submissions should include a copy of the most recent bank statement (this is usually May’s statement if submitted on time). If the report and accompanying bank statement are not submitted by June 30, troop leaders may not be eligible to be appointed troop leaders the following year.

Troop leaders who do not submit a finance report by June 30 will lose access to the VTK. Access will be restored once the leader renews their membership (and has a current CBC) for the following year.

Service Units that have bank accounts must also file an end of the year report. SUMs are responsible for filing the report for the Service Unit bank account. Please use the SERVICE UNIT FINANCIAL REPORT found on the FORMS page of GSSNE.org.

Delinquent Troop Accounts

If GSSNE determines that an account has not been maintained in accordance with the council financial standards, it has been abandoned, or if the authorized signatories on the account are no longer the leaders of the troop, then the CEO or Senior Director of Finance and Administration may direct the pertinent bank or credit unit to either:

- Close the account and return the funds to GSSNE
- Change the signatories on the account

Disbanded Troop Treasury

When a troop disbands, the following steps must be taken:

- A signatory on the account withdraws the remaining funds from the troop account and closes the account
- The withdrawn money and a final bank statement showing the last withdrawal and zero balance should be brought to council

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

- If girls from a disbanded troop transfer to other troops, the remaining funds are divided equally between the number of girls that were in the disbanded troop, and that share is given to the troop of the transferring girls. To access the funds, the girl/parent or 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 Girls moving to new troop would each take \$10.00 with them to the new troop. The remaining treasury balance stays with council.

If, using that example, Girls 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 several factors: 1) whether the troop was saving for some later trip or event, and 2) whether 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” requires that some distribution should occur. Where there is a disagreement on dispersal and/or division of funds, SUMs should consult with the Senior Director of Customer Experience.

When the money from a disbanded troop comes into council and no distribution is requested by girls 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 back to council to support other Girl Scout activities.

Bad Debt Policy

In instances of bad checks or unpaid debt, GSSNE will make every effort to contact the person involved and develop a payment plan (the Senior Director of Finance and Administration must approve payment plans). In these cases:

- The SUM will be notified the adult is under a restriction on handling money for a minimum of one year
- Volunteer status will be changed to “suspended” in the database
- Scholarships will not be available to the adult or girl member until the debt is paid in full
- Cookie credits cannot be applied for the girl member until the debt is paid in full
- Neither the adult nor the girl will be allowed to register for programs or training until the debt is paid or a payment plan is in process
- Checks will not be accepted in the Girl Scout Shop as payment in the shop until the debt is paid or a payment plan is in process

When debt recovery occurs, accounting will notify all departments and the Customer Experience Department will notify applicable Service Team members. In the case of troop cookie credit, when the debt is paid in full, the troop will receive the cookie credit.

Tax-Exempt Status for Troops

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 tab of GSSNE.org. **Leaders must check the document each time they plan a troop activity to make sure all requirements are met.**

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 girls to have their **pictures** on any social media, electronic, or print publications
- For girls 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, or breast cancer awareness) – permission slips should be created and maintained by troop leadership

SOCIAL MEDIA

When using social media in conjunction with Girl Scout affairs the following procedures and standards apply:

All girls using email or social media for Girl Scouts must read and accept the [Girl Scouts Internet Safety Pledge](#).

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 the girls. Girl Scouts, whether adults or girls, should always use the Girl Scout Law as her/his guide.

- As part of the registration process to become a member of Girl Scouts, parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians is required for girls 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 tab 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, parents/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 Website / Facebook Page

A Troop or Service Unit website/Facebook page 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

Member Coverage

- Every registered Girl Scout (girl and adult) is automatically covered by accident insurance through Mutual of Omaha during normal, supervised program activities, except those events lasting more than two consecutive nights. Coverage is automatic for all girls and adults upon member registration and payment of the registration fee.
- When injuries result in treatment, the insurance company will pay for expenses incurred that are medically necessary.* When \$140 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.
- Sickness is not covered. Only medical expenses arising from accidents during an approved, supervised activity are covered. Sickness is covered when purchasing additional insurance for International trips.

Member Claims

- Leaders of Girls who have an accident requiring medical treatment during a Girl Scout activity, or adults who have an accident themselves during a Girl Scout activity, must report it promptly to council using the Confidential Crisis Report form found on the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org.
- An insurance claim form for medical reimbursement is available in English and Spanish on the FORMS tab at GSSNE. Once there, use the search box to find “GSUSA Claim form” (either English or Spanish). Our insurer, Mutual of Omaha, requires that GSSNE process the form.

Insurance FAQs

For more details, visit the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org. Once there, use the search box to find “Mutual of Omaha Insurance Brochure” (either English or Spanish). To discuss specific insurance coverage for your situation, contact Customer Care.

Trips

For trips of more than two consecutive nights or for overseas trips, troops must obtain additional insurance. The cost is nominal (\$5.00 for up to 45 people covered) and can cover both accident and illness. At least three weeks before the trip, please submit the Mutual of Omaha Purchase of Additional Insurance form found in the list of documents on the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org.

Non-Registered Participant Insurance

At a Girl Scout event where non-registered members are present (such as a bridging ceremony or a “Bring-a-Friend” event), troops may purchase additional liability insurance from Mutual of Omaha. In general, a \$5.00 minimum payment covers 45 non-GSSNE registered members. Higher numbers of attendees would increase the cost.

At least three weeks before the event, please submit the Mutual of Omaha Purchase of Additional Insurance form found in the list of documents on the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org.

Siblings/Tagalongs

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

- A designated registered adult member 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 tagalongs.
- The tagalong must be covered by GSSNE accident insurance. The request for insurance must be made to GSSNE BEFORE the meetings are held and GSSNE needs at least 10 business days to process the request. The cost for this insurance must be paid for by the troop.
- If a tagalong is a registered member of a different troop, but not of the proper age for the activity, and is not participating as part of a service project, additional coverage is required through Mutual of Omaha Insurance.
- Tagalongs are NOT permitted at any Girl Scout PROGRAM (those listed in the Program Catalog or added to the schedule after printing) unless the program specifies “bring a friend”.

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

The loan, rental, or chartering of a bus or van to transport girls for Girl Scout program activities by a troop, group, or service unit **must have council pre-approval**. Please refer to GSUSA Volunteer Essentials 2020-2021 manual for standards on TRANSPORTING GIRLS.

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.

Car rentals for troop transportation do not need advance approval by the council.

CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE

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 tab at GSSNE.org. Allow at least three weeks 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), they must have council pre-approval. In addition, 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

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 (401-603-8429). The CEO or a Senior Director will contact you for information and to 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 parents or legal guardian 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 parents 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 needs to 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**

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.

General Guidelines for Showing Affection to Children

Girl Scouts encourages staff/volunteers that interact with children to be affectionate with those children in a manner that is safe for both the children and the adult.

- **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 only 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 are discussing young children who are easily influenced by adult expectations.
- **Guideline 2: Age Appropriate**
Consider the age and developmental stage of the child involved. Is this behavior typical of that group or cause for concern? Children who display over-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 or other 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 if you have 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. A Girl Scout trip is an opportunity for girls to have fun, experience adventure, and enrich the ongoing Girl Scout program. The decision to take a trip, establish a budget, and finalize plans should be made by leaders and girls in consultation with parents 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 parents 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 girls and sharpens their skills in planning and evaluating. Trips of progressively greater distance and length keep girls 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 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 (the 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 girls 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 both 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 their families
- All GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints are followed, with particular attention to required girl/adult ratios (see Girl-to-Adult Ratios page 4)
- All participants understand that GSUSA standards require separate sleeping accommodations for adults and girls; and male volunteers must have separate sleeping accommodations 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 destination must be 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 girls’ home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to spend the night on museum grounds which makes for an exciting experience for girls. 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 girls 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 Travel Training

Preparing a troop to travel involves additional leader training. At least one member of the troop leadership team must have the training described below in order 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, First Aid, CPR recommended
Overnight (not camping)	Troop Trips, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – camping at GSSNE sites	Troop Camp Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – camping at a non-GSSNE site	Troop Trips, Troop Camp Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – off trail camping	Troop Camp Training, Wilderness First Aid, Hiking or equivalent, 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 **in advance** of 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 tab 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.

Permission Slips

Every trip requires a signed permission slip from the parent/guardian in order for the girl to attend. A sample permission slip is available on the FORMS tab at GSSNE.org ("Parent Guardian Form for Girls"), 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
- Telephone numbers (as many as can be listed) for parents/guardians where they can be reached **during the time of the activity**
- Additional emergency contact information (neighbor, friend, relative)
- **PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE AND DATE**

You may also want to include:

- Recommended amount of spending money (especially for older girls)
- If you have a troop Facebook page or other type of social media contact system, permission to take and publish photos and/or videos of the 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 tab 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. Parents 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. 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 tab 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 tab 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 a GPS, be prepared if batteries die or service does not work at all times

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 must 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)

Adults on the Trip

The number of adults required on a trip is governed by the Girl/Adult ratio chart.

	EVENTS, TRAVEL, AND CAMPING GIRL/ADULT RATIO CHART	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	<i>One</i> additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	24	1-12
Girl Scout 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 identification

When traveling, each girl must carry an identification card with her at all times. 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 the identification cards on the inside of a jacket or shirt so personal information is not public. The information on each should include:

- Full Name
- Girl Scout council and Troop #
- Telephone contacts
 - Leaders cell phone(s)
 - GSSNE crisis line number
- Pertinent medical information such as allergies

TRAVEL CHART

Troop Age Level	Type of Trip	Screenings/Trainings	Notifications/ Approvals	Forms	Timeline	Adults
Daisy Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	DAY TRIPS To a council-sponsored event To any site within the age-level distance requirement	LEADERS - New Leader training - FA/CPR recommended OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (for troop arranged carpools) checked for age, license, and insurance	SUM notified in advance			Leaders / chaperones must be registered volunteers with current background checks on file with GSSNE The number of adults must conform to girl/adult ratio guidelines
Daisy Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OUTDOOR DAY AT CAMPSITE	Same as above plus: - Troop Camp training - First Aid - CPR recommended - Outdoor Day training	Reservation through Property Rentals tab on the council website Notify SUM	Sign off documents at Property Rentals site	At least two weeks in advance	Same as above
Daisy (1 st grade) Brownie Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHTS (1-2 nights) (lock-ins, hotels, motels, museum or zoo overnight) OVERNIGHTS (3+ nights)	LEADERS - New Leader training - Troop Trips training - FA/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (for troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance LEADERS - Advanced Trips training OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (for troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance	Intent-to-Travel form SUM notified in advance	Intent-to-Travel form	At least two months in advance	Same as above
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 - Troop Trips training - Troop Camp training (TCT) - FA/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (for troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance	Intent-to-Travel form	Intent-to-Travel form	At least one month in advance	Same as above plus: The camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes Troop Camp training The FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop support volunteer who is certified

TRAVEL CHART

Troop Age 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	<p>LEADERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Leader training - Troop Camp training - FA/CPR <p>OTHER ADULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current GSSNE membership and background check - Drivers (for troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance 	<p>Reservation through Property Rentals tab on the council website</p> <p>SUM notified in advance</p>	Sign-off documents at Property Rentals site	At least one month in advance	<p>Leaders & chaperones must be registered volunteers</p> <p>The number of adults must conform to girl/adult ratio guidelines</p> <p>The troop camp trained adult can be any registered adult volunteer who successfully completed Troop Camp Training</p> <p>The FA/CPR trained adult can be registered adult volunteer who is certified</p>
Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHTS: Off-Trail Camping or Backpacking	<p>Same as above +</p> <p>GSSNE Hiking/Backpacking course or equivalent</p>	Intent-to-Travel form	Intent-to-Travel form	At least one month in advance	<p>Leaders / chaperones must be registered volunteers</p> <p>The number of adults must conform to girl/adult ratio guidelines</p> <p>The troop camp trained or hiking/backpacking certified adult can be any registered adult volunteer</p> <p>The FA/CPR trained adult can be registered adult volunteer who is certified</p>

ADULT LEARNING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Once a volunteer completes New Leader Training, s/he will be ready to lead their troop. Some troop leadership positions and activities require further training. With the introduction of gsLearn, our on-demand, online training platform, GSSNE volunteers can 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. Trainings must be assigned by council staff so Contact Customer Care if you are interested in a specific training but don't see it in gsLearn. 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 Adult Learning calendar at www.GSSNE.org or by Contacting Customer Care to request a training.

TYPE OF TRAINING	ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO
<p><u>TROOP LEADER TRAINING</u> (Online) GSUSA Foundations 1-4 Volunteer Toolkit Intro to Troop Finances Opening a Troop Bank Account Generating Troop Funds</p>	<p>Start a troop Organize troop meetings Attend council-sponsored events Borrow program materials from council Participate in fall and winter product programs Call on council for support, resources, and information</p>
<p><u>OUTDOOR DAY TRAINING</u> (In-person) Schedule a troop Outdoor Day at a GSSNE camp Hold a troop activity that includes fire-building</p>	<p>Schedule a troop Outdoor Day at a GSSNE camp Hold a troop activity that includes fire-building</p>
<p><u>ASHI FIRST AID/CPR/AED TRAINING</u> (online & in-person) American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI)-sponsored training is offered by GSSNE Online First Aid training plus 2.5-hour practicum for CPR + AED training Other certifying organization's cards may be accepted; submit to Customer Care a copy of your valid FA / CPR / AED certification card from issuing organization</p>	<p>Recommended for all troop leaders Recommended for all troop trips Required for some activities (see Safety Activity Checkpoints) Required for troop camping / hiking / backpacking / Wilderness FA Required for all overnights</p>
<p><u>TROOP CAMP TRAINING</u> (Online, classroom & overnight required) Preliminary online training and Skills Checklist Classroom session: (3 hours) Overnight at a GSSNE camp (Saturday to Sunday)</p>	<p>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>

TYPE OF TRAINING	ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO
<p><u>BACKPACKING / HIKING TRAINING SERIES</u> (Classroom and overnight required)</p> <p>Workshops with classroom sessions and hikes</p> <p>The first sessions are listed in the Program Guide and may be taken by Ambassador troops and/or just adult leaders</p> <p>The final workshop is a Backpacking/Hiking weekend just for adults/Ambassador Scouts</p>	<p>Qualifies troop leaders to take troops on hiking and backpacking trips</p>
<p><u>WILDERNESS FIRST AID TRAINING</u> (Overnight required Saturday to Sunday)</p> <p>This ASHI course (the American Health and Safety Institute) is a 16-hour comprehensive certification course that covers a wide-range of rescue scenarios. The is taught over a weekend at a GSSNE camp and certification is for two 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>TROOP CAMP REFRESHER COURSE</u></p> <p>Review of GSSNE camp standards</p>	<p>For troop leaders whose Troop Camp Training was more than five years ago</p> <p>For experienced leaders who transferred into GSSNE from another Girl Scout council where they received TCT</p>
<p><u>AGE LEVEL CHANGE TRAINING</u></p> <p>Daisy to Brownie: in-person session (2 hours)</p> <p>Brownie to Junior (online)</p>	<p>Recommended for all leaders transitioning from one program age level to another</p>
<p><u>TROOP TRIPS TRAINING</u> (2.5 hours in-person)</p>	<p>Required for all overnight trips (including museum overnights) or any activity requiring an Intent-to-Travel form</p> <p>Recommended for Brownie and Junior leaders</p>
<p><u>ADVANCED TRIPS TRAINING</u> (2.0 hours in-person)</p>	<p>For Cadette, Senior and Ambassador level leaders who are planning extended trips (3+ nights) or geographically distant trips (outside of New England)</p> <p>Especially helpful for troops planning on extensive fund-raising activities</p>
<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>	<p>An interactive workshop for Girl Scouts (required), parents, and leaders explaining how to pursue a Silver/Gold award</p> <p>The session covers information on prerequisites, typical projects, guidelines, timelines, and standards. Reviews GSSNE paperwork requirements and council procedures</p>