



Policies, Procedures, and Standards (PPS) 2025-2026

***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

Welcome!	4
Contact Information	4
GSUSA	4
GSSNE	4
GSSNE Leadership Center Use (NEW)	4
GSSNE Service Units	5
GSSNE on Social Media	6
Girl Scout Promise & Law	6
Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Commitment (NEW)	6
Pets & Service Animals (NEW)	7
Steps to Become a Girl Scout Volunteer	7
Criminal Background Screenings / Policy	7
Volunteer Appointment & Expectations	8
Volunteer Conduct & Ethics	8
Training & Adult Learning (UPDATED)	8
Volunteer Policy	9
Zero Tolerance Policy (Child Abuse, Racism, Intoxicating Substances/Medication)	10
Conflict Resolution	11
Handling Adult Conflict	11
Handling Youth Conflict	11
GSSNE Troop Standards	12
Types of Troops	12
Forming a New Troop / Troop Size Standards	12
Girl Scouts With Special Needs	12
Moving Girl Scouts from Troop Rosters	12
Adult Supervision / Leadership Standards	13
The “Buddy System”	13
Youth-Adult Ratios: Troop Meetings / Outings, Overnights, Travel (UPDATED)	13
Youth-Adult Ratios: Multi-Level Troops	13
Other Adults Involved with the Troop (UPDATED)	14
Program Standards	14
Girl Scout Participation in Activities with other Scouting Organizations	14
GSSNE Dress Guidance	14
Meeting Place Standards	15
Meeting Sites	15
Meeting in Homes (UPDATED)	15
Safety in the Meeting Place	15
Fiscal Standards	15
Financial Support Overview (UPDATED)	15
Troop / Service Unit Banking (Preferred Banks, Account Registration (ACH))	15
Troop Income / Additional Sources of Income	16
Council Participation Standard (UPDATED)	16
Donations Received by Troops/Service Units	17
Financial Accountability Overview	19
Financial Records & Reporting for Troop/Service Unit Accounts	19
Delinquent Bank Accounts	19
Debt Policy (UPDATED)	19
Managing Girl Scout Funds: Transfers, Donations, & Disbandment (UPDATED)	20
Fund Handling & Redistribution (UPDATED)	20
Tax-Exempt Status for Troops / Service Units	21
Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC)	21
Exposure to Wild Animals	21

Permission Slips	22
Social Media (Communication, Permissions, Social Pages, Cookie Program Social Media).....	22
Insurance	22
Coverage Enhancement (UPDATE: Sickness Coverage for Travel)	22
Siblings / Tagalongs	22
Member Claims	23
Other Types of Insurance (UPDATE)	23
Girl Scout Youth Driving Girl Scout Youth (NEW)	23
Working with Children	23
Child Abuse & Neglect	23
National Child Abuse Training (NEW)	24
Definition and Types of Child Abuse	24
Child Abuse Reporting Procedures	24
General Guidelines for Showing Affection to Children	24
GSSNE Travel: Where Adventure Meets Purpose	25
Notification	25
Obtaining Council Permission (NEW)	25
Permission & Unauthorized Travel (NEW)	25
Travel Guidelines (NEW)	25
Readiness & Travel Distance (Day Trips, Daisy Camping, Overnights, Travel)	25
Leader Training – Troop Travel	26
Travel Permission Slips	26
Leader Travel Binder	27
Transportation (Automobiles)	27
Youth-Adult Ratios: Events, Travel, Camping	28
Adult Chaperones (UPDATED)	28
Girl Scout Identification (UPDATED)	28
Travel Chart (UPDATED)	29

WELCOME!



We're so glad you're here! As a volunteer, you're a trusted partner and an ambassador of the Girl Scout Movement, helping girls grow courage, confidence, and character. This guide, along with national resources like the Blue Book, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Checkpoints, is here to give you the guidance and support you need to create safe, welcoming, fun, and empowering experiences for all who wish to be part of Girl Scouts. By joining, you agree to uphold the values of Girl Scouts, and know that GSSNE is committed to supporting you every step of the way.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England (GSSNE) is part of a larger organization, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A, 420 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10018, 800-478-7248, www.gsusa.org.

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England (GSSNE) Headquarters

500 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886

401-331-4500 / 800-331-0149

Customercare@gssne.org

GSSNE's Customer Care Team (Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 5:30 pm)

GSSNE's Customer Care Team is available to assist with all Council-related questions and provide resources. For the fastest response, please contact them by email or phone. Check the website for holiday hours and special closings.

GSSNE Leadership Center

The GSSNE Leadership Center is a shared council facility available to support troop meetings, trainings, and Girl Scout activities. It is available for 1-night rentals Friday and Saturdays starting at 5:30 pm until the following day at noon for \$75 per day. All users are expected to respect the space and leave it better than they found it.

Reservation Process

- Registered GSSNE troop leaders and service team volunteers may reserve the space at no cost for Girl Scout events.
- Submit an online request at least 2 weeks in advance to CustomerCare@gssne.org.
- GSSNE will send written confirmation with approved dates, times, and areas.
- Council-led events may take priority. Reservations may be adjusted as needed to accommodate high-priority programming and Customer Care will notify contacts of schedule changes as soon as possible.

Cancellations & Closure

- Please notify customer care@gssne.org or 401-331-4500 at least 48 hours in advance.
- Multiple missed reservations without notice may result in a temporary hold on future bookings.
- In case of weather or emergency closures, GSSNE will cancel all reservations and notify the impacted troops. Rescheduling is welcomed and subject to availability.

Use & Cleanup Expectations

- Always follow required adult-to-youth ratios as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Use only the areas assigned to your group. Youth should remain supervised at all times.
- Permitted only in designated areas. Please bring and remove your own food and clean thoroughly after use.

"Girl Scouts always leave a place better than the way they found it." Let's live this motto together! Before leaving, work with the youths to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Reset tables and chairs | • Sweep or spot clean floors as needed |
| • Wipe down surfaces (including chairs & door handles) | • Turn off lights, faucets, and close doors securely |
| • Dispose of trash (or take it with you if bins are full) | • Report damage or concerns to GSSNE within 24 hours |
| • Wipe bathroom counters, doors, and handles, & sweep | |

Prohibited Activities

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Unsupervised youth | • Altering fixtures, décor, or thermostats |
| • Smoking, vaping, alcohol, or illegal substances | • Unauthorized use of equipment or materials |
| • Open flames without council approval | |

Accountability

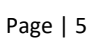
We trust that troops will use the Leadership Center with the same care and integrity they bring to all Girl Scout activities. To maintain fairness and safety, GSSNE follows a progressive approach when expectations are not met but may take more immediate measures at their discretion depending upon the circumstance:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| • First violation: | Courtesy reminder |
| • Second violation: | Formal warning and 30-day hold on reservations |
| • Third violation: | Loss of access for the remainder of the membership year |
| • Serious misuse: | Immediate suspension and possible volunteer conduct review |

Each GSSNE service unit has a volunteer team led by a council-appointed Service Unit Manager (SUM) who work together to support local volunteers and events. To connect with your team, contact Customer Care.

North Attleboro

Yankee B (Burrillville, Foster, Glocester)



GSSNE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



facebook.com/gssne



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



Instagram @gssne



tiktok.com/@girlscoutsofsne



pinterest.com/girlscoutsSNE



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



youtube.com/gssne

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.



EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM COMMITMENT

At GSSNE, we are committed to creating an environment where every youth and adult feels valued, respected, and empowered. Our dedication to equity, inclusion, and anti-racism reflects the core values of the Girl Scout Movement and guides all that we do.

By becoming a Girl Scout member, you agree to uphold the Anti-Racism Pledge and Commitment to Pluralism. GSSNE has zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or exclusion. Behavior inconsistent with these principles may result in removal from volunteer roles, in accordance with GSSNE's Volunteer Policies. Together, we build a Girl Scout community where everyone can thrive, belong, and lead.

Equal Opportunity

GSSNE upholds a strong policy of equal opportunity. We recruit, train, promote, and appoint volunteers based solely on competence and performance, without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, religion, lineage or citizenship, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital or familial status, age, socioeconomic background, source of income, disability, genetic information, or any other protected characteristic.

We strive to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and ensure that all members feel welcomed, supported, and included.

Anti-Racism Pledge

As Girl Scouts, we commit to being actively anti-racist. We pledge to:

- Educate ourselves about racism and oppression to understand their impacts.
- Stand up against injustice and inequality wherever they occur.
- Listen to, support, and amplify the voices of those who are marginalized.
- Create and maintain safe, inclusive spaces for all girls and adults.
- Engage in this work every day, knowing Girl Scouts is for every girl.

Commitment to Pluralism

We celebrate the diversity of cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives within our community. Volunteers are encouraged to intentionally plan and deliver programs that are inclusive and accessible, taking into account diverse needs such as financial circumstances, religious observances, and accessibility requirements to ensure equitable participation for all.

Pets and Service Animals

Pets are not permitted on GSSNE properties except for service animals as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A service animal is a dog **trained** to perform specific tasks directly related to a person's disability. Emotional support, therapy, comfort, and companion animals do not qualify as service animals.

When it's not obvious a dog is a service animal, staff may ask only:

1. Is the dog a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What work or task has it been trained to perform?

Staff may not request documentation, require the dog to demonstrate its task, or ask about the person's disability. Service animals do not need special vests or IDs but may be asked to leave if they are disruptive or not under control.

(Source: U.S. Department of Justice, ADA Service Animal FAQ: ada.gov/resources/service-animals-faqs)

STEPS TO BECOME A GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER

1. **Register as a Member** – Visit GSSNE.org, click **Volunteer with Us** and follow the prompts. Adult membership for 2025-2026 is \$30.00.
2. **Complete Background Checks – Free of charge**
 - You will receive an email from STERLING Volunteers with a link to complete your national background check. Search all your inboxes for "STERLING" if you do not see it right away.
 - MA CORI Check – Required for any adult interacting with Massachusetts children. The form is on the *FORMS* page at GSSNE.org.

Note: All volunteers are re-screened every 3 years.

3. **Take Required Training** – You will receive an email with training instructions based on your role (e.g., co-leader, treasurer, cookie coordinator, etc.,)

Need help? Contact CustomerCare@gssne.org or call 401-331-4500.

Criminal Background Screenings

To help ensure the safety and well-being of our members, all potential volunteers must become GSUSA adult members and complete a background check through Sterling Volunteers before working with youth, accessing their information, or handling Girl Scout funds. Massachusetts volunteers must also complete a CORI check, according to state law.

Some roles may require additional or more frequent screening (e.g., staff are CORI-checked every six months). Volunteers with records of child abuse, violent, or sexual crimes will be disqualified. GSSNE may also deny volunteer roles based on other serious offenses, including financial, drug, or alcohol-related issues that conflict with our mission and values. Background checks are repeated every three years. Volunteers must report any arrests or convictions to the Senior Risk & Compliance Manager. Copies of background check results are available upon request.

Criminal Background Screening Policy

When national background screenings through STERLING Volunteers and/or CORI checks are part of the standard screening process for employment, volunteer service, or licensing, the following practices and procedures will apply:

- 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 (online national screening).
- 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, suitability determinations based on CORI checks and the national background check through STERLING Volunteers 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 screening report and GSSNE's Criminal

- Background Check Policy, advised of the part(s) of the record that makes 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 with 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, GSSNE 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 GSSNE 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:
- Relevance of the crime to the position sought
 - The nature of the work to be performed
 - Time since the conviction
 - Age of the candidate at the time of the offense
 - Seriousness and specific circumstances of the offense
 - The number of offenses
 - Whether the applicant has pending charges
 - Any relevant evidence of rehabilitation or lack thereof
 - Any information, including information submitted by the candidate or requested by the hiring authority
- IX. GSSNE will notify the applicant of the decision and the basis of the decision in a timely manner.

Volunteer Appointment and Expectations

Volunteer roles are appointed for terms of one to three years, depending on the position. While two consecutive terms are recommended, extensions may be made by mutual agreement with GSSNE. All roles are "at-will" and may be ended at any time by either party. Completion of Troop Leader Training indicates agreement to fulfill all role expectations. Service Unit Team members will receive a position-specific Role Description/Agreement, to be reviewed and signed in gsLearn (see "Training & Adult Learning").

Volunteer Conduct & Ethics

Girl Scouts are ambassadors of the movement and expected to uphold the highest ethical standards. By accepting a position as a volunteer or paid staff person, you agree to act with integrity, respect, and responsibility in support of the Girl Scout mission. You also agree to:

- Be guided by the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Complete all required trainings and follow GSSNE and GSUSA policies and safety guidelines
- Uphold the Anti-Racism Pledge and Commitment to Pluralism and use them as guides to create an inclusive environment and actively welcome diversity
- Support youth leadership and honor their decision-making
- Handle Girl Scout funds responsibly, keeping accurate records and using funds only for approved purposes
- Follow all applicable laws and Girl Scout guidelines, including *Volunteer Essentials*, *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, and the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*

Training & Adult Learning / gsLearn

After adult membership and CBC (criminal background check) clearance, training is assigned via gsLearn, GSSNE's online platform. Volunteers must notify GSSNE of their intent to lead at CustomerCare@gssne.org to begin onboarding.

gsLearn offers flexible, on-demand training through MYGS at [GSSNE.org](https://gssne.org). Volunteers inactive over a year or trained before 2020 must complete current leader training. Failure to complete required training may result in role removal.

Required training for troop leaders (to be completed within 30 days) includes:

- Volunteer Essentials (read and e-sign attestation)
- Video training on troop safety, banking, troop funds, family engagement, and forming a troop committee

Upon completion, volunteers receive a confirmation email linking them to their Service Unit Manager and resources. Additional trainings, such as Troop Camp Training, require in-person attendance and can be registered for via the GSSNE Activities calendar or Customer Care. First Aid/CPR, camp, and travel trainings are strongly recommended early.

Completion of all position-specific training is mandatory for successful performance and continued service. Failure or refusal to complete required training may result in removal or non-appointment. For questions or assistance, contact Customer Care - we are here to help!

TYPE OF TRAINING	ALLOWS VOLUNTEERS TO
<u>TROOP LEADER TRAINING (Online gsLearn – assigned by GSSNE)</u> • 194 – Troop Leader Training	• Start a troop • Organize troop meetings • Attend Council-sponsored events • Borrow program materials from Council • Participate in fall and winter product programs
<u>TROOP OR SERVICE UNIT TREASURER (Bank Account Signatory) (Online gsLearn)</u> • Volunteer Essentials (read) • Volunteer Essentials Attestation form (e-signature) • Opening a Bank Account with GSSNE (video) • Funding the Fun - Managing Girl Scout Troop Funds (video)	• Act as a signatory on the troop or service unit's bank account
<u>ASHI FIRST AID/CPR/AED TRAINING</u> (Approx. 3 hours online + 3 hours in person) • Health & Safety Institute-sponsored training offered by GSSNE • You may submit first aid/CPR cards from other organizations to GSSNE for review by sending a copy to Customer Care. Certifications must include both First Aid and a hands-on CPR practicum. Basic Life Saving (BLS) alone is not sufficient unless paired with a valid first aid certification or a current nursing/advanced medical license. Approval is at GSSNE's discretion.	• 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 and all overnights
<u>OUTDOOR DAY AT A CAMPSITE (Online gsLearn)</u> • 194 - Guide To Outdoor Day Adventures: Day Camping Experiences (gsLearn online video training)	• Schedule a troop Outdoor Day at a GSSNE camp • Hold a troop activity that includes fire-building or cooking
<u>LODGE CAMPING (Online gsLearn)</u> • 194 – Lodge Camping	• Required for troops participating in lodge camping
<u>TROOP CAMP TRAINING</u> (Online, classroom & overnight; pre-requisite = Getting Girls Outdoors) • Preliminary online skills checklist • Classroom session: (3 hours) • Group overnight at GSSNE camp (Saturday to Sunday)	• Required for camping at GSSNE AND non-GSSNE camp sites
<u>WILDERNESS FIRST AID TRAINING (16 hours)</u> (Saturday to Sunday Overnight; pre-requisite=current FA/CPR cert.) The HSI course (Health & Safety Institute) is a 16-hour comprehensive certification covering a wide-range of rescue scenarios. It is taught over a weekend at a GSSNE camp and certification is valid for 2 years.	Required to take a troop hike, a backpacking trip, or to an off-trail camping site which is 30 minutes or more from 911. Not currently offering this training
<u>GRADE LEVEL ESSENTIALS (gsLearn online videos)</u> • Daisy Grade Level Essentials • Brownie Grade Level Essentials • Junior Grade Level Essentials	• Recommended for all leaders transitioning from one program age level to another.
<u>TROOP TRIPS TRAINING: DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (Online gsLearn – 1 Hour)</u>	• Required for non-campsite overnight trips (including museum overnights) or any activity requiring an Intent-to-Travel • Recommended for Brownie-Ambassador leaders
<u>STRIVE FOR SILVER/GO FOR GOLD TRAINING</u> • 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.	• Required for Cadettes planning to earn their Silver Award and Seniors-Ambassadors planning to earn their Gold award. • Training should be completed before work begins.

Volunteer Policy

When a volunteer's performance, behavior, attendance, or productivity falls below GSSNE standards, the council aims to offer a reasonable opportunity to improve, when appropriate. However, the volunteer relationship is at-will, and immediate release may occur if deemed necessary. This also applies to other unpaid staff and support roles.

Any volunteer action that GSSNE determines, at its sole discretion, could harm or interfere with council operations, business interests, charitable status, or reputation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal.

Employees, volunteers, and members represent GSSNE and Girl Scouts and are expected to uphold reasonable standards of conduct and may be disciplined if they do not. Examples of unacceptable conduct include:

- Any form of dishonesty, racism, hate, or any kind of abuse
- Disruption of the “workplace”
- Failure to comply with a Council policy or practice
- Failure to properly safeguard confidential business or customer information
- Alcoholic or intoxicating substances (whether or not prescribed) in the presence of youth, or at youth-facing Girl Scout events
- Illegal substances are not allowed on GSSNE property or at Girl Scout events
- Taking company or individual 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 at inappropriate times (whether paid or volunteer)
- Accessing and distributing confidential information (other than in the normal performance of one’s job duties)
- Engaging in other actions that could be considered fraudulent or an act of misrepresentation

When issues arise, the council may use progressive discipline. Staff and the volunteer will discuss the problem, set goals, and agree on a timeline for improvement. Continued issues after disciplinary action may result in termination.

The 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 hybrid model utilizing various components listed above in addition to:

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

GSSNE plans to be proactive and positive thinking in our self-improvement structures, and transparent in our decision-making process and timeline. If the volunteer member believes otherwise, the sitting Board Chair will provide the role of ombuds.

Zero-Tolerance Policy: Child Abuse, Sexual Harassment, and Drug Use

GSSNE is committed to a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment. To protect all members, we enforce a zero-tolerance policy for certain behaviors. Violations will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal and, when necessary, law enforcement notification.

Child Abuse & Sexual Harassment

Strictly Prohibited:	Physical, verbal, emotional, or sexual abuse of any youth, including inappropriate touching, sexual communication, pressure, or advances.
Mandatory Reporting:	Any individual who witnesses or suspects abuse or harassment must immediately report it to council staff. GSSNE will take immediate action, including notifying authorities when necessary.
Prevention Measures:	GSSNE maintains comprehensive child abuse prevention policies, including clear procedures for reporting, investigation, and follow-up.

Racism & Discrimination

- GSSNE upholds the Girl Scout commitment to anti-racism and equity. Any form of racism, discrimination, or bias-based harassment (whether verbal, physical, written, or online) is prohibited.
- This includes conduct targeting individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic.
- Volunteers and staff are expected to actively contribute to a culture of inclusion and respect for all members.

Intoxicating Substances / Medication

All volunteers and staff are expected to be fully capable of exercising sound judgment, functioning safely, and acting responsibly while engaged in Girl Scout activities and supervising youths. Therefore:

- Individuals may not serve in any Girl Scout capacity if they are under the influence of, or impaired by, any substance - **whether prescribed, over the counter, or recreational** - that affects behavior, judgment, reaction time, or physical coordination.
- This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Marijuana (THC), cannabis-derived products (regardless of prescription or legality under state law)
 - Alcohol (before or during any youth-facing activity)
 - Illegal drugs
 - Medication not prescribed to the individual, unless being administered to someone else under proper procedures and with written consent

Volunteers and staff are prohibited from possessing, using, or distributing these substances while participating in any Girl Scout program, event, or activity, or while acting in a volunteer or staff capacity on behalf of Girl Scouts.

Personal Medication Use

Volunteers and staff may use their own prescribed or over-the-counter medications only if doing so does not impair their ability to supervise youth or ensure safety. All personal medications must be stored securely and kept out of reach of youth at all times.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Good leadership means working well with others, communicating clearly, and teaming up to reach goals. Disagreements and conflict are a normal part of any group, and they are not always a terrible thing. They can spark innovative ideas, highlight important issues, and help people grow. If there is no clear policy violation, GSSNE encourages volunteers to try the following conflict resolution tips to work things out respectfully:

ADULT CONFLICT

Step 1: Try to Resolve It Yourself

Have a face-to-face conversation to share perspectives and how the situation affected each of you. Often, one person may not even realize there is a concern. See “Girl Scout Conduct & Conflict Volunteer Guidance” at GSSNE.org for tips.

Step 2: Bring in a Neutral Third Party

If needed, invite a service unit manager or team member to join the conversation. They can offer fresh insight or help guide the discussion. If you are mediating, speak to each party separately first.

Step 3: Find a Solution Together

Work toward a solution that everyone can agree on. It is up to the individuals involved to decide how they move forward.

Step 4: Contact GSSNE if Needed

If the conflict cannot be resolved informally, contact CustomerCare@gssne.org. You may escalate to GSSNE at any time if the situation warrants it.

YOUTH CONFLICT

At the start of the year, troop leaders should help youth create a Troop Agreement - a youth-written set of expectations and consequences that reflects their desired troop culture. Leaders may also ask youth and caregivers to sign the Girl Scout Code of Conduct (available on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org). Keep a copy and share one with the family.

If behavior issues arise during official Girl Scout activities and cannot be resolved by the youth, leaders should refer to the Volunteer Guidance: Youth Conduct & Conflict. Encourage Girl Scouts to work through issues themselves when possible, it builds important skills. Leaders should only address behavior that happens within Girl Scout settings; conflicts outside Girl Scouts fall outside our scope.

In Case of Serious Incidents

If a Girl Scout-related incident causes harm or property damage:

- Ensure everyone's safety
- Call 911 if needed
- Contact the GSSNE Crisis Line at 800-476-0293 as soon as it is safe

First Incident – Address Privately

- Speak with the youth calmly and privately (never alone). Explain what agreement or expectation was not met.
- For conflicts between youth: have them reflect on how the other person feels, share perspectives, and work together on possible solutions. Choose a compromise to which they can commit.
- Document date, behavior, and resolution

Second Incident – Take a Break

- Have youth take a short break in sight of volunteers. Explain the behavior concern before or after.

- Briefly notify the caregiver.
- For recurring or new conflicts, repeat First Incident steps. Encourage respectful disagreement when compromise is not possible.
- Document all actions and notify caregivers as needed.

Third Incident – Meet with Caregiver(s)

- Set up a private meeting with the caregiver(s).
- Review the troop agreement, Code of Conduct, and prior incidents.
- Keep the conversation respectful and solution focused. Ask for family support (e.g., caregiver attending meetings).
- Document the meeting and next steps.
- If multiple youth are involved, meet with all families. Focus on facts and shared solutions. Follow up with a recap email.

Fourth Incident – Request Support

- Repeat Second Incident steps.
- Contact your Service Unit Manager and/or GSSNE for help: CustomerCare@gssne.org | 401-331-4500.
- Collaborate with the family to determine the next steps.
- If a caregiver will not engage, contact your Service Unit Manager or GSSNE.

GSSNE TROOP STANDARDS

Types of Troops

- **Standard troops** are those with members of the same age level (Daisies, Brownies, etc..)
- **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 13 for details](#)).

Forming a New Troop / Troop Size Standards

The standard troop size is 5–12 Girl Scouts, and all troops must be open to at least 12 members. To increase capacity, submit the Troop Status Update form at [GSSNE.org](https://gssne.org). Troops with fewer than 5 youths are not considered active by GSUSA and should grow or merge promptly. Smaller troops may limit the Girl Scout experience, reduce access to product program incentives, and risk IRS scrutiny.

Most troops serve one age level, though some are multi-level. Larger troops must follow specific leadership standards (see page 13). Troop leaders can use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to manage rosters, plan meetings, track background checks, and communicate with families.

Larger troops, supported by more adult volunteers, allow Girl Scouts to choose their activities in smaller groups, enhancing engagement and personal growth.

Girl Scouts with Special Needs

Girl Scouts receiving special education services may remain enrolled through age 21. For placement questions, GSSNE prioritizes each girl's developmental and emotional needs. Contact Customer Care with questions.

Moving Girl Scouts from Troop Rosters

To support a positive troop environment, a Girl Scout may sometimes be moved between troops or to Individually Registered Member (IRM) status when the current placement is not the best fit. Moves can be requested by the caregiver, troop leader, or GSSNE for various reasons, including:

- **Relocation** (family moving to a new location)
- **Scheduling conflicts** (meeting times may no longer fit with the Girl Scout's or their family's schedules)
- **Friendships** (youth may have friends in another troop they wish to join)
- **Troop Size** (current troop may be too small or too large, impacting the Girl Scout's experience)
- **Program Focus** (youth may seek a different experience such as more outdoor experiences or more badge work)
- **Personal Comfort** (youth may feel more comfortable/supported in a different troop due to dynamics or personal reasons)
- **Leadership Style** (difference in leadership style or philosophy may prompt a move to a troop that better aligns with the youth's needs and preferences)
- **Attendance** (prolonged non-attendance without communication from the family)
- **Conflict or behavioral issues** (although rare, there may be occasions where behavioral issues or interpersonal conflict cannot be resolved so moving to a different troop is in the best interest of the youths' well-being and personal growth)

Primary Caregiver Initiated

A primary caregiver can transfer their Girl Scout to any available troop anytime via their MYGS account. To switch to IRM status, caregivers should email CustomerCare@gssne.org with the Girl Scout's name; Membership staff will process the change.

Troop Leader Initiated

Troop Leaders should follow these 3-steps PRIOR TO submitting a move request. Approved roster moves will be completed by GSSNE:

- **STEP 1:** Email Caregiver (after 2 consecutively missed meetings and no communication from caregiver)
- **STEP 2:** Phone & Email Caregiver (day after third consecutively missed meeting)
- **STEP 3:** Complete a ["Girl Scout Roster Move"](#) request (a Membership staff person will conduct follow-up and remove the Girl Scout from the roster if deemed appropriate)

Council Follow-up

- GSSNE staff reviews the request
- Contacts troop leaders for additional clarity
- Reaches out to the Girl Scout caregiver via text if possible or via USPS letter letting them know troop leaders have tried to reach them regarding their Girl Scout missing multiple consecutive meetings and that until we hear back from them their Girl Scout will be listed as an Individually Registered Member (IRM)
- Move Girl Scout from troop roster to requested destination or IRM status

ADULT SUPERVISION / LEADERSHIP STANDARDS

The "Buddy System"

Girl Scouts should never go anywhere alone and must always have a buddy. One adult cannot be alone with one Girl Scout; there must be at least two youth with one adult or two adults with one youth.

Youth-Adult Ratios: Troop Meetings, Outings, Overnights, and Travel

For all Girl Scout gatherings (meetings, activities, trips, camps, events, or virtual sessions) at least two registered, approved adult volunteers are required. They must be unrelated by blood or marriage, live in different households, and include at least one female. If co-leaders are related, married, or live together, a third unrelated, registered and background-screened adult must be present.

This rule is strict with no exceptions, and additional adults may be needed per youth-adult ratio guidelines. However, per Girl Scout safety guidelines, the number of adults attending should not exceed the number of youth. This is to ensure that trips remain girl-led, maintain appropriate supervision without overshadowing the girls' experience, and avoid situations that could appear to be adult-centered rather than girl-centered.

GIRL SCOUT YOUTH - ADULT RATIOS (Troop Meetings, Outings, Overnights, & Travel)				
Girl Scout Program Level	TROOP MEETINGS <i>Two unrelated volunteers * for up to this number of youths:</i>	TROOP MEETINGS <i>One additional volunteer * for each additional:</i>	OUTINGS, OVERNIGHTS & TRAVEL <i>Two unrelated volunteers* for up to this number of youths:</i>	OUTINGS, OVERNIGHTS, & TRAVEL <i>One additional volunteer* for each additional:</i>
Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Seniors & Ambassadors (grades 9–12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

**Not related by blood or marriage, nor living in the same household/residence and at least one who is female*

Youth-Adult Ratios: Multi-Level Troops

Each troop must have at least 2 trained leaders or 1 trained leader plus 1 registered troop support volunteer (TSV) who attends all Girl Scout events/activities. Additionally, there must be at least 1 registered adult volunteer per grade level to deliver age-appropriate programming. For example, a Daisy/Brownie troop needs one volunteer for each level.

If more than six girls are at one level, more volunteers are required to ensure proper supervision, exceeding GSUSA's minimum ratios. When unsure, base ratios on the youngest age level.

Determining the right number of leaders balances safety and quality programming. Contact Customer Care for guidance if needed.

Example #1: If a Daisy/Brownie troop had 9 Daisies and 3 Brownies, the troop would require two leaders to work with the Daises 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 involved with the troop, such as attending meetings, participating in activities, or handling troop funds (e.g., Product Program Coordinator, driver, parent helper, chaperone), must have current GSSNE membership and background screening on file (see Steps to Becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer on pg. 7).

For adults with financial responsibilities, troop leadership should carefully select trustworthy individuals who will ensure deposits are made promptly, checks clear, and records are accurate and balanced. Troop leaders should ensure that volunteers in the treasurer roles complete trainings required for their position.

Guest experts (e.g., firefighters) do not need to be registered volunteers if troop leaders supervise all interactions and ensure no Girl Scout is ever alone with the expert.

For guidelines on adults and travel, please see page 25. Remember, Per Girl Scout safety guidelines, the number of adults attending should **not** exceed the number of youth. This is to ensure that trips remain girl-led, maintain appropriate supervision without overshadowing the girls' experience, and avoid situations that could appear to be adult-centered rather than girl-centered.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

Troop activities like service projects or field trips may include all age levels, but each age group must work on their own badges, Journeys, and leadership programs—no cross-level badge work (e.g., Brownies complete Brownie badges only). Older Girl Scouts can gain leadership experience by helping younger troops while continuing their own age-appropriate work.

Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations

Scouting America's (formerly BSA / Boy Scouts) decision to include girls in their program has changed its relationship with Girl Scouts, creating risks to our membership and brand. To protect Girl Scouts' unique identity, all activities must be Girl Scout-exclusive, safe, Girl Scout-led, and supervised by GSSNE.

By joining Girl Scouts, volunteers agree to follow GSSNE and GSUSA branding and program guidelines and not share any Girl Scout materials with Boy Scouts or other groups.

GSSNE Dress Guidance

GSSNE values individuality and personal choice, fostering a diverse, welcoming community where attire is respected without discrimination.

Personal Choice & Respect:

Members may choose their clothing freely but should ensure it supports a respectful, inclusive environment by:

- Not compromising health or safety
- Avoiding hostile or intimidating attire
- Wearing solid, non-transparent fabric that covers genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples
- Following guidance that avoids reinforcing marginalization based on race, gender, orientation, culture, income, or body type

Safety & Activity Appropriateness:

Certain activities may require specific attire for safety. Members must:

- Respect local dress customs when traveling
- Wear official uniform items (e.g., sash, vest, tunic) during ceremonies or when representing Girl Scouts, as outlined by GSUSA policies

Prohibited Attire:

Clothing should not include:

- Violent or hateful language/images

- Depictions of drugs, alcohol, illegal activities
- Hate speech, profanity, pornography
- Hostile or intimidating content targeting protected or marginalized groups
- Revealing undergarments (except practical, non-provocative visible bra straps)
- Swimsuits unless activity-appropriate
- Dangerous accessories or face coverings (unless for religious reasons)

These guidelines promote safety, inclusivity, and respect while honoring personal expression.

Guidance & Support:

Members and their families are responsible for attire choices, but troop leaders and Service Unit Managers may guide members to ensure a respectful, inclusive environment.

Addressing Concerns:

Attire concerns should be managed respectfully. Members are encouraged to respectfully discuss any perceived unfair criticism with their leaders or SUM.

Review & Feedback:

This guidance is reviewed annually to stay relevant and supportive.

MEETING PLACE STANDARDS

Meeting Sites

Troop meetings and Girl Scout activities must be held at sites that are:

- Accessible to all members and caregivers
- Spacious for various activities
- Reachable by phone
- Safe, secure, clean, well-ventilated, heated, hazard-free, with at least two well-marked emergency exits
- Well-lit with first aid available
- Equipped with accessible restrooms, including for people with disabilities
- Free of pets near the meeting area (consider allergies)
- Compliant with state laws

Troops should avoid using funds to rent space and instead seek free public venues like schools, churches, or community centers. Service unit members may be able to assist in locating sites.

Meeting in Homes

Troop meetings should ideally be in safe, accessible community locations. In-home meetings may be allowed with GSSNE permission and criteria met (see MEETING IN HOMES request form on GSSNE.org).

Safety in the Meeting Place

Leaders must ensure Girl Scouts leave only with custodial caregivers or authorized adults, with written permission for others. A sign-in/sign-out system supervised by a leader is recommended to track drop-off and pick-up.

FISCAL STANDARDS

Financial Support – Overview

When a youth or adult registers, the \$30 registration fee and \$10 youth Council service fee fund GSUSA and GSSNE operations. Troops do not receive these fees and should build their treasury through Council-sponsored product program profits or troop dues.

Troop/Service Unit Banking (Preferred Banks, Account Registration)

All Girl Scout troops and service units must keep funds in a no-fee, nonprofit business checking account opened with GSSNE approval at a federally insured bank or credit union, under GSSNE's federal tax ID. Signatories must be currently registered volunteers, and **all** funds should flow through this account - never personal accounts or homes. Funds legally belong to GSSNE, not individuals or troops.

Opening or changing a checking account requires a GSSNE-issued authorization letter. Accounts must be in GSSNE's name, under GSSNE's Federal Tax ID and address, with the primary signatory's home mailing address for correspondence.

GSSNE issues bank letters only if:

- The troop meets leadership standards (at least two trained, registered leaders, or one leader plus a volunteer, and meets youth/adult ratios).
- Volunteers submit the Bank Letter Request form on GSSNE.org.
- Accounts have 2–3 signatories: one must be a troop co-leader or SUM; others may be active volunteers.
- If two signatories are related or share a household, a third unrelated, active volunteer must be added as signatory and receive mailed statements.

GSSNE Preferred Banking

GSSNE partners with select local banks and credit unions (Preferred Banks) to offer volunteers:

- Enhanced protection for Girl Scout funds
- Better support for banking questions
- Simplified annual finance reporting
- Direct GSSNE assistance with account issues on volunteers' behalf
- Improved fiscal practices and reporting

Current Preferred Banking Partners

Volunteers may choose one of the following Preferred Banks to open their Girl Scout account:

- Bank Newport
- Centreville Bank
- Navigant Credit Union
- Washington Trust Bank (offers online account opening)
- Wrentham Cooperative Bank

Bank Account Registration

When opening or updating a bank account, volunteers should use the ACH Registration form to promptly confirm the bank completed the request. This enables Council to:

- Send payments electronically (no paper checks); product program refunds under \$1.00 will be donated to Friends of Girl Scouting unless otherwise requested. If you prefer to receive your refund, please contact CustomerCare@gssne.org.
- Track accounts under GSSNE's tax ID
- Assist volunteers if the bank contacts Council
- Ensure signatory info is always current
- Speak to a bank on the troop's behalf when extra assistance is needed

Bank registration is required before troop / service unit special requests are approved. Bank letters include a banker-completed confirmation section, which volunteers should ask the banker to complete and email to GSSNE. This eliminates the need for volunteers to submit the ACH form themselves.

Troop Income

Troops can build their treasury by:

- Joining GSSNE's exciting Fall and Cookie Product Programs where troops earn a share of the profits! Leaders should share the fun with families and encourage everyone to participate—though it is always optional.
- Setting troop dues, decided by the troop and families, making sure every Girl Scout can join in the fun regardless of ability to pay. The ability to pay dues should NEVER exclude a youth from participating in the troop/troop's activities.
- Exploring other creative ways to raise funds (see below)!

Additional Sources of Income / Council Participation Standard

The two income sources above typically cover troop activities. For major trips or big expenses, additional funds can come from MONEY-EARNING ACTIVITIES, DONATIONS, and GRANTS. Brownie troops and older, plus service units, may apply for Council approval (Daisy troops are not eligible). Troops must meet the Council Product Program Participation Standard to apply, which will be considered in the review.

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 (2024's Council average sold was 270 packages)

Money-Earning Activities

A money-earning activity **involves Girl Scouts actively providing a service or doing the work to make the activity happen.** The project should suit their age, relate to skills they've developed in Girl Scouts, and must be pre-approved by GSSNE using the Additional Money-Earning Request form on GSSNE.org. Money-earning activities that do not receive prior written approval from GSSNE are considered unauthorized and may result in disciplinary action. This may include but is not limited to the forfeiture of funds to the council and/or suspension or removal from a volunteer role.

NOT ALLOWED:

- Games of chance where a fee or donation is required to participate (Bingo, raffles, etc.)
- Restaurant fundraisers where Girl Scouts promote a date and receive a portion of sales
- Selling or promoting another business's product

Troops/service units must apply to GSSNE for money-earning activity approval at least 10 business days in advance. To protect critical funding from Council product programs, additional money-earning projects cannot overlap product program seasons. *Exceptions to this policy are uncommon but will be considered when requested.*

Blackout dates for 2025-2026 are:

Fall Product Program: September 11, 2025 - October 26, 2025

Cookie Program: December 20, 2025 – March 29, 2026

GSSNE troops may apply for a money-earning activity if they:

- Meet Council product program participation standards
- Are in good standing with GSUSA and GSSNE policies (youth-adult ratio, memberships & background screenings, etc..)
- Meet GSUSA standards of having a minimum of 5 youth members
- Have a dedicated checking account in good standing that complies with fiscal standards, an updated troop ACH registration, and prior year finance report on file
- Ensure members participate voluntarily with signed guardian permission forms kept on file
- Ensure members understand the purpose and goals of the fundraising
- Conduct age-appropriate, safe activities
- Submit a Money-Earning Report to the council within 14 days after the activity (form on GSSNE.org)

Donations Received by Troops & Service Units

Although Girl Scout troops and service units are not independent nonprofits – they are “sponsored” by the legally recognized non-profit, GSSNE - they may still benefit from donations to support Girl Scout activities. All donations must be processed through GSSNE to ensure compliance with IRS regulations and Girl Scout policies. Whether it is a local business, community organization, or family member offering support, donations can be a meaningful way to enhance the Girl Scout experience—as long as they follow the proper guidelines and go through the council.

Pass-Through Funds: Donations & Transfers

GSSNE troops and service units may sometimes receive donations or choose to transfer funds to another GSSNE Girl Scout group - for example, to support events, share costs, or offer financial assistance. Since GSSNE is the official nonprofit entity, all such funds must be processed through the Pass-Through Funds Submission Form to ensure proper handling and IRS compliance.

Use this form whenever:

- An external donation (cash or in-kind) of \$250 or more is received by a troop or service unit
- A donor of any amount requests an official tax acknowledgment letter
- A troop or service unit sends \$250 or more to another GSSNE troop/SU

Note: During the Cookie Program, all donations received by the troop must be used for Cookie Share only.

How to Handle a Donation or Transfer

Step 1: Confirm It's Allowed

Funds must:

- Support Girl Scout programming (e.g., events, projects, supplies)
- Not benefit a single individual
- Be made **payable to GSSNE** if from an outside donor
- Be shared **only between official GSSNE troops or service units** (for internal transfers)

Step 2: Submit the Pass-Through Funds Form

Be prepared to include:

- Donor or sender name
- Amount and purpose of the funds
- Troop/SU numbers involved
- Supporting documentation (e.g., donor letter, event cost breakdown, written agreement, invoice for in-kind donation)

Step 3: What GSSNE Will Do

- Acknowledge eligible donations with an official tax letter
- Record the funds and ensure proper allocation
- Transfer the funds to the designated troop/SU account (ACH or check, typically within 2 weeks)

Troop or Service Unit Responsibilities

- Record funds in the **Annual Finance Report**
- Use funds according to **Girl Scout guidelines**
- Keep documentation for all related expenses or agreements

What's Not Allowed

- Donations made directly to a personal account
- Donations intended for one person (e.g., "for Ava to go on her troop trip")
- Donations made directly to a troop leader or troop account outside of council channels
- Anonymous cash donations over \$250 without sufficient documentation.
- Donations with conditions that violate GSSNE or GSUSA policies

Donations from Friends & Family

Troops/service units may receive occasional donations from friends and family members. All donations received must follow the guidelines outlined above.

From Cookie Booths

Donations at cookie booths go solely to the COOKIE SHARE program and must be clearly labeled. Funds may not be used for other purposes.

From Volunteer-Organized Events

For adult-only fundraising events without Girl Scout participation:

- Funds go into the troop/service unit bank account as donations (following donation rules)
- No council approval required
- Girl Scout name, logo, branding, or sponsorship cannot be used in promotion or on official troop/service unit channels; personal social media or flyers may be used without GS branding.

From Corporate Volunteer Programs

Corporate volunteer donations over the IRS de minimis threshold (\$250) face strict IRS scrutiny, especially if funds benefit volunteers' families, which may cause tax issues or threaten the council's tax-exempt status.

To address this, effective January 1, 2017, GSSNE requires:

- All corporate volunteer donations are processed through GSSNE's finance department. If sent to a volunteer, they must forward it to GSSNE.
- Funds are allocated to general operations unless the donating volunteer requests involvement in allocation. Allocations include:
 - General Operating Fund
 - Camp Operations
 - Camperships
 - Capital Projects
 - Membership Assistance
 - Troop Program Assistance
 - Camp Hoffman Endowment
- If a volunteer wishes to allocate funds to a specific troop or service unit, they must submit the donor corporation's volunteerism program. If unrestricted, Council will honor the volunteer's designation within IRS rules. If restricted, Council follows the corporation's guidelines exactly.

Designation Parameters

If allowed by the corporation, volunteers may designate funds with these rules:

- Funds can go to Council-administered accounts.
- Funds may be assigned to a specific troop or service unit if:
 - The troop meets Product Program standards, owes no Council debt, and has filed the latest Annual Troop Finance Report.
 - The first \$250 can go directly to the troop/service unit
 - The rest is split between troop/service unit and Council, up to \$250 per registered Girl Scout member annually (max \$5,000 total, including the first \$250)
 - Excess donations remain with Council
 - Limits reset annually (Oct 1–Sept 30)
- If no designation is made, funds go to GSSNE general operating funds.

Grants

Troops/service units may apply for grants only with GSSNE pre-approval. To start, send your grant proposal to GSSNE's Customer Care before submitting it to the funder. To qualify for approval, troops must:

- Meet Council product program "full participation" standards
- Follow GSUSA/GSSNE policies and have last year's Annual Finance Report on file
- Deposit grants under \$250 directly into the troop account and report them; grants \$250+ must go through GSSNE accounting and also be reported (see "Pass-Through Donations" on page 20).

Financial Accountability Overview

Any volunteer who helps manage Girl Scout money, assets, or bank accounts (troop leaders, treasurers, account signers, service unit team members) must complete GSSNE's Finance Training. To handle money, adults must be registered Girl Scout members with up-to-date background checks (including CORI for Massachusetts volunteers). These volunteers are trusted with important responsibilities and are expected to follow all policies related to finances, fundraising, grants, and money-earning activities.

Financial Records and Reporting for Troop & Service Unit Accounts

Troop leaders, SUMs, and treasurers must keep accurate, up-to-date financial records with receipts. GSSNE recommends using a spreadsheet aligned with Annual Finance Report categories (template available in gsLearn). Records and receipts should be kept for 3 years.

Because troop accounts belong to GSSNE, not individual volunteers, transparency must be ensured by sharing regular financial updates with the Girl Scouts and their caregivers (or volunteers if it's a service unit account).

All troops and service units must submit an Annual Finance Report by **the advertised deadline** each year via the FORMS page on GSSNE.org, whether the group had income or expenses that year. Missing the deadline may affect eligibility for product program rewards/refunds, money-earning, travel, and special permissions, and may lead to temporary deactivation, or other restrictions.

GSSNE staff may conduct mid-year financial reviews to ensure fiscal health. GSSNE may request additional paperwork and records as needed. Volunteers should keep receipts and accurate and complete financial ledgers at all times.

Delinquent Bank Accounts

GSSNE may freeze or assume control of accounts suspected of fraud, at risk of closure/defaulting, in a negative balance, or if the volunteers have ceased communication with GSSNE. GSSNE will attempt to contact signatories and/or troop leaders of any account being paused or closed.

Debt Policy

A **debt** includes insufficient funds, unpaid product program balances, unfulfilled payment commitments, or any amount owed to GSSNE, its service units, troops, or vendors. Unpaid troop or service unit funds are considered mishandled.

If a debt is incurred:

- The individual may be removed from volunteer roles and subject to legal action.
- Repaid debts may allow reappointment, but not to money-handling or leadership roles.

GSSNE will attempt to contact the person or troop to arrange repayment. Payment plans must be approved by the CFO. If unresolved after 3 months:

- The individual may no longer handle Girl Scout funds or assets
- Restrictions are applied in Salesforce (the membership database) for all affected individuals/troops
- No scholarships, cookie credits, program or camp registration, travel, money-earning, volunteer positions, or training approvals will be granted until the debt is paid in full
- Outstanding debt will be referred to GSSNE's attorneys and may result in legal action

- Any volunteer who incurs or oversees troop or SU debt more than once is ineligible for future service
- Any caregiver who incurs debt is also ineligible to volunteer; once debt is paid in full, GSSNE may re-evaluate the caregiver's status
- Cookie credits will not be applied; as long as the debtor is working with GSSNE to repay the debt, cookie credits may be reinstated once debt has been paid in full. If there is no cooperation, GSSNE the debtor may forfeit the cookie credits.

Once resolved, GSSNE notifies relevant teams.

Managing Girl Scout Funds: Donations, Transfers & Disbanding

Pass Through Funds

Troops and service units sometimes receive donations or choose to transfer funds to one another for events, shared expenses, or financial support. To keep everything clear and in line with nonprofit rules, please use this form anytime:

- A donation is given to support a specific troop or service unit, or
- One troop or service unit wants to send money to another (for example, to split event costs or offer help).

For Donations:

Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England (GSSNE) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so donations may be tax-deductible if:

- The donation is made out to GSSNE, not to an individual or troop;
- The donor did not receive anything in return (like cookies, goods, or services); and
- The funds are used to support Girl Scout programs and activities.

For donations of \$250 or more, GSSNE can provide a letter for tax purposes. Just be sure to upload a copy of the donor's letter, the check, and any notes about what the donation is for when you complete this form. Once submitted, GSSNE will make sure the funds go to the right place and are used as intended. If you have questions, contact customer care@gssne.org — we are always happy to help!

Transferring Funds Between Troops or Service Units

- No direct transfers: Troops and service units may not give cash, gift cards, or direct payments to individuals, or outside nonprofits.
- All internal transfers (between GSSNE troops or service units) must go through GSSNE for financial reporting and proper allocation.
- GSSNE funds must stay within GSSNE - no transfers to Girl Scout groups in other councils.

When a Troop Splits

- Funds **do not automatically follow** a Girl Scout who changes troops or starts a new one.
- Transfers of funds is **optional and decided by the original troop**, based on fairness.
- Disputes should be brought to your **Service Unit Manager or GSSNE Customer Care**.
- **All transfers must be submitted to GSSNE** and recorded on the **Troop Status Update form**.

Disbanding a Troop

Troops must follow these steps within **14 days** of submitting the **Intent to Disband** form (available on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org) and **before September 30** of that year:

Required Steps:

1. **Submit Intent to Disband form**
2. **Close troop bank account:**
 - If at a Preferred Bank, GSSNE will perform the closure.
 - For other banks, request a Bank Letter from GSSNE, then a signatory closes the account.
 - Withdraw funds via check or money order.
 - Collect a final statement and proof of closure.
3. **Send to GSSNE within 5 days** of account closure:
 - Withdrawn funds (check or money order)
 - Final bank statement
 - Proof of account closure
 - Final finance report

Fund Handling & Redistribution

- Funds should always come to GSSNE when a troop is disbanding. Donations voted on by the youth members will be reviewed and if approved, made by GSSNE on behalf of the troop.

- If every youth member of a disbanding troop is graduating to adult, remaining troop funds may be donated to GSSNE Council, or a GSSNE service unit or troop. Every youth member of the graduating troop must be given the opportunity to vote on the donation.
- If a troop is disbanding, but not all youth members are graduating to adult, the troop may divide the remaining balance in the troop account by the number of youth registered. The amount for each graduating youth member may be designated as a donation to GSSNE, or a GSSNE troop or service unit. The portion of the funds for the non-graduating youth will be held by GSSNE for up to 1 year during which time any of the youths who decide to continue their Girl Scout experience can request a portion of those funds for her new troop.
- GSSNE holds disbanded troop funds for 1 year. After that, funds are used to support other Girl Scout activities through financial assistance.
- If a Girl Scout becomes a “Juliette” (an independently registered Girl Scout), her share may be applied to program fees or travel and must be requested in writing through CustomerCare@gssne.org.
- No funds are transferred to troops, service units, or councils outside of GSSNE.

Spending Down Funds (Optional)

Before closing the account, troops may vote to spend funds by 9/30 on Girl Scout-related activities (e.g., camp, trips, regalia, lifetime memberships). These expenses must be troop-decided and listed on the final finance report.

Important: If GSSNE must disband a troop or close the account due to inaction or lack of communication with troop leadership, it may be treated as “abandonment,” and remaining funds will stay with GSSNE.

Tax-Exempt Status for Troops / Service Units

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)

The *Safety Activity Checkpoints* (updated annually at GSSNE.org/FORMS) outline required safety standards for Girl Scout activities. Leaders must review the SAC during activity planning to ensure compliance.

If an activity requires Council approval or is outside the troop’s grade level, submit a *Special Permissions* form (also on the FORMS page). Some activities have age restrictions or are discouraged. For unlisted activities, contact Customer Care.

EXPOSURE TO WILD ANIMALS

Girl Scouts are encouraged to follow the *Outdoor Progression* to build confidence and environmental stewardship. Whether planned (e.g., petting zoos, therapy animals) or unplanned (e.g., wildlife during hikes), proper preparation ensures safe, memorable experiences.

Wildlife Safety Tips (*refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints before any activity*):

- Learn what animals are in the area and how to respond if encountered
- Never approach, touch, or feed wild animals (even babies)
- Store food securely; follow local guidelines in bear country
- Report sick or strangely behaving animals
- In snake areas: wear closed-toed shoes, avoid unseen spaces, use flashlights, never touch snakes, and back away slowly

Animal Bites or Scratches

- Wash the wound for 10–15 minutes with soap and water
- Seek medical care immediately
- If possible, bring the animal (or its owner’s info) to the ER or Health Dept

Report all bites to the state’s Department of Health:

- RI: 401-222-2577
- MA: 617-624-6000
- CT: 860-509-8000

Rabies Risk Levels

<i>High Risk (Vectors):</i>	bats, raccoons, skunks, groundhogs, foxes, coyotes
<i>Moderate Risk (monitor if bitten):</i>	dogs, cats, ferrets, farm animals, rabbits, possums
<i>Low Risk:</i>	rodents (squirrels, mice, rats, chipmunks)
<i>No Risk:</i>	birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish

Rabies Notes

- Transmitted through saliva; virus dies ~30 min outside the host
- Small animals die quickly if infected (less transmission risk)

- *Bats are unique:* unseen bites are common. If someone wakes with a bat overhead, seek care immediately unless the bat can be tested.

As of this manual's date, Rhode Island has had no human rabies cases since 1940.

PERMISSION SLIPS

There are many occasions where permission slips are REQUIRED:

- Any meeting held at a different time or location than usual
- Travel (see Travel section for details)
- Participation in Council product programs (slips provided)
- Photo/video use in any media
- Troop money-earning activities (slip included with approval)
- "Sensitive" topic discussions (e.g., bullying, drugs, puberty—created/kept by troop leaders)
- Dispensing medication (must be locked up, except emergency meds like EpiPens, inhalers, etc.)

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE (Communications, Permissions, Social Pages, Cookie Program, Social Media)

To ensure a safe online environment, all youths and adults (18+) using email or social media for Girl Scouts must read and accept the Girl Scouts Internet Safety Pledge. One-on-one electronic communication between adults and youth is not allowed, another adult or caregiver must always be included.

Permission to Post

Girl Scout volunteers must model respectful, responsible social media behavior, guided by the Girl Scout Law.

- Caregivers may grant GSSNE permission to use their child's photo during registration; if not granted, it is respected.
- A separate guardian permission slip is required for posting youth photos/info on troop or service unit social media.
- Even without an official page, any photo shared on social media (e.g., from a trip) requires specific guardian permission, either on the trip form or a separate release.
- A sample Social Media Release form is on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.

Creating a Troop or Service Unit Facebook Group

Troop or service unit Facebook groups must:

- Be private
- Have a leader, SUM, or adult volunteer as the administrator responsible for content and member management
- Avoid sharing personal information
- Follow GSUSA's "Computer/Online Use" Safety Activity Checkpoints

GSSNE Product Program

Special protections are in place for activities associated with the Fall & Cookie Product Programs. Please use the guiding standards in the Cookie/Fall product program training materials.

INSURANCE

Overview

For full details, visit the *Insurance* section on the FORMS page at [GSSNE.org](https://gssne.org). For claim questions, contact **Mutual of Omaha** at 1-800-524-2324 (8:00 AM–4:30 PM CT).

Basic Coverage (Plan 1)

All registered youth and adult Girl Scouts, and non-members who were invited to attend a Girl Scout-sanctioned event, are automatically covered for accidents during approved and supervised activities, including travel to/from the event and domestic trips of any duration.

Coverage Enhancement as of 10/1/2025:

Beginning 10/1/2025, the Basic Coverage (Plan 1) will also automatically include sickness coverage for all overnight stays (including camp) and international travel. This change, effective for trips occurring on and after October 1, 2025, eliminates the need for the purchase of additional insurance entirely.

Note: Adults who regularly engage with youth, oversee Girl Scouts funds or assets, or travel/stay overnight with the troop must be registered and background screened Girl Scout volunteers.

Tagalongs (Siblings/Friends)

"Tagalongs" (siblings) may attend Girl Scout events as and are covered under Basic Plan 1 **only if:**

- A designated adult supervises them (adult is not involved in the meeting)

- They remain at the event site (not elsewhere)
- The event is open to families (for participation in activities)

Member Claims

- Report accidents requiring medical treatment during supervised Girl Scout activities using the Confidential Crisis Report (on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org).
- The *GSUSA Claim Form* (English/Spanish) is also on the FORMS page under “Insurance.” Claimants complete their section and send it to GSSNE for signature; GSSNE will return it for submission to Mutual of Omaha.
- Once the \$140 deductible is met, benefits are paid only for costs not covered by other insurance up to the limits outlined in the insurance brochure.
- Refer to the Activity Accident Insurance brochure ([English brochure](#) / [Spanish brochure](#)) in the insurance section of GSSNE.org for full details.

Other Types of Insurance (renter’s / homeowner’s, personal vehicles, vehicle rentals, certificates of insurance)

Renter’s / Homeowner’s Insurance

This is required for any volunteer who wishes to host a Girl Scout meeting in their private residence/on their property. Volunteers are expected to ensure their insurance is current. Volunteers should NOT host Girl Scout meetings in their home if they do not have homeowner’s/renter’s insurance. Permission from GSSNE must be granted prior to meetings being hosted in a private residence. Use the Meeting in Home request found on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.

Additionally, volunteers are responsible for the safekeeping of Girl Scout assets under their care (such as cookie inventory, program supplies, or equipment). If items are lost or damaged while in a volunteer’s possession, the volunteer may be held financially responsible to GSSNE or the troop/service unit for the replacement cost. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that volunteers who store Girl Scout property or assets at their residence or on their property maintain homeowner’s or renter’s insurance that will cover the value of those items in case of theft, damage, or loss.

Personal Vehicles

Only vehicles with active owner insurance may be used for Girl Scout activities. Troop leaders should confirm whether drivers’ auto insurance policies meet GSUSA’s minimum liability coverage (GSSNE recommends higher coverage than these minimums):

RI: \$25K/person, \$50K/accident

MA: \$20K/person, \$40K/accident

CT: \$25K/person, \$50K/accident; \$25K property damage; UM/UIM \$25K/\$50K

If an accident occurs during official Girl Scout business, GSSNE’s umbrella policy may provide excess liability coverage after the driver’s insurance is exhausted.

NOTE: Girl Scout Youth Transporting Girl Scout Youth

Senior/Ambassador Girl Scouts with a valid license may use a personally owned vehicle to drive themselves and siblings to meetings or activities but may not transport other Girl Scouts.

Vehicle Rentals & Liability Certificates

Troops may rent cars or minivans for Girl Scout activities without Council pre-approval. Follow GSUSA’s Safety Activity Checkpoints, especially when transporting more than 11 passengers.

Bus Rentals

Bus companies should have a certificate of insurance on file with GSSNE. Contact Customer Care to confirm.

Certificates of Liability (COL)

If an activity is held at a non-GSSNE facility, a certificate of liability may be required. Certificates for the most common sites are listed on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org (“Insurance” section at the bottom of the page). If the certificate you are looking for is not listed, please request one using the Certificate of Liability Request form (also in that section) at least 10 business days in advance. This includes campsites, hotels, and event venues.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Creating a safe, supportive environment for all Girl Scouts is our top priority. This section outlines the policies and expectations for adults working with youth, including supervision, conduct, and safety protocols.

Child Abuse and Neglect

The most important responsibility of any Girl Scout adult is protecting children from harm. GSSNE has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse or neglect. All volunteers and staff must know the signs, follow reporting laws, and take immediate action when concerns arise.

National Child Abuse Training (Free Online)

A free, state-approved online training on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect is available and strongly encouraged for all volunteers. “**Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**” is offered by the Child Welfare Information Gateway and can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#), through gsLearn, or on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org.

This is self-paced and provides a solid foundation in:

- Recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect
- Understanding your role as a mandated reporter
- Knowing how and when to report concerns

Definition and Types of Child Abuse

Recognize these abuse types:

- **Physical:** Non-accidental injuries like bruises, burns, fractures, or strangulation.
- **Neglect:** Failing to provide food, shelter, supervision, cleanliness, or medical care.
- **Emotional:** Persistent acts harming a child’s mental health, such as rejection, insults, or lack of support.
- **Sexual:** Any sexual act or exploitation from single incidents to repeated abuse, often involving intimidation or threats to silence the child.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedures

Sadly, child abuse affects all communities. Girl Scout volunteers & staff are mandated reporters like teachers/coaches, and must follow state laws and Council procedures. Reporting rules vary slightly in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Legal Reporting Requirements:

- **Rhode Island:** Everyone must report suspected child abuse/neglect to the Dept. of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF) within 24 hours: 1-800-RI-CHILD (1-800-742-4453) or www.dcyf.ri.gov.
- **Massachusetts:** Report suspected abuse immediately to the local DCF Area Office (9 am–5 pm) or the Child-At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200 after hours and on weekends.
- **Connecticut:** Mandated reporters must call the DCYF Careline or law enforcement within 12 hours and submit a written report within 48 hours. Facility staff must also notify their institution’s head. The 24/7 Careline number is 1-800-842-2288.

GSSNE Procedures

- Volunteers must report suspected abuse per state guidelines **and** immediately notify GSSNE’s crisis line (800-476-0293). The CEO or COO will follow up.
- Senior Management reviews reports; any involved volunteer or staff is suspended immediately pending investigation.
- Caregivers are notified per agency instructions. GSSNE keeps all involved parties’ identities confidential and does not share them.
- GSSNE files required reports and cooperates with legal authorities.
- Reinstatement occurs only after all allegations are fully cleared by the CEO or designate.
- Staff and volunteers must maintain confidentiality and discuss the incident only with the CEO or designate.

General Guidelines for Showing Affection to Children

Always have at least two adults or two children present; never be alone one-on-one with a child.

- **Child-Initiated:** Affection is acceptable only if the child initiates it (e.g., holding hands, sitting on a lap). Avoid encouraging or forcing affection. Brief, warm responses to hugs are fine; discourage inappropriate gestures like kissing.
- **Age-Appropriate:** Consider if behavior fits the child’s age and development. Overly affectionate or inappropriate touching may signal abuse.
- **Gentle Limits:** Set firm but kind boundaries by redirecting or distracting the child after brief contact, without causing rejection.
- **Have Witnesses:** For necessary physical contact (e.g., helping with clothing or certain activities), ensure witnesses are present to maintain transparency and protect the child’s dignity.

Touching Policy:

- Respond only to the child’s needs, never the adult’s
- Always seek the child’s permission and respect any resistance
- Avoid touching breasts, buttocks, and groin
- Keep contact open and non-secretive
- Ensure physical contact is appropriate for the child’s age and developmental level

GSSNE TOUCHING POLICY	
APPROPRIATE	
Pat on the shoulder	Definitely—a terrific way to show affection
Hugging	Use a sideways hug if you initiate
High fives	A wonderful way to be affectionate at work
Secret handshake	Effective 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	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

GIRL SCOUT TRAVEL – WHERE ADVENTURE MEETS PURPOSE

Travel is an exciting way to bring the Girl Scout experience to life! Whether a day trip or faraway journey, trips build confidence, create memories, and expand learning beyond troop meetings. Trip planning is a team effort - girls, leaders, caregivers, and GSSNE collaborate from choosing the destination to budgeting and finalizing details, helping girls grow in leadership, independence, and teamwork. There are higher safety risks associated with Girl Scout travel so it's critical leaders follow guidance.

Notification

If a troop meets outside its regular time or place, a leader must notify their local Service Unit Manager in advance. Caregiver-signed permission slips are required, and additional paperwork or Council approval may be needed depending upon the activity.

Permission / Unauthorized Travel

To ensure compliance with policy and safety standards, and to allow GSSNE to provide necessary support, all troop and service unit overnights and travel beyond the age-level recommended distance must receive prior written approval from GSSNE before plans are finalized or funds are spent. Use the Intent to Travel form to request permission. Failure to secure council approval prior to traveling may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from volunteer role(s) and possible reimbursement of Girl Scout funds used for the unapproved travel.

Travel Guidelines

- **Day Trips:** No approval needed if following Safety Activity Checkpoints; inform your SUM if meeting outside your regular time or location.
- **Museum Overnights:** Reserve directly with the venue (e.g., Mystic Aquarium); notify your SUM.
- **Non-Camping Overnights (e.g., NYC trips, YMCA lock-ins):** Submit an Intent to Travel form; SUM is copied on approval—no extra notice needed.
- **Camping at GSSNE Sites:** Reserve via the Property Rentals page; notify your SUM.
- **Camping at Non-GSSNE Sites:** Submit an Intent to Travel form; SUM is copied on approval.

To avoid this:

- Follow Girl Scout Travel Guidelines
- Submit your travel request early and wait for approval before spending
- Reach out to Council with questions

Readiness and Travel Distance (Day Trips, Daisy Camping, Overnights, Travel)

Trips, from local day outings to extended international travel, build Girl Scouts' planning skills and engagement. GSSNE follows national travel standards and offers a Troop Travel Guide on the VTK Resource tab to help assess readiness and age-appropriate options.

Day Trips

- **Daisies and older:** Short local outings (e.g., walk to a garden or a quick car/public transit ride) are encouraged. Max travel time for Daisies is one hour from the meeting site.
- **Brownies and older:** Full-day visits to nearby historical or natural sites (bring lunch) or city trips with meal stops. Distance limit for Brownies is 100 miles from the meeting site.

Daisy Troop Overnights: Allowed with Daisy Buddy Camper badge and Safety Activity Checkpoints. GSSNE recommends:

- Prior success with shorter trips
- Troop leaders deem Daisies ready
- Required adult-youth ratios are followed
- Separate sleeping/restroom spaces for adults and youth; male volunteers must sleep separately
- Daisies help plan and pack (per Buddy Camper badge)
- Site must be within a one-hour drive from the meeting location

Overnight Trips (Brownies and Older): One or two nights at a state/national park, historic site, or nearby city (hotel, motel, or campground). These trips offer adventure without triggering homesickness. GSSNE's distance limit is 100 miles from the meeting site. Troops traveling this far must have prior successful overnights.

Extended Overnight Trips (Juniors and Older): Multi-night stays at camps, hotels, motels, or hostels within the home region (e.g., New England). Some museums offer exciting overnight experiences. GSSNE's standard is within 150 miles of the community; most New England and nearby NY locations are approved.

National Trips (Cadettes and Older): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to avoid ordinary recreational trips Girl Scouts might take with their families and consider those that offer educational components 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 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.

Troop Travel Training	
Type of Trip	Training Required
Day trip (not at a campsite)	Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors
Day trip to a camp site	Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors, Outdoor Day Training/Troop Camp Training, First Aid, CPR recommended
Overnight (not camping) 1-2 nights within New England	Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors, Troop Trips Training, First Aid/CPR
Overnight – camping at GSSNE sites	Getting Girl Scouts Outdoors, 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

Travel Permission Slips

A permission slip signed and dated by the caregiver is required for every trip. You may use the sample form on the FORMS page at GSSNE.org or create your own. Slips must include:

- Troop number and level (e.g., Junior Troop 123)
- Date, time, and location of the activity

- Transportation details and who is responsible (family or troop)
- Overview of the activity
- Leader's contact number during the trip
- Caregiver and alternate emergency contact info
- Medication permission (locked unless emergency/lifesaving)
- Suggested spending money (for older girls)
- Photo/video permission for troop social media

Leader Travel Binder

As covered in Troop Trips Training (required to take Girl Scout youth on an overnight or domestic trip), leaders must bring a Travel Binder on all Girl Scout trips. A backup copy should be given to another adult chaperone, and a third copy should be left with a designated contact person at home.

If traveling in multiple vehicles, each driver must carry the health forms, emergency contact information, and directions for all passengers in their car. Being specific and organized helps ensure a safe, smooth, and well-prepared trip for everyone.

Your travel binder should contain the following essential documents:

- **Troop Roster** with emergency contact info for all attendees
- **Health History Form** for anyone with medical needs (found on GSSNE.org FORMS page)
- **Medications:** Must be in original containers, stored securely, and dispensed by a designated adult with caregiver-signed **Permission to Dispense Medication** form. *Exceptions:* Self-carried emergency meds (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers)
- **Signed Permission Slips** for each girl
- **Crisis Sheet** (GSSNE Confidential version—download on GSSNE.org FORMS page)
- **Mutual of Omaha Claim Form** (also on FORMS page)
- **Passport Copies** (for international travel)
- **Trip Itinerary** with transportation, lodging, activity details, room and car assignments. Submit draft with Intent to Travel; final version due before departure
- **Driving Directions** in case GPS fails

Transportation (Automobile Travel Only)

These guidelines apply to troop transportation to and from Girl Scout events, activities, or trips, regardless of distance. The mode of transportation must be clearly stated on the permission slip.

- **Girl Scout Youth Transporting Girl Scout Youth:** Senior/Ambassador Girl Scouts with a valid license may use a personally owned vehicle to drive themselves and siblings to meetings or activities but may not transport other Girl Scouts.
- **Family Transportation:** Families provide transportation for their Girl Scout. Families may carpool independently, but troop leaders do **not** arrange carpools. Once girls arrive at the activity site, troop leaders assume responsibility. *Note:* Senior/Ambassador Girl Scouts may drive themselves and siblings but **not** other Girl Scouts.
- **Troop-Arranged Carpools:** Troop leadership arranges carpool transportation. Permission slips must state that transportation is arranged by the troop. Drivers must:
 - Be at least 21 years old
 - Hold a valid driver's license
 - Be currently registered volunteers with valid background screening(s) on file with GSSNE
 - Provide a current MVR (Motor Vehicle Record) report from their insurance company
 - Have insurance meeting state minimums (confirmed by troop leadership):
 - RI:** \$25K/person, \$50K/accident
 - MA:** \$20K/person, \$40K/accident
 - CT:** \$25K/person, \$50K/accident; \$25K property damage; UM/UIM \$25K/\$50K

Youth-Adult Ratios for Events, Travel, and Camping

The number of adults required for these activities is governed by the chart below (see page 13 for youth-adult ratios for meetings).

Girl Scout Program Grade Level	OUTINGS & OVERNIGHTS	OUTINGS & OVERNIGHTS
	Two unrelated volunteers * 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

**Not related by blood or marriage, do not live in the same household/residence and at least one who is female*

Adults / Chaperones During Girl Scout Travel

Additional adults may be needed as chaperones (chaperones are defined as registered Girl Scout volunteers who actively supervise, guide, and ensure safety). Troop leaders must ensure chaperones understand their role, Girl Scout safety rules, and that they are there for the girls, not for a “vacation.” The number of adults should never exceed the number of Girl Scouts unless it is a family trip, where Girl Scout funds cover only the Girl Scout’s expenses.

To ensure a safe and positive travel experience, **any adult interacting with Girl Scout youth during a trip or overnight, other than their own child, must be a registered currently member with a current, cleared background screening.**

Trip Types:

- **Troop Trips:** Girl Scouts travel and stay with the troop. Attending adults are considered **chaperones** responsible for the safety and well-being of youth and must have current **membership and background screening(s)**.
- **Family Trips:** Youth stay with their families. Attending adult family members must have **membership and background screening(s)** (troop funds should be spent on Girl Scouts only).
- **Parallel Family Travel (Not a Family Trip):** Although discouraged, if a youth stays with their family during a troop trip, **all adults in the family group** must have **membership and background screening(s)**.

Girl Scout Identification

Each Girl Scout must carry an ID card when traveling domestically and an ID card and passport for international trips. IDs should be laminated, in a plastic holder or on a wristband, preferably worn inside clothing to protect privacy. IDs must include:

- Full legal name
- Girl Scout Council and troop #
- Emergency contacts
- Leader’s cell phone(s)
- GSSNE crisis line
- Relevant medical info (e.g., 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 / intrn'l	LEADERS - GSUSA Girl Scouts in the Outdoors (gsLearn video) - First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, and insurance minimums	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	194 - Guide To Outdoor Day Adventures: Day Camping Experiences (gsLearn video) - First Aid/CPR - Current GS membership & background check	- Reservation through Property Rentals tab at GSSNE.org - SUM notified in advance	Sign-off forms at Property Rentals tab at GSSNE.org Special Permission form as determined by the SAC Site Use form at the end of stay (at GSSNE sites)	At least two weeks in advance	Same as above plus: - Trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes these requirements - 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 overnights NON-CAMPSITE OVERNIGHTS (3 or more) (NOT AT A CAMPSITE)	LEADERS - GSUSA Girl Scouts in the Outdoors (gsLearn video) 194 - Troop Trips Training: Domestic & International (gsLearn video) - First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) leaders check age, license, insurance LEADERS 194 - Troop Trips Training: Domestic & International (gsLearn video) OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) leaders check age, license, insurance	Intent-to-Travel form - SUM notified in advance INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL or CRUISE: US Passport for each traveler	Intent-to-Travel form Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC	At least two months in advance NOTE: Troop camp training is only offered in the fall and spring	- Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratio guidelines - Trips trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes 194 - Troop Trips Training: Domestic & International (gsLearn video) - 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 - GSUSA Girl Scouts in the Outdoors (gsLearn video) 194 - Troop Trips Training: Domestic & International (gsLearn video) - Ready, Set, Camp! Troop Camp Training (in person) - First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) leaders check 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 NOTE: Troop camp training is only offered in the fall and spring	- Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratios - Trips trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes 194 - Troop Trips Training: Domestic & International (gsLearn video) - Camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes required troop camp training - FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop 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 - GSUSA Girl Scouts in the Outdoors (gsLearn video) - Ready, Set, Camp! Troop Camp Training (in person) - First Aid/CPR OTHER ADULTS - Current GS membership & background check - Drivers (troop-arranged carpools) checked for age, license, insurance	- Reservation through Property Rentals tab at GSSNE.org - SUM notified in advance	Sign-off forms at Property Rentals tab at GSSNE.org Special Permission form as determined by the SAC Site Use form at the end of stay (at GSSNE sites)	At least one month in advance NOTE: Troop camp training is only offered in the fall and spring	- Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratios - Camp trained adult can be any support volunteer who successfully completes Troop Camp Training - FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop volunteer nationally certified; certification must be on file with GSSNE
Junior Cadette Senior Ambassador	OVERNIGHTS: Off-Trail Camping or Backpacking	Same as above plus: GSSNE Hiking/Backpacking course or equivalent	Intent-to-Travel form	Intent-to-Travel form Special Permissions form as determined by the SAC	At least one month in advance NOTE: Troop camp training is only offered in the fall and spring	- Number of adults must conform to youth/adult ratios - Camp trained or hiking/backpacking certified adult can be any Girl Scout volunteer who successfully completed GSSNE training - FA/CPR trained adult can be any troop volunteer nationally certified; certification must be on file with GSSNE