



Policies and Standards

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Girl Scout Promise

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

{*Girl Scouts does not attempt to define the word “God”. Individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs}

Girl Scout Law

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

Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts of Orange County Vision

Girl Scouts of Orange County creates the best leadership development experiences for ALL girls in Orange County.

Introduction

The Girl Scout Promise and Law express the basic beliefs of Girl Scouts and provides the foundation for individuals and groups. Girl Scouts is open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. A volunteer’s acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law is the primary qualification for membership in the Girl Scouts, as it has been since 1912. It is imperative that each volunteer believe in Girl Scout principles, maintain the highest standards of conduct, and demonstrate their ability to perform the requirements of their volunteer position.

The Board of Directors for the Girl Scouts of Orange County sets policies for all volunteers. Only the Board of Directors can change, add, or delete Policies. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has the authority to set and amend Standards. This Document does not contain day-to-day operational procedures. Operational procedures are found in other manuals and documents.

Girl Scout Policies in the Girl Scouts of the USA publication, [Blue Book](#) shall be adhered to by all volunteers.

Girl Scout Program Standards in the Girl Scouts of the USA publication [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) shall be adhered to by all volunteers.

Failure to adhere to the policies of Girl Scouts of the USA and the Girl Scout Program Standards (as modified herein) and/or the Girl Scouts of Orange County Policies and Standards may result in disciplinary action, up to and including revocation of volunteer status.

Throughout this document, “Council” and “GSOC” are used interchangeably.

The History of Girl Scouts

Juliette Gordon Low, founder of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), was born October 31, 1860, in Savannah, Georgia. A sensitive and talented youngster, Daisy, as family and friends knew her, developed what was to become a lifetime interest in the arts. She wrote poems and plays, sketched, acted, and later became a skilled painter and sculptor. Full of inspiration herself, it was her destiny to inspire others. On March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Juliette Low gathered 18 girls together to organize the first two American Girl Guide troops. Daisy Gordon, her niece, was the first registered member. The name of the rapidly growing organization was changed to Girl Scouts the following year.

At the organization’s founding in 1912, Juliette Gordon Low originated the practice of defying stereotypes. She was a visionary who blazed the way for girls and women to embrace everything life offers. She not only offered girls the opportunities that until then only boys were granted, she opened up those same possibilities to girls of all ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, ability, and geographic groups. Just as it was for Juliette over 100 years ago, so it is with us today: ensuring all girls in America have access to Girl Scouting is vital. We are the place where over 3 million girls go to explore and discover their world, connect with others, and become leaders who take action to make their world a better place.

Now headquartered in New York City, Girl Scouts of the USA is the world’s largest organization for girls. To date, GSUSA has positively influenced the lives of more than 50 million girls and adult women. Girl Scout councils have a “charter” relationship with GSUSA; council employees are not employed by GSUSA. This charter relationship designates each council as a separate, independent legal entity with its own board of directors and staff. Each Girl Scout council has the independent authority and accountability for developing Girl Scout membership and for administering and supervising the Girl Scout program within its geographical jurisdiction. The National Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of the USA is accountable to the National Council, from which it receives its authority, for the sound management of Girl Scouting throughout the USA. Individual Girl Scout Councils and GSUSA work together to support effectiveness and inclusiveness, ensuring that the experiences of Girl Scouting remain available for generations of girls to come.

Definitions

The following definitions will assist in understanding the GSOC Policies and Standards.

Policy: An established course of action, which can be monitored and enforced. GSUSA National policies are printed in the Leader's Digest: Blue Book of Basic Documents. The Girl Scouts of Orange County's Board of Directors adopts Girl Scouts of Orange County policies.

Standard: An act or a manner of proceeding in any action or process and procedure.

Volunteer: Any person who willingly gives one's service without concern for monetary compensation. No policy or provision in this document is intended to create an employment relationship.

Member: Individual — an adult or girl who is recognized as a Girl Scout by GSOC and who pays the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime Members or who are working in a temporary advisory consultative capacity.

Service Unit (SU) – A community of Girl Scout volunteers and girls in a geographic area. The service unit (SU) team is an essential support system for volunteers, girls and caregivers.

Right to Revise

The GSOC Policies and Standards document contains policies and standards in effect at the time of publication.

Girl Scouts of Orange County reserves the right to revise, modify, delete or add to any and all policies or standards stated in this document. However, any such changes must be in writing and must be signed by the Board of Directors or CEO of Girl Scouts of Orange County, as appropriate.

Any written changes to this handbook will be distributed and/or made available to Members. No oral statements or representations will in any way alter the provisions of this handbook.

Affirmative Action & Discrimination

POLICY: The Girl Scouts of Orange County ensures that there will be no discrimination to any employee or Volunteer regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender identification and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, transgender status, registered domestic partner status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition including genetic characteristics, socioeconomic status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal or state laws.

STANDARD: The Girl Scouts of Orange County places special emphasis on securing representation of persons from underrepresented racial minority groups, at all levels, throughout the organization and ensures that the membership of Girl Scouts of Orange County is reflective of the diversity of population groups within its jurisdiction.

Alcohol/Drugs/Smoking

POLICY: Sale, possession, consumption, use or being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal or prescription drugs such as opioids, etc. at any Girl Scout meeting, activity or camp designed for the participation of girl Members is prohibited.

Smoking (including e-cigarettes and vaping) while working with girl Members at Troop/Group meetings, program events or on field trips is not allowed. If it is necessary to smoke, it must be done in designated areas only and not in the presence of girl Members.

STANDARD: If it is necessary to consume tobacco products it must be done in designated areas only, according to the law and venue, and not in the presence of girl Members.

Anti-Bullying

POLICY: The Girl Scouts of Orange County does not tolerate bullying behavior.

STANDARD: Please refer to the [GSOC Volunteer Conduct Policy & Standard](#)

Anti-Harassment

POLICY: Girl Scouts of Orange County does not tolerate sexual or other unlawful harassment, or abusive conduct, by any employee, volunteer, vendor, contractor, consultant, customer or visitor.

STANDARD: Harassment is a breach of GSOC policy, and a violation of state and/or federal law. In addition to any disciplinary action that GSOC may take, up to and including termination, offenders may also be personally liable for any legal and monetary damages.

Banking

POLICY: ALL Troops/Groups/Service Units must have a bank account for the purpose of safeguarding funds. ALL Troop/Group/Service Unit funds must be deposited into the bank account.

STANDARD: Adults who have access to bank accounts/records, writing or signing checks or otherwise handling money for troops/groups or service units must be registered Members of the Girl Scouts of the USA, have successfully completed the background check process and are not related by blood, or marriage or living in the same household. No one under the age of 18 may act in the capacity of Finance Coordinator, Treasurer or authorized bank account signer. Authorized signers for troop/group or service unit bank accounts must not be related by blood, marriage or living in the same household.

ALL withdrawals of funds from bank accounts require two authorized signatures of registered adult Members over the age of 18, who are not related by blood, marriage or living in the same household.

All Troop accounts must be established within 30 days of receiving a Troop number and must have ACH (Automated Clearing House) capability.

Troop/Group/Service Unit bank accounts must bear the name of GIRL SCOUTS OF ORANGE COUNTY, the Service Unit name and/or Troop/Group/Service Unit number, and the Council Tax Identification Number (952023244). All Troops/Group/Service Units must use this tax identification number. Debit cards must not be used for ATM cash withdrawal or cash back from a purchase. Receipts must support all purchases, withdrawals and payments made by debit cards and checks.

A troop ACH form must be completed annually and when there is change to the account.

Disbanded Troops/Groups/Service Units must relinquish funds to GSOC within 30 days of disbandment. These funds will be kept in a restricted account for one year. If in the event a girl Member of a disbanded troop moves to a new troop within a year of disbandment, a percentage of the troop funds will be transferred to the new troop. If a group and/or service unit is reestablished within one year of disbandment, the group and/or service funds being held in the restricted account will be transferred to a newly established account for the group and/or service unit. If the Troop/Group/Service Unit does not reactivate after one year, the funds will become unrestricted for use by GSOC.

One debit card may be requested by the Troop/Group/Service Unit. Debit cards may be used for deposits and purchases only.

A troop may use an online payment system such as PayPal, Venmo or Square; however, it must be linked to the troop checking account. Any fee incurred using these online payment systems must not be passed on to the consumer. The troop must cover any and all fees associated with using these online payment systems.

Please see [Troop Financial Guidelines](#) for more information.

Child Abuse Reporting

POLICY: Volunteers who have reasonable suspicion that a girl Member has been subjected to abusive conduct or neglect, either within or outside the council, are required to report any suspected child abuse to their immediate supervisor or a GSOC staff member as soon as practically possible.

STANDARD: Volunteers may also submit a report directly to Child Protective Services and/or a Police or Sheriff's department or call the Orange County 24-hour child abuse reporting hotline at (800) 207-4464.

For more information about preventing or reporting suspected child abuse, please visit www.cdss.ca.gov.

Child Custody Issues

POLICY: Girl Scouts of Orange County staff and volunteers are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing parental custodial agreements. Troop/Group Leaders must share Girl Scout participation information with all parents/guardians in the troop/group.

STANDARD: The GSUSA membership data system provides the ability for one person (parent/guardian) to manage the membership data for girl Members online. When a girl Member is first registered, that relationship is established by the person completing the registration (online or paper.) The family manager/guardian is ultimately responsible for decisions regarding a girl Member's participation in Girl Scouts, including troop membership, activities, and the cookie program. In order for the family manager/guardian to be changed, GSOC requires the current family manager/guardian to submit a written request.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to clearly communicate with their troop/group leader, custody arrangements that may result in Girl Scout participation restrictions.

Child Protection

POLICY: Girl Scouts of Orange County does not tolerate infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl Members; physical neglect of girl Members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities; emotional maltreatment of girl Members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks. This includes physical punishment, sexual misconduct, physical neglect and emotional abuse.

Collection of Outstanding Funds

POLICY: Persons with an outstanding amount due to Girl Scouts of Orange County beyond 90 days are not allowed to serve in any volunteer capacity for the council until the account is paid in full.

STANDARD: Girl Members may continue to participate in Girl Scout troop and Service Unit activities despite their parents/guardians having delinquent or outstanding balances with the council; however, their participation in the Girl Scout product program, may be restricted. Girl Members with

parents/guardians with delinquent or outstanding funds may not participate in additional money-earning activities until the debt is cleared.

All avenues available to the council, including use of collection agencies and legal action, will be pursued regarding outstanding debt or delinquencies. If a volunteer resigns her or his position, or is terminated, any balances owed the council are still considered outstanding until paid in full.

Confidentiality

POLICY: All information concerning staff, Members, financial data, and business records of Girl Scouts of Orange County is confidential.

STANDARD: Care shall be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared. Information that is sensitive in nature should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without written authorization from GSOC.

Conflict Resolution

POLICY: Disagreements and issues between Girl Scout adults must never involve or be discussed with girl Members present.

STANDARD: When conflicts of opinion occur between adult Members, or adult Members and parents, the affected Members will follow the guidelines and procedures in the [GSOC Volunteer Essentials manual](#).

If conflict is not resolved or the issues surrounding the conflict violate GSOC Policies and Standards, the GSUSA Blue Book or the Girl Scout Promise and Law, the immediate supervisor may initiate termination of services prior to the end of a term of appointment.

It is important for all GSOC Members to remember the Girl Scout Promise and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Contracts

POLICY: Girl Scout Volunteers shall not enter into any contractual arrangements on behalf of the Council. Contracts shall only be entered into by the Chief Executive Officer or designee.

STANDARD: "Contracts" include any meeting locations, Certificate of Insurance (COI) request, any location/vendor that requires a signature. More information can be found by submitting forms or questions for review through our [Facilities Use/Certificate of Insurance Request Application](#).

Electronic Signatures

POLICY: Electronic signatures are acceptable and have the same legal significance as manual records and handwritten signatures.

STANDARD: Electronic signatures include but are not limited to the following:

- Submission of an online survey through a click
- Submit buttons or checkboxes accompanied by language to the effect of, “by clicking the button/checking the box, I agree with these terms.”
- A name typed by the sender at the end of an email message
- Faxed signatures or other electronic transmission of a document containing a handwritten signature
- A code or PIN (such as those used with ATM and credit cards)
- Electronic signature box at the end of permission slip or health history)

Family Participation

POLICY: Troop/Group Leader must hold a parent/guardian meeting at least once a year to inform parents/guardians of the opportunities to participate in the troop/group. Troop/Group Leaders must establish regular communication with parents/guardians so that they are well informed regarding troop/group events and activities.

If unregistered adults and/or children who are not Members, employees, or Volunteers, (tagalongs) participate in a meeting, event or activity, the troop/group leader is required to purchase Plan 2 Insurance

STANDARD: GSOC encourages family participation in their Girl Scout’s experience. While parent/guardian participation is not required for membership, parent/guardian support of troop/group events and activities is highly encouraged and leads to a more productive and satisfactory Girl Scout experience for all. Troop/Group Leaders can limit the number of adults and tag-alongs attending troop/group meetings, events, and activities, as long as this is applied consistently and equitably to all adults within the troop.

Financial Accountability

POLICY: Each Troop/Group/Service Unit must file a financial report annually. This report will list income and expenditures and will include a copy of the latest bank statement. Troop financial records must be available to all Members of the troop; girl Members, parents and Volunteers, as well as Council staff as requested.

Adults responsible for the financial accountability of Troops/Groups/Service Unit must ensure that all financial obligations of the Troop/Group/Service Unit are met by the time they are due; i.e., payment of bills, filing of required reports, bank statements, etc.

A financial report must also be submitted when a Troop/Group/SU changes leadership or disbands.

For additional information please see [Troop Financial Guidelines](#).

STANDARD: In cases when money has been collected from a Member for a specific activity in which she did not participate, that money may not be reimbursable if expenses have been incurred on the Member's or the troop/group/SU behalf (i.e. a short notice cancellation).

If an entire troop bridges from one level of Girl Scouting to another, the funds may move along with them. In an ongoing or open-ended troop; however, where only a few girl Members are "bridging up," the funds would remain with the original troop. When girl Members move to a new troop, the girl Members within the original troop can vote to provide a share of their troop funds, which would be sent to the troop girl Members are registered.

First-Aid Providers

POLICY: The presence of a First Aid Kit and an adult with appropriate current certification in First Aid and CPR for Adults & Children is required for activities away from the normal meeting place, overnights, and activities with a higher risk as denoted in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

First-Aid Level 1 certification is required for the primary First-Aid provider present at Girl Scout Activities such as programs, events, travel and camping within an emergency response time of 30 minutes or less. (see Planning Large Events training and Volunteer Essentials for more information regarding first-Aider requirements).

First Aid Level 1 and First Aid Level 2 (Wilderness First Aid) certification are required for the primary First-Aid provider for activities, such as sleepaway camp, weekend camp, family camp, camping, and travel, (domestic or international) when emergency response time is 30 minutes or longer, and for events over 200 participants.

Events for 500 or more participants must have two Level 2 First Aid providers (Wilderness First Aid).

The following health care providers may also serve as First-Aid providers: physician, physician's assistant, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, or emergency medical first responder.

The First-Aid provider must never administer any medication to girl Members without written instructions by the parent or guardian. This includes all prescription and over-the counter drugs, topicals and ointments. Medications must be in their original containers.

For more information, please refer to [Troop/Group Travel Guidelines](#) and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Fund Raising

[Blue Book:](#)

POLICY: Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions of cash, cash equivalents or other goods or products from any foundation, corporation or business at any time in the name of Girl Scouts of the USA, or the Girl Scouts of Orange County. Girl Members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit philanthropic donations to their council of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from the GSOC's Chief Executive Officer. Permission requests must be submitted not less than two months in advance.

A Service Unit or a Troop/Group may not engage in fundraising except for the following exception: a Member or a Service Unit may request permission from the Chief Executive Officer to participate in certain city or corporate sponsored events, such as a fair or festival, in which organizations have been invited to have a fund raising activity.

A Troop/Group with money owed to the Council will not be permitted to participate in any money-earning activity until reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive Officer or a designee.

Troops must have the written approval of the Service Unit Coordinator/Manager to engage in money-earning other than Council-sponsored Product Programs. Troops will not be granted permission to hold any additional money-earning projects during the time Council-sponsored Product Programs are underway.

Girl Scout Daisy Troops may not participate in money-earning projects other than the Council-sponsored Product Programs.

Girl Scout Brownie Troops should not participate in money-earning projects other than the Council-sponsored Product Programs; however, Troops may request approval for one money-earning project during the year in addition to the Council-sponsored Product Programs.

Girl Scout Junior Troops may request approval for no more than one money-earning project each year in addition to Council-sponsored Product Programs.

Girl Scout Cadette Troops may request approval for no more than two money-earning projects each year in addition to the Council-sponsored Product Programs.

Girl Scout Senior and Ambassador Troops may request approval for no more than three money-earning projects each year in addition to the Council-sponsored Product Programs.

STANDARD: Money-earning activities, if approved, may take place only in the community in which the Troop/Group is registered.

Troops/groups are encouraged to participate in council-sponsored product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning must not compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council-sponsored product programs.

Girl Scout Membership

POLICY: Membership in the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. is open to all girls (ages 5-17 years) (grades K-12) and adults who understand and accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. No girl or adult will be denied membership because of race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, disability, age, veteran, socioeconomic status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal or state law.

Membership as a Girl Scout Adult requirements ([Blue Book](#)):

1. Accept the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA
2. Has paid the annual, lifetime or other applicable membership dues.
3. Meets applicable membership standard of minimum age of 18 or a high school graduate or equivalent.

STANDARD: Girl Scouts of Orange County Financial Assistance is available to cover the national registration fee for any girl who cannot afford to pay for it.

Girl Scout Program

POLICY: The Girl Scouts of Orange County's program standards as described in Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials shall be adhered to when planning and participating in all Girl Scout events and activities, unless specifically modified herein. For more information, please refer to [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials](#).

STANDARD: High adventure and higher risk activities require prior approval. The Higher Risk/High Adventure application must be submitted to and approved by GSOC staff prior to the activity.

GSOC defines High Adventure as any activity that requires special training or skills to participate safely and effectively. High Adventure/Higher Risk activities include, horseback riding, backpacking, kayaking, canoeing, mountaineering, rock climbing, mountain biking, orienteering, etc. See the Safety Activity Checkpoints for more information.

Girl Scouts of Orange County recognizes that learning how to handle firearms properly and safely is of paramount importance, as is the healthy respect girls will develop when properly trained in shooting sports. Members are not permitted to use firearms unless they are 12 years old or older. Written permission must be obtained from GSOC in advance of the activity. After approval, troops/groups must have a separate, written permission from a parent/guardian before a girl Member is permitted to participate in target shooting. Hunting is not permitted.

Target shooting is limited to air guns (BB and pellet rifles) and firearms of 22 caliber rimfire long guns (rifles), at an approved range with approved instructors only, as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Flying in a private plane is not permitted as a Girl Scout program.

Please note that adult-to-girl ratio may be different for high adventure/higher risk activities. Please review SAC for more information. For mixed-grade level troops, use the ratio for the lowest grade level in the troop.

Insurance

POLICY: For any event lasting more than two nights, additional accident insurance must be purchased through the Girl Scouts of Orange County.

Events including non-registered adults require Plan 2 insurance.

STANDARD: Every registered Girl and adult Member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA, and the basic plan is effective during the regular **fiscal** year (October 1 to the following October 1). Members who purchase extended year membership will be covered from the day the membership is purchased. Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new Members who register in the month of August. Non-registered family/caregivers, "tagalongs" (brothers, sisters and friends) and other persons are **not** covered by the basic plan

Lifeguards

POLICY: When swimming or boating activities are planned, an adult (18 years of age or older) holding a current certification in American Red Cross Lifeguard Training or equivalent certification and two other watchers shall directly supervise each group up to 25.

STANDARD for lake, rivers, streams: At least one lifeguard, certified in American Red Cross Waterfront Lifeguard course or the equivalent, must be present for every 25 swimmers, plus one watcher for every 10 swimmers.

STANDARD for pools: For swimming activities in public pools, hotel and cruise-ship pools, and backyard pools, the lifeguards must be at least 18 years old and have American Red Cross Lifeguard Training certification or the equivalent. When girl Members are wading in water more than knee-deep, an adult with American Red Cross Basic Water Rescue certification or with documented experience must be present.

Watchers must be adults and both watchers must be skilled in the use of basic rescue equipment. If the site is a supervised beach or public pool and lifeguards are provided, it is not necessary to supply additional lifeguards.

STANDARD for boating (canoes, kayaks, corcl*): Lifeguards must hold a current certification in American Red Cross (ARC) Lifeguarding with Waterfront Module or equivalent and have the proper training, documented experience, and rescue equipment for the body of water being used. Certifications must be appropriate for the activity at hand. In addition, follow the adult-to-girl ratios listed in [Volunteer Essentials](#).

* Not recommended for Daisies except with an experienced adult in each canoe in flat water.

Medical Considerations

POLICY: The Girl Scouts of Orange County reserves the right, in good faith, to determine the appropriateness of a person's participation in Girl Scout activities based on medical conditions.

STANDARD: No Member or adult will be denied participation solely on the basis of a known physical disability or medical condition, as long as participation does not endanger her health or safety or the health and safety of others. However, if any law, ordinance or public regulation prohibits participation, the Girl Scouts of Orange County will comply with such law, ordinance or public regulation.

Health exam forms and health history forms will be shared only with designated health professionals and the appropriate local council staff responsible for coordinating them. All health and medical information is private (by law) and must not be shared or publicly available. Care must be taken to protect personal information of our Members and Girl Scouts. This information may be shared, as needed, with volunteers who are responsible for the well-being of the Members, such as a lifeguard or first aid provider. All health exam/history forms shall be retained in accordance with California state record retention requirements and laws.

Medications

POLICY: Written parent/guardian permission is required to administer medication at any Girl Scout activity.

No minor may administer medications at any time, except for prescriptions designed for self-medication in case of an emergency such as epinephrine injector pen, inhalers, etc. These medications must be kept by the individual for whom they are prescribed.

STANDARD: All medications must be in the original container and maintained in a location deemed to be safe and appropriately stored and accessible. Prescription medications must be administered according to doctor's orders. Non-prescription medication will be administered according to the directions on the label and only with signed parental consent.

Parental/Guardian Permission

POLICY: Parent or guardian permission is required for girls to become a Member of Girl Scouts and to participate in all Girl Scout programs, activities, and events, including product sales. New permission forms and a new health history form must be completed each year.

Troop/group leaders must have a signed copy of the Annual Permission Slip or Single Use Permission Slip and Girl Health History Form for every girl Member in their troop/group on hand at every Girl Scout program, event, activity, and troop/group meeting. The signed parent permission form must be with the girl Member while she is traveling to and from an activity and in the Leader's possession during an activity or event.

Membership: Signature of parent/guardian is required on hard copy submission indicating permission for a girl to become a Member of Girl Scouts. If using an electronic form, payment indicates permission.

STANDARD: Annual Permission Slips: A parent/guardian signed annual permission slip may be used in the following circumstances:

1. Activities located within 150 miles of the troop's meeting place and within the state of California
2. Activities that do not exceed 8 hours or are overnight
3. Activities that are not considered Higher Risk/High Adventure activities, according to the Higher Risk/High Adventure Activity Guidelines (to review these guidelines visit www.girlscoutsoc.org and search for "High Adventure" under Forms & Docs.)
4. Activities that do not discuss sensitive topics. Activities that discuss sensitive topics require use of a Parental Notification for Sensitive Issues form. Topics that discuss sensitive topics and require a Parental Notification for Sensitive Issues form may include, but are not limited to, global citizenship, emotional and physical safety, cultural and family values, sexual identity, gender roles, or child marriage.

Single use Permission Slips must be available for parents/guardians who do not wish to use the Annual Permission Slip.

Political and Legislative Activity

POLICY: Girl Scouts will not, nor will they authorize anyone on their behalf to, participate or intervene directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office; or participate in any legislative activity or function which contravenes the laws governing tax-exempt organizations. ([Blue Book](#))

Private Inurnment/Private Benefit

POLICY: To ensure council compliance with IRS regulations and to protect GSOC's 501(c)3 tax exempt status with the IRS, GSOC does not allow troops/Groups to create reserve funds or earmark funds or financial disbursement for individual girls.

Public Relations

POLICY: No street address, telephone number, email address, or social media profile of any Member will be revealed in any public release or photo caption without written permission from the parent or guardian of the Girl Scout or adult pictured.

Photos of Girl Scout Members cannot be used for publicity, advertisement, or marketing collateral without: 1) a signed photo release on file at Girl Scouts of Orange County Headquarters, or 2) the posting of a [Girl Scouts of Orange County Notice of Photography](#), from which the individual photographed did not opt out.

Immediately refer all media inquiries to the Communications Director at GSOC Headquarters at 949-461-8800.

STANDARD: Volunteers shall not discuss sensitive or controversial issues with the press without prior permission from the Council. Sensitive or controversial issues may include, but are not limited to, global citizenship, emotional and physical safety, cultural and family values, sexual identity, gender roles, and/or child marriage. Furthermore, Volunteers should promptly contact council regarding any press interactions, positive or negative.

For more information regarding press releases and what to do if the media/press show up at an event, please see our [Public Relations Handbook](#). To contact council regarding press, call 949-461-8800 and ask for the Communications Director.

Social Media

POLICY: When posting on any social media channel (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and any others) as a representative of Girl Scouts, abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

STANDARD: Volunteers/parents/girl Members must clearly represent themselves as a Girl Scout volunteer/parent/girl with Girl Scouts of Orange County when posting on social media. Report misuse/inappropriate social media behavior to GSOC staff

Spirituality/Religion

POLICY: Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual Members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” ([Blue Book](#))

STANDARD: Every Girl Scout group shall respect the varying religious opinions and practices of its membership in planning and conducting activities.

When a troop meets at or is affiliated with one religious group, members of different faiths or religious affiliations within the troop shall not be required to take part in religious observance of the sponsoring group.

Technology and Privacy

POLICY: Girl Scouts of Orange County allows the use of electronic communications for legitimate and authorized Girl Scout program purposes.

Contents of all electronic communications shall conform to law and policies set forth by GSUSA and GSOC regarding protection of intellectual property, copyright, patents, and trademarks. The Girl Scout brand and all Girl Scout trademarks and copyrights are the sole property of GSUSA and their use must be pre-approved in writing by the appropriate GSOC staff.

STANDARD: An electronic communication is defined as any communication that is broadcasted, created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, or printed by any electronic communications service, including email and telephone.

Transporting Girl Members

POLICY: Every driver must be a registered and background screened volunteer at least 21 years old, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle for planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities (outside the normal meeting time and place) in which a group will be transported in private vehicles,

Girl Members will never drive other girl Members. If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female.

In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Drivers of a vehicle with 10 or more passengers, including the driver, must be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver's license (CDL). Fifteen passenger vans are not permitted. Please refer to [Volunteer Essentials](#) for more guidelines regarding transporting girls.

Uber, Lyft, Curb and similar ridesharing companies are not permitted to transport girl Members.

The Council must approve any bus transportation before it is procured for a Girl Scout trip or event.

STANDARD: It is the parent/guardian's decision on how to transport girl Members between their homes and Girl Scout meeting.

Volunteers will follow all guidelines in Volunteer Essentials and SAC when transporting girl Members.

Troop Formation

POLICY: There must be at least two qualified adult Leaders and five girl Members in order to form a Troop.

Every group must have at least one lead adult Volunteer and one or more co-Volunteers. Because the female role model is so central to Girl Scouts, at least one volunteer must be an adult female, and to keep girl Members safe, the adult female must not be related (by marriage, partnership, or blood) to the other Volunteer(s). Adult Volunteers must also be at least 18 years old or the age of majority (if less than 18) as defined by state law.

STANDARD: A Troop is expected to have a minimum of twelve girl Members. If a troop is under the minimum of twelve, Girl Scouts of Orange County reserves the right to list the Troop in our online troop system so that potential girl Members can join the troop.

Troop Trips/Travel

POLICY: Troops/Groups must obtain Council authorization before Troop/Group trips or travel that require an overnight stay.

STANDARD: For trips over 600 miles round-trip or to a foreign country, approval from the Troop Support Department is required after pre-approval by the Service Unit Manager. For trips 150-600 miles round-trip domestically, approval from the Service Unit Manager or designee is required. For trips less than 150 miles roundtrip domestically Service Unit Manager pre-notification is required.

At least one adult accompanying girl Members on any trip must complete appropriate training. Additional adults accompanying the troop must be registered and background screened and will function as chaperones. A Volunteer who has completed Indoor Overnight Adventure training must accompany girl Members on any overnight experience to a Council program center, a cabin experience or a Service Unit overnight where housing or food are provided.

All travel, domestic and international, require a First Aid Level 1 and Level 2 (Wilderness First Aid) certification when emergency response time is 30 minutes or longer.

Separate sleeping arrangements are required for males and females.

For more information on Trips and Travel, including guidelines on accommodations and transportation, please see our [Troop/Group Travel Guidelines](#) and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Uniforms

POLICY: Girl Scouts at each level have one required element (Tunic, Sash or Vest) for the display of official pins and awards. Full Girl Scout uniform is required when girl Members participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement.

STANDARD: For all girl Members, the unifying look includes wearing a choice of a tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards, combined with a white shirt (either their own or the official Girl Scout polo shirt for their program level), khaki pants or skirts and a scarf. For adult Members the unifying look of the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf or tie for men, worn with the official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue business attire.

Volunteer Appointment

POLICY: Adult Members must be appointed to be a Volunteer.

STANDARD: A complete explanation of the duties and expectations of the position as outlined in the position description must be provided to each Volunteer prior to appointment.

Appointments for Council-wide operational Volunteer positions are made by and accountable to the appropriate staff member for a period of one year or for the duration of the assignment.

All Volunteers must complete and sign the online Volunteer Agreement form annually, and complete all required training for each appointed position within three months of appointment.

Volunteer Conduct

POLICY: Volunteers are expected to be positive role models for the Girl Scouts of Orange County and conduct themselves in an exemplary manner that is aligned with all Girl Scout Policy and Standards, Volunteer Agreement, and the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

STANDARD: All Members of the organization will provide an environment that is free of sexual, physical or verbal abuse, intimidating, hostile, or offensive behavior and will attempt to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of all Members and GSOC staff. Girl Scout Volunteers must refrain from lewd or inappropriate affection such as kissing or fondling with other adults/spouses/partners while participating in a Girl Scout meeting, activity, or event or representing the Girl Scout organization.

Modeling appropriate behavior is essential. This includes Volunteer attire; therefore, attire must be appropriate for their position and/or situation. GSOC reserves the right to discuss inappropriate attire choices with individuals. Never use illegal drugs. Do not consume alcohol, use foul language, or smoke in the presence of girl Members. Smoking includes, but is not limited to vapor pens and E-cigarettes. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girl Members, unless given special permission by council officials for target sport activities. Always obey the law, for example, by not talking on a cell phone or texting while driving.

Volunteers who do not follow the conduct standards or do not adhere to the Volunteer Agreement may be subject to removal from their Volunteer position. Volunteer Agreements can be accessed online at www.GirlScoutsOC.org and must be completed annually.

Please refer to the Social Media, Anti-bullying, and Anti-harassment sections for additional information.

Volunteer Feedback

STANDARD: Volunteers, both operational and troop, shall receive feedback as appropriate and as necessary in order to ensure they are satisfied and successful in their role. Volunteers have an opportunity to provide feedback to GSOC through the annual Voice of the Customer survey, as well as activity-based surveys.

Volunteer Membership

POLICY: All regular Volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as Members of Girl Scouts of the USA and individually pay the annual or other applicable membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime Members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity ([Blue Book](#))

STANDARD: Volunteers who are working on a short-term (fewer than 30 consecutive days) or episodic (one-day event) basis and do not have responsibility for girl Members and/or handle Girl Scout funds are considered temporary assistants, and as such annual membership and background check are optional.

Please see the Volunteer Screening section of this document for information on requirements for long-term Volunteers.

Volunteer Personnel

POLICY: Board Members will not serve in ongoing operational roles.

Volunteer Reappointment

STANDARD: Volunteer reappointment is based on an individual continuing to meet requirements for membership and the ability and willingness to perform duties as specified in the Volunteer Agreement.

Volunteer appointments are based on the Girl Scout membership year which is from October 1-September 30. Term limits may be applied to specific positions. Some exceptions to the term may apply, i.e. Delegates.

Volunteer Recognition

POLICY: Girl Scouts of Orange County recognizes exceptional volunteers annually. Volunteer recognitions of the Thanks Badge, Thanks Badge II, Honor Pin, President's Award, Opening Doors Award, Good Guy Award and Appreciation Pin require approval of the Board of Directors.

Standard: The Adult Recognition Committee reviews applications that go before the Board of Directors.

The Volunteer of Excellence Award is presented four times per year and is reviewed by the Adult Recognition Committee.

Other Council awards, such as Orange Owl and Spotlight, are reviewed by the Service Unit Recognition Coordinator.

Annual Council-wide volunteer recognition events include Volunteer Appreciation Month, Leader Appreciation Day, Leader Week and Volunteer Recognition awards ceremony.

Volunteer Release and Non-Appointment

POLICY: The Council has discretion in all appointments, disciplinary action, and releases based on a case-by-case analysis of each Volunteer applicant and the best interest of Girl Scouting.

In addition, any Volunteer will be automatically released when background screening results indicate that the individual, as an adult, perpetrated any crime including violent or sex crimes or substance abuse crimes involving a child or a dependent adult, regardless of how long ago the incident occurred

STANDARD: A standard process will be followed when release, non-appointment or suspension of a Volunteer is required.

Volunteer Resignation

POLICY: Volunteers may initiate termination of services at any time.

All troop/group records, equipment, funds, and/or major supplies **MUST** be returned to designated Service Unit Volunteer or council staff

STANDARD: A Volunteer unable to complete his/her term, or who chooses to terminate his/her services at the end of a term, shall give written notice to his/her volunteer supervisor or council representative at least thirty days in advance. She/he shall make arrangements to share all information and materials with their Service Unit Coordinator or designated council staff in order to ensure the uninterrupted experience for the girls.

After a notice of resignation has been received, the membership status of the Volunteer will be transferred to an appropriate GSUSA adult position code until the end of the membership year.

Volunteer Screening

POLICY: All prospective Volunteers with supervisory or disciplinary responsibility over minors or funds, including product, are required to submit to the Chief Executive Officer's established background screening process as part of the Council's determination of eligibility to serve as a Volunteer.

Criminal background checks are conducted in accordance with the Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) at a minimum of every three years or more frequently, as required.

STANDARD: Girl Scouts of Orange County will conduct criminal background checks on Volunteers prior to appointment without regard to disability, age, race, color, ethnicity, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law.

Volunteer Selection

POLICY: Every adult Volunteer in Girl Scouting is selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the job, and willingness and availability to participate in the training for it ([Blue Book](#)).

Volunteer Training

POLICY: Volunteers must complete all required training as directed.

STANDARD: First time Operational Volunteers must complete New Leader Orientation and Level Essentials Training within three months of appointment.

All other Operational Volunteers (Service Unit Coordinators, SU Financial Coordinator, SU and Troop Treasurer, etc.) must complete training for their positions within three months of appointment. Some trainings may be required prior to appointment, such as, training for Troop or Service Unit Product Program volunteers.

All Troop Leaders shall complete Level Essentials training each time they move to a new program level. Troop Leaders who remain at the same program level shall retake required training every five years or as directed. Some operational positions may require annual training.

Episodic Volunteers working with girls, program or administrative assistance, shall receive training prior to, and specific to their participation.