



# Volunteer Policies & Procedures

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## Introduction

The Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi (GSGMS) Volunteer Policies & Procedures serves as the main governing document to guide volunteers and staff, ensuring that the Girl Scout program is delivered in a safe, consistent manner for girls across our council. Volunteers should familiarize themselves with those GSGMS policies and procedures that guide and protect their status as Girl Scout volunteers. The policies and procedures listed below pertain to all volunteers regardless of position or role and supersede all previous versions.

A policy is an established, binding course of action to be followed. A policy states what must be done and is binding on those whom it affects. Policies are established by the Board of Directors and remain in force until specifically repealed or revised.

A procedure is a step or method by which to adhere to and carry out established policies. GSGMS procedures are established by the senior leadership team of GSGMS and remain in force until specifically repealed or revised.

**By the terms of its charter, Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi and all its members are required to adhere to the policies of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA) as stated in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* and are guided by the standards of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. as stated in *Volunteer Essentials* and *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.**

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# Part 1: Girl Scout Members & Volunteers

## I. Adult Volunteers

### **Policy:**

The Girl Scout experience is made possible by the generous support of Girl Scout volunteers. Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi (GSGMS) appreciates the adults willing to give their time, talent and resources to help fulfill the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Adults who are taking responsibility for girls not in their family must register and complete a volunteer application process and background check to become a Girl Scout volunteer. Adults participating in an event as a parent with their own daughter (such as Mom & Me or Dad & Me events), and not taking responsibility for girls that are not a part of their family are not required to complete this process. These adults, however, may register as an adult member if they wish to be covered by Girl Scout activity insurance for programs and activities.

GSGMS is committed to an environment in which relationships between volunteers, staff, parents and girls are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect and equitable treatment.

A positive female role model is essential for meeting the Girl Scout program goals and purposes. The attitudes, appearance, and actions of volunteers have a direct impact on the lives of girls. The leadership of every Girl Scout Troop/group must include two unrelated adults within the team. Each Girl Scout Troop/group must have at least one female Girl Scout Leader who is at least 18 years of age, is a registered Girl Scout adult, has an appropriate volunteer security status, and agrees to meet the training requirements for the position.

We welcome and encourage male volunteers to participate in our program. All policies and procedures concerning men are designed to protect our male volunteers and our girl members. Male adults may be part of the leadership team for a Girl Scout Troop/group of girls, including being designated as the troop leader for the Girl Scout troop/group. Male Girl Scout leaders are expected to fulfill the same requirements as female Girl Scout leaders. Specifically, men may not participate alone with girls. At troop meetings, one unrelated female volunteer must be present. In addition, men will not take girls on overnights, camping trips, extended trips, or events without two female volunteers present.

Girl Scout volunteers do not have the authority to end another member's Girl Scout membership or participation in Girl Scouts, for either adults or girls. Membership and participation status can only be changed by following the processes outlined in the GSGMS Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Definition of 'Volunteer'**

A 'volunteer' is any adult (18 years of age or older) who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of the council. A 'volunteer' should be appointed by the council staff before performing the task. Unless specifically stated in writing by the council, volunteers shall not be considered as 'employees' of the council.

## **Membership Registration**

All adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement must register as members with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), except those adults who are working in a temporary advisory capacity, such as instructor, program aide, etc.

## **New Volunteer Procedure**

Potential new volunteers will follow this process:

1. Complete the initial Adult Registration form accessible from the GSGMS website.
2. Select a volunteer role.
3. Become an adult Girl Scout member & pay for membership.
4. If necessary for the selected role, the adult member will then complete a background check as prompted automatically by an email with instructions.
5. The volunteer will be prompted to view the GSUSA Welcome Video.

## **Conditions requiring Adult Membership Registration and Background Check**

Any adults participating in Girl Scouts the following ways must register with GSUSA and successfully complete a background check:

- taking responsibility for the safety of girls not in their family, including driving.
- handling Girl Scout monies, including those funds involved in the GSGMS Cookie Program.
- participating in overnights when girls attend without adults from their family.
- serving as a Safety-Wise adult to meet adult-to-girl supervision ratios, as further defined in the Risk Management policy.

It is recommended that any adults who are part of a troop leadership committee or Girl Scout administrative team successfully complete a background check with GSGMS.

## **Volunteer Roles**

The decision to accept and retain volunteers is made on an individual basis. GSGMS does not discriminate against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer on the basis of race, age, disability, color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, veteran status, or any other legally-protected status. Volunteers shall be appointed to a position for a period of one year. A volunteer may, however, be released at any time due to failure to fulfill the requirements of the position or a change in the needs of the council. The membership, background screening, training, and time commitment are determined based on the needs of each volunteer role. More details are available from the GSGMS liaison who is managing the position.

## **Eligibility, Acceptance & Agreement**

Volunteer eligibility is determined and acceptance is completed online. Before applying for the position it is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to review the Code of Ethics and the Volunteer Agreement of the role for which she or he is applying. Specialized Volunteer Agreements should be requested from the GSGMS liaison who is managing the position.

All volunteers should complete a GSGMS Volunteer Agreement and sign a Code of Ethics by October 1 or within 1 month of appointment each membership year. These agreements ensure that a volunteer accepts any GSGMS volunteer terms and conditions as well as an intellectual property agreement.

Volunteers may not be accepted or retained if an outstanding debt to GSGMS is unresolved. During processing of online volunteer applications, information on outstanding debts will be reviewed. Any volunteer with current outstanding debt will be rejected until the debt is resolved. See XXV. Collection of Outstanding Funds.

### **Representing Girl Scouts**

When a Girl Scout or Girl Scout volunteer is representing Girl Scouts in any way they must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout movement. If a Girl Scout and/or Girl Scout volunteer acts in violation of this procedure, they may lose their membership privileges.

### **Termination of Volunteer Appointment**

Situations may occur that would require GSGMS to release or terminate a volunteer from one or all positions before the end of the assignment term. Any action to release a volunteer will receive careful and detailed consideration. A volunteer may have their appointment terminated because of, but not limited to:

- Refusal to comply with GSGMS or GSUSA policies
- Conduct inconsistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement as indicated by the Girl Scout Promise and Law, including lack of support of the council, disruption of operations, coercive and covert actions against the council, GSUSA or other members
- Inability to perform or fulfill the duties of the position as outlined in the Volunteer Role Description
- Unsatisfactory completion of objectives and corrective action in regards to her or his role
- Refusal or failure to adhere to financial guidelines of GSGMS
- Conviction of a crime
- Registered sex offender status\* or crimes against a child

\*Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scout programs. Volunteers shall not knowingly hold activities where a registered sex offender is present.

### **Resignation**

Volunteers may choose to resign or request change of positions at any time. Volunteers are encouraged to give as much notice as possible when resigning, preferably a minimum of two weeks. Volunteers should submit resignations to the GSGMS liaison who supports them in writing. If notice of resignation has not been submitted and a GSGMS representative has attempted to reach out to a volunteer on at least three documented occasions without success, the volunteer may be deemed to have resigned, or otherwise abandoned the position.

### **Volunteer Role Reappointment**

Volunteers with roles that require action steps prior to reappointment will be guided through this process by the staff liaison that supports their position. All other volunteers should renew their roles during membership renewal every year.

### **Adult Uniforms**

Adult uniforms are not required for participation in Girl Scout activities. When adult members choose to wear a uniform, 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.

## **Dress Code**

We ask that volunteers remember at all times they are serving as role models for girls; therefore, their dress must reflect both modesty and appropriateness for their position and/or situation. GSGMS reserves the right to discuss inappropriate attire choices with individuals.

## **Public Display of Affection (PDA)**

Girl Scout volunteers must refrain from lewd or inappropriate affection (kissing, fondling, etc.) toward other adults/spouses/partners while working with Girl Scouts or representing the Girl Scout organization. Any infraction will be subject to prompt review under council volunteer disciplinary guidelines.

## **II. Volunteer Terms**

### **Policy:**

Girl Scouts is not only the premiere leadership development organization for girls but also a vehicle through which adult volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their leadership skills. Volunteers serving in any troop leader role are appointed to their roles for a one-year commitment to be reviewed and renewed each year.

## **III: Adult Development**

### **Policy:**

To ensure ongoing improvement of Girl Scout programming, volunteers should continue to take advantage of adult education opportunities because the strength of the Girl Scout movement rests in the voluntary leadership of trained adult members. All volunteers will receive basic training for their role. Depending upon the role, they may also be required to complete additional training within a specified time frame.

These trainings ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their endeavors.

### **Procedures:**

All volunteers are required to view the GSUSA Welcome Video as well as complete an online knowledge check before assuming the responsibilities of their volunteer role. Additional details for specific roles are outlined in the procedures listed below.

Girl Scout Troop Leaders (including co-leaders, assistant leaders, and troop leadership team members): In addition to the Welcome and Orientation Videos, all Troop Leaders are strongly recommended to:

- access online equipping resources
- review Volunteer Essentials on an annual basis
- review GSGMS Volunteer Policies & Procedures on an annual basis

Videos and resources intended to support volunteers are available on the council website. Key subjects covered include troop management, behavior management, troop finances, and troop cookie management. Review of these resources may be required for certain troop activities or roles.

In addition, a variety of enrichment opportunities are offered in-person, by webinar, home study and social media. A complete list of offerings can be found on the council website.

### **Troop Product Sale Managers**

In addition to the Welcome and Orientation Videos, Troop Product Sale Managers are required to submit the Troop Product Sale Manager Position Agreement and fulfill all additional requirements as outlined in the Troop Product Sale Manager Guide.

### **First Aiders & Outdoor Living Skills (OLS) Certified Volunteers**

Leaving the troop meeting place means assuming responsibility for the transportation and safety of other people's children. Different activities require preparation and/or certifications in addition to the Welcome and Orientation Videos, depending on the type of activity for the girls.

A First Aider is an adult volunteer who has taken First Aid/CPR/AED training that includes specific instructions for child CPR from an approved GSGMS provider. Depending on the activity, a more specific definition of First Aider in any given situation may be found in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

OLS Certified Volunteers are those who have completed and have a current certification for various levels of GSGMS outdoor leadership educational training as outlined below.

#### Level I - Field Trips & Sleepovers:

- A Girl Scout Troop that is leaving the regular meeting place on a field trip must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed the GSGMS Orientation and online knowledge check, and one First Aider as defined in Safety Activity Checkpoints as well as an appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.
- A Girl Scout Troop that is having an indoor sleepover (such as a slumber party, lock in, or overnight at the local zoo) must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed the GSGMS Orientation and online knowledge check, and one First Aider, and appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.
- A single overnight backyard campout in a tent, in a fenced backyard, less than 25 yards from a residence, not using grills or fire of any kind is considered to be a sleepover.
- *Forms required:* Parent Permission Slips, Health History Forms, proof of Girl Scout membership registration for all participants. A Low Risk – Activity Approval form may be required.

#### Level II - Outdoor Day Outings:

Definition of Outdoor Environment & Activities: an outdoor environment is characterized by the presence of natural features such as wooded areas, hiking trails, bodies of water, as well as insects and creatures not normally found in everyday situations. Outdoor activities could include, but are not limited to, activities such as fire building, outdoor cooking, and hiking.

- A Girl Scout Troop that is going on a one day outing in an outdoor environment, not sleeping over, and not making a campfire or doing outdoor cooking must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed the GSGMS Orientation and online knowledge check, plus one



First Aider as defined in Safety Activity Checkpoints as well as an appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.

- A Girl Scout Troop that is going on a one day outing in an outdoor environment, not sleeping over, but plans to participate in outdoor activities such as making a campfire or outdoor cooking is considered to be camping, and therefore must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed OLS training, one First Aider, and an appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.
- *Forms required:* Parent Permission Slips, Health History Forms, proof of Girl Scout membership registration for all participants. A Low Risk – Activity Approval form is required.

#### Level III - Camping Overnight:

- Girl Scout Troops that are camping on council-owned sites with established sleeping and restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed OLS training, one First Aider, as well as an appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.
- Girl Scout Troops that are camping on non-council sites that have established restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed Outdoor Living Skills training, one First Aider, and an appropriate number of Safety-Wise adults.
- *Forms required:* Parent Permission Slips, Health History Forms, proof of Girl Scout membership registration for all participants. Either a Low Risk – Activity Approval form or a Medium-High Risk Activity Approval form is required.

#### Additional information:

The primary First Aider for any overnights and the primary Camp Trained adult for overnight camping cannot be male. Males may, however, act as additional First Aiders and camp trained adults. See XIV. Outdoor Program for additional information.

#### **Camp Training Recertification**

OLS Certified Volunteers must recertify once every three years to remain current. Recertification can be achieved by completing the online recertification exam for the current level before the three-year window expires, or by taking the next progressive level of outdoor program training to extend the certification for the next three years. If the OLS certification window has expired, the volunteer will be required to take the course again.

#### **Girl Scout Service Unit Team Members**

Core and Support Girl Scout Service Unit Team Members are required to take Service Unit Team Training. In addition, many service unit team roles have role-specific training that must also be completed. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description.

#### **Day/Twilight Camp Volunteers**

Day/Twilight Camp Administrative Team Members are required to attend training annually for their administrative role. Returning team members may update their training by reviewing the updated materials each year after they have completed the in-person session the first year. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description.

#### **Council Trainers/Facilitators**

Council Trainers are required to complete a Trainer the Trainer Workshop. In addition, they will be asked to work through a mentoring program that includes shadowing experienced trainers.

### **Short-term Volunteers**

Volunteers who participate in a one-time or short-term opportunity will receive an orientation specific to their volunteer activity. These volunteers may not count toward the number of Safety Wise Adults, nor may they be responsible for girl safety.

### **Other Volunteer Roles**

For roles not listed above, in addition to the Welcome and Orientation Videos, the volunteer should complete appropriate training as defined by a GSGMS liaison or within the Volunteer Role Description.

## **IV. Conflict Escalation & Resolution**

### **Policy:**

GSGMS encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to promptly and efficiently resolve conflicts. Despite the best of intentions by all Girl Scout stakeholders, including girl members, parents and volunteers, it may be necessary at times to address conflicts that arise. All involved parties should attempt to bring any disputes to resolution informally before escalating the conflict.

### **Conflict Resolution:**

Recognizing that each individual has both a personal interest in and a share of the responsibility for resolving conflicts in which they are involved, GSGMS favors a collaborative adult conflict resolution process. The most effective way of resolving complaints and concerns is usually by calm, open discussion between the individuals involved by telephone or in person. For this reason, before utilizing the formal grievance procedure, the aggrieved individuals are encouraged to try to resolve the matter informally among themselves. E-mail or text messaging exchanges are generally not conducive to a prompt and efficient resolution and, therefore, should be avoided.

Girl Scout volunteers do not have the authority to end another member's Girl Scout membership or participation in Girl Scouts or a specific Girl Scout troop, for either adults or girls. GSGMS staff must be consulted any time issues arise that involve an adult or girl's successful participation in a troop or that involve an adult in a volunteer role.

GSGMS expectations are that attempts be made to resolve the situation on a troop, volunteer, service unit, or other local level, prior to escalation. If no attempts have been made, the council reserves the right to not proceed with the escalation process.

### **Conflict Escalation Procedure:**

1. Whenever a conflict arises between individuals or an individual and the council, the circumstances surrounding the conflict should be discussed with the immediate supervisor (Girl Scout Service Unit Manager, Committee Chair, Volunteer Coordinator, Membership Specialist, etc.) and all parties involved. (Examples - a volunteer working in the Service Unit is supervised by the Service Unit Manager, Service Unit Manager is supervised by the Membership Specialist, Training Facilitator is supervised by the Adult Development Specialist)
2. If, despite the preceding steps, the conflict remains unresolved, any of the involved parties may request, complete and submit a GSGMS Escalation Form and send it to the appropriate

GSGMS staff member. GSGMS will promptly investigate the grievance and take further action, including a conference of all the parties involved in order to best resolve the conflict.

3. If this group is still unable to reach a solution after the steps outlined above have been followed, the unresolved conflict may be taken to the next level of supervision as necessary and appropriate.
4. In the event the conflict concerns finances, all records including bank statements, receipts, the most recent Annual Troop/SU Financial Report and any other financial records may be requested and an audit may be conducted.
5. After following the above steps, if the volunteer is not satisfied with the resolution at this level, an internal review board hearing will be offered that includes a five member group appointed by the Executive Committee consisting of two independent senior level volunteers, the Director of Human Resources, and two independent board members. The volunteer may present his/her grievance in writing or in person. The decision of this internal review board is binding and final.
6. Should the volunteer find the resolution unacceptable and pursue legal action, the Chairman of the Board and the Executive Committee, in consultation with the CEO, will make a final decision and see that the decision is implemented.

## V. Non-Discrimination

### **Policy:**

The Board of Directors of the GSGMS reaffirms its support of the following GSUSA policies and the development of a plan to recruit a variety of volunteers and staff within GSGMS's jurisdiction.

*Non-Discrimination for Volunteers:* There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified volunteer based upon a person's race, color, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, national origin, citizenship, genetic information, marital status or other protected group status. To ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, Non-Discrimination Policies and Procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of under-represented population groups.

*Pluralism and Diversity in Girl Membership:* All Girl Scout councils shall be responsible for seeing that membership is reflective of the pluralistic nature of their populations, and that membership is extended to all girls in all population segments and geographic areas in their jurisdictions.

## VI. Situations regarding Child Custody Parental Arrangements

### **Policy:**

GSGMS staff and volunteers are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing parental custodial agreements. Further, GSGMS staff and volunteers are prohibited from taking on the role of a mediator in these situations. If there is any escalation or conflict regarding a child custody arrangement, local law enforcement may be contacted to assist in the resolution of the situation as it pertains to that Girl Scout.

Volunteers are held accountable for following volunteer policies as stated in GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents, GSUSA Volunteer Essentials, GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSGMS Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

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 is first registered, that relationship is established by the person completing the registration (online or paper.) In order for the family manager/guardian to be changed, GSGMS requires the current family manager/guardian to submit a written request.

## VII. Whistleblower Policy

The Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi (GSGMS) requires the Board of Directors, other volunteers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. Employees and representatives of the organization must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling their responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Policy:**

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee, director or other volunteer of Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi who reports an activity that she/he considers to be illegal or dishonest to one or more of the parties specified in this Policy. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities include violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or goods not delivered; fraud, corruption, or other forms of lawbreaking covered by the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), the Whistleblower Protection Act of 1989, or by state whistleblower statutes; and other fraudulent financial reporting. It is the responsibility of all Board of Directors, other volunteers, and employees to report ethics violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

### **Procedures:**

#### **No Retaliation**

No director, other volunteer, or employee who in good faith reports an illegal or dishonest activity shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. Any individual who retaliates against someone who has reported an illegal or dishonest activity in good faith is subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the Council, including termination from the organization. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within GSGMS prior to seeking resolution outside GSGMS.

#### **Reporting Concerns - Employees**

Employees should first discuss their concern with their immediate supervisor. If, after speaking with his or her supervisor, the individual continues to have reasonable grounds to believe the concern is valid, the individual should report the concern as follows: Financial infractions to the Chair of the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees; All other concerns to the Board Chair. In addition, if the

individual is uncomfortable speaking with his or her supervisor, or the supervisor is a subject of the concern, the individual should report his or her concern directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee or the Board Chair.

If the concern was reported verbally, the reporting individual, with assistance from the Chair of the Audit Committee or the Board Chair, shall put the concern in writing. For non-financial concerns brought directly to the Board Chair, she/he will determine if the complaint should be reported to the Chair of the Audit Committee, who has specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all concerns. If the Board Chair, for any reason, does not forward the concern to the Chair of the Audit Committee, the reporting individual may directly report the concern to the Chair of the Audit Committee. Concerns may also be submitted anonymously. Such anonymous concerns should be in writing and sent directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee.

### **Board of Directors and Other Volunteers**

Board of directors and other volunteers should submit concerns in writing directly to the Chair of the Audit Committee.

### **Handling of Reported Violations**

The Audit Committee shall address all reported concerns. The Chair of the Audit Committee shall immediately notify the Audit Committee, the Board Chair, and the CEO, of any such report. The Chair of the Audit Committee will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the concern within five business days, if possible. It will not be possible to acknowledge receipt of anonymously submitted concerns.

All reports will be promptly investigated by the Audit Committee and appropriate corrective action will be recommended to the Board of Directors, if warranted by the investigation. In addition, action taken must include a conclusion and/or follow-up with the complainant for complete closure of the concern.

The Audit Committee has the authority to retain outside legal counsel, accountants, private investigators, or any other resource deemed necessary to conduct a full and complete investigation of the allegations.

### **Confidentiality**

Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

### **Acting in Good Faith**

*Anyone reporting a concern must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates an improper accounting or auditing practice, or a violation of the Code of Conduct.* The act of making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and that prove to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or with the foreknowledge that the allegations are false, will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer position or termination of employment. Such conduct may also give rise to other actions, including civil lawsuits.

**Please check the council website under Governance for current contact information.**

# Part 2: Risk Management & Safety

## VIII. Risk Management

### Policy:

The council recognizes that, through its varied activities, there is substantial exposure to various risks associated with its operations. In order to provide a safe organizational environment for youth, volunteers, and employees, the council will take reasonable and prudent steps to limit potential organizational liabilities through a program of risk management that includes, but may not be limited to, maintenance of a comprehensive liability insurance program, compliance with all regulatory requirements, and organizational standards, continuing education of employees and volunteer personnel, and assessment of the program's effectiveness.

A "Safety-Wise adult" is an adult designated as having the responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellness of girls, individually or collectively, while participating in Girl Scout activities. Safety-Wise adults should also be registered adult members and have completed a background check. Specific guidelines regarding the suggested adult-to-girl ratios can be found in Volunteer Essentials; however, in certain situations, the number of safety-wise adults may be increased to accommodate the special needs of girls.

### Procedures:

#### Non-Members

Non-member insurance should be purchased for all events at which non-members are participating. The Accident Insurance form can be located on the GSGMS website under the Forms section on the council website.

#### Certifications

Volunteers providing certified expertise must maintain current certification to meet Safety Activity Checkpoints requirements.

#### Child Safety

- All state, county, and city regulations must be adhered to, in particular with regards to food handling and child safety.
- Children will be supervised by an adult while cleaning supplies are in use.
- Girls must be accompanied at all times by the correct number of Safety-Wise adults when in the presence of program providers or activity certified individuals who are not Girl Scout members.

#### Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, the volunteers must:

- Provide appropriate care for the ill/injured individuals.
- Call 911/emergency medical care.
- Notify the child's parent or guardian.

- One adult must stay at the scene. Do not disturb victim or surroundings until assistance arrives.
- Make NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. DO NOT give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact GSGMS headquarters (601.366.0607 or 601.326.4475.)
- Secure and maintain all original permission forms and medical records to turn in as described below.
- Report the emergency. First call 911. Then call GSGMS Headquarters at 601.366.0607 or 601.326.4475 during normal business hours. If the emergency occurs after hours, call the COO of GSGMS at 318.348.5416. The after-hour emergency number is to be used for emergencies ONLY, such as: fatality, serious illness or accident, lost child, natural disaster, fire, chemical spills, etc.

### **Incident Reports**

In the event of an incident, an Accident/ Incident Report must be filled out within 48 hours and sent to Customer Care at GSGMS headquarters. All medical incident reports will be maintained by GSGMS in compliance with federal regulations. The form can be located on the GSGMS website under the Forms section. ([www.gsgms.org](http://www.gsgms.org))

### **First Aid/CPR/AED**

Approved providers of First Aid/CPR/AED training are American Red Cross, National Safety Council, Medic First Aid (formerly known as EMP America), American Heart Association, Emergency Care & Safety Institute, EMS Safety Services, and American Safety & Health Institute. First Aid/CPR/AED training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scout requirements as such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on technique.

### **Safety Activity Checkpoints**

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers detailed information concerning safety preparation and requirements to ensure safety for the girls while participating in that activity. For more information see the council website.

### **Privacy for Volunteers**

- Paper forms with confidential information such as Social Security numbers and drivers' license numbers should be turned into a GSGMS office or staff member within seven days of receipt of completed forms. All confidential information MUST be kept and held securely if in a volunteer's possession.
- Health History forms should not be maintained past their applicable use. Health History forms gathered by a troop leader are outdated twelve months past the date when they were originally filled out. At that time they may be reviewed and updated to extend their use. Health History forms gathered for the purpose of a specific event should not be kept past the final date of the event. In this case, forms should be returned to the participants or their parents/guardians or shredded.
- Volunteers should treat all privileged Girl Scout information with respect and maintain its confidentiality. This includes any and all information related to the organization, its members, its volunteers, and its staff, in any format (voice, paper, electronic.) This includes personal contact information.

## Credit Card Safety

- Protecting the safety of credit card information is also important. GSGMS uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology to protect the security of credit card information as it is transmitted. SSL is the industry standard in Internet encryption technology, and it is a highly sophisticated method of scrambling data as it travels from a GSGMS or other computer to the merchant credit card processor. GSGMS does not retain or store credit card numbers on its computers or servers.
- Volunteers and parents can make sure they are accessing the council's secure server before they submit personal financial information by looking at the lower left-hand corner of their browser. If they see an unbroken key or a closed lock (depending upon the browser), then SSL is active. To double-check for security, they should look at the URL or address line of the browser. If they have accessed a secure server, the first characters of the address in that line should change from "http" to "https."
- It is important for volunteers and parents to protect against unauthorized access to their password and to their computer. They should be sure to sign off when they finish using a shared computer.

## Note to Parents on Our Privacy Policy

- GSGMS is committed to providing a safe, secure, and fun online experience for children who visit the council's site. GSGMS is dedicated to safeguarding any personal information collected online and to helping parents and children have positive experiences on the Internet. Consistent with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, GSGMS will never knowingly request personally identifiable information from anyone under the age of 13 without prior verifiable parental consent.
- Parents can revoke their consent and ask that information about their children be deleted from the site by contacting GSGMS offices by phone at 601.366.0607 or CustomerCare@GSGMS.org. To do this or to review personal information collected from children, GSGMS must verify the identity of the requesting parent. When a parent revokes consent, GSGMS will stop collecting, using, or disclosing information from that child. To respect the privacy of parents, information collected and used for the sole purpose of obtaining verifiable parental consent or providing notice is not maintained in retrievable form by the site if parental consent is not obtained after a reasonable time.
- Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi believes it is good policy not to collect more personally identifiable information from children under 13 than is necessary for them to participate in the council's online activities. In addition, all sites that are targeted to children under 13 are prohibited by law from collecting more information than they need.
- For additional information on privacy, see <http://www.girlscouts.org/help/privacy.asp>.

## Forms Retention

All forms, not listed under the Privacy section above, that show personal contact information or troop financial information, such as copies of registration forms, financial reports, event reports, and membership rosters, should be kept for one membership year past the membership year for which they apply. After that time period, the forms should be shredded. For audit purposes, the council will retain finance reports according to recommended guidelines.



## IX. Health Issues

### Policy:

Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi recognizes that health issues may arise and encourages programs that enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our membership.

In support of this goal, the presence of an adult with a current First Aid/CPR/AED certification is necessary when required by Safety Activity Checkpoints. This training must include information on allergies and the proper response to allergic reactions.

### Procedures:

#### Infractions

Any infraction of the Health Issues Policy will be subject to prompt review under council volunteer disciplinary guidelines. The volunteer will be removed from her or his responsibilities at the activity.

#### Incident Reports

All Accident/ Incident Report reports will be maintained by council headquarters in compliance with HIPAA regulations.

#### Medication

Medication must be in the original container, prescribed for the person who is to receive the medication, and cannot be expired. A volunteer must have written permission from the parent/guardian to dispense the medication to a Girl Scout or individual under the age of 18 who is participating at a Girl Scout event or activity.

#### Confidentiality

All health related information will be maintained in a confidential manner in accordance with state and federal laws.

#### Allergies

Allergies requiring any accommodations must be disclosed in advance in writing to the appropriate volunteer or staff member.

## X. Child Protection

### Policy:

It is the policy of the council to provide an environment that is free of child abuse and that safeguards the health and well-being of all girl members of GSUSA, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The following is therefore prohibited by all adults and girls in the program:

- *Physical Punishment:* Volunteers cannot restrain, spank, or use any other physical engagement to punish a child.
- *Physical Abuse:* Any action that causes harm or injury to a girl, such as hitting, hazing, kicking, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.

- *Sexual Misconduct:* This includes any inappropriate sexual physical contact, lewdness or communication in words, print or images.
- *Physical Neglect:* This includes failure to give supervision, failure to provide for safety during activities or time of danger, or failure to meet medical needs.
- *Emotional Abuse:* This includes verbal attacks, anger outbursts, hostility, humiliation, hazing or socially inappropriate language such as cursing.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer implementing the Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse and/or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse and/or neglect.

**Procedures:**

Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 43-21-105, requires all persons make a report when abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children is suspected. Definitions of abuse and neglect and reporting information may be found at this website: <https://www.mdcp.ms.gov/report-child-abuseneglect/>

**Reporting:**

In the state of Mississippi, reports of abuse or neglect must be made within 48 hours at **[www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov](http://www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov)**. It may take 24 hours to process reports of abuse and neglect made through the Internet. If, as a volunteer you are unsure, contact your local Child Protection Services Agency to describe the situation.

Reports should include:

- The name and address of the child and her/his parents/guardians or person(s) having custody of such child, if known.
- The child’s age and the nature and extent of the child’s injuries, abuse or neglect, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse or neglect.
- Other information that might help in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse or neglect.
- Record the name of the intake worker who takes the report and note the date that the report is made.

Call Statewide Intake at 800.222.8000 or 601.432.4570 if:

- you prefer to remain anonymous;
- you have insufficient data to complete the required information on the report; or
- you do not want email confirmation of your report.

Call your local law enforcement agency or 911 if the situation is a life-threatening emergency.

**Providing Information:**

Although reports may be made anonymously, immediately notify Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi of any reports of suspected abuse or neglect involving either adults or youth in Girl Scouting. This includes any reports made to your local Child Protection Services Agency or state intake number.

Provide a written or verbal notification to the Chief Operating Officer at Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi at 601.366.0607 or 800.898.4475 within 24 hours after making a report.

**Confidentiality:**

Do not share this information with anyone other than the local Child Protection Services Agency and the Chief Operating Officer at Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi unless instructed by law enforcement.

## **XI. Harassment**

**Policy:**

GSGMS is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers and staff with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, while conducting Girl Scout program, harasses another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member.

**Procedures:**

Any volunteer or staff member who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization should promptly report the incident to their appropriate staff member. The individual contacted will take measures to follow up on all incidents in an expeditious manner.

# Part 3: The Girl Scout Program

## XII: Program

### Policy:

Girl Scouts is an informal educational program designed to help girls put into practice the fundamental principles of the Girl Scout movement as set forth in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, with a particular emphasis on leadership development in an all-girl environment. It is carried out with volunteer adult leadership and provides a wide-range of progressive activities developed around the interests and needs of today's girl. Programs are designed to foster courage, confidence and character, with an ultimate goal of helping girls discover their full potential, connect with others, and take action to improve their lives and their communities.

Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints must be consulted and guidelines followed. Activity Approval forms must be submitted and approved, when appropriate.

### Procedures:

#### Council Activity Approval

Depending on the nature, length and extent of the activity or trip, completion and authorization of an activity approval form may be required to ensure all proper steps are being followed. These forms can be located on the GSGMS website under the Forms section. The requirements and details for each of these forms can be found below:

The Low Risk - Activity Approval Form is required when activities:

- Are overnight stays of no more than one or two nights and/or involve travel outside the council's jurisdiction but within a 50 mile radius.
- Involve a subject that may be considered sensitive or controversial in nature
- Are of a money-earning nature (not including the GSGMS product sales program)
- Involve camping at a site other than a GSGMS property and troop camp certification is required.

This form should be submitted at least four weeks before the activity date to your designated GSGMS staff support representative.

The Medium-High Risk - Activity Approval Form is required when activities:

- Are overnight stays of three nights or more. Upon approval of your request, you will receive an Extended Trip Packet with additional instructions.
- Require a signed contract – all contracts must be signed by a GSGMS council officer.
- Include travel outside of council geography (over a 50 mile radius) to non-council hosted activities.
- Require specific certified instruction and activities not planned with camp reservation at council sites.

This form should be submitted at least six weeks before the activity date and may only be approved by your designated GSGMS staff support representative.

### **Site Agreement, Contracts and Charters**

All contracts, including facility use contracts (schools, churches, etc.) and transportation charters, must be signed by a council officer. Any volunteers who enter into contracts themselves will assume personal liability and responsibility.

Facility Use contracts must be sent to [CustomerCare@GSGMS.org](mailto:CustomerCare@GSGMS.org) and a copy of a Certificate of Liability Insurance requested before being mailed to the facility along with the Certificate of Liability Insurance.

All other contracts must be accompanied by a Medium-High Risk - Activity Approval form that must be approved by designated GSGMS staff and emailed to [CustomerCare@GSGMS.org](mailto:CustomerCare@GSGMS.org).

Bus charters require that the bus agency have a minimum of \$5 million in insurance coverage. A copy of the insurance certificate must be provided to council headquarters. Send all contracts to the council Accounting Department by emailing them to [CustomerCare@GSGMS.org](mailto:CustomerCare@GSGMS.org) or faxing to 601.326.7640, allowing a minimum of 14 business days for processing.

### **Overnight Sleeping Arrangements**

Most cabin and tent units at Girl Scout camp facilities have a designated Girl Scout leader's cabin or tent for adults. Girls sleep in the remaining cabins/tents in that unit. Lodges at Girl Scout camps have a group sleeping area for girls and a separate Girl Scout Leader room for adults, all within the same building.

No adult may sleep alone in a room, or in the same bed, with a girl. It is recommended but not mandatory that adults sleep in those areas designated for adults, and girls sleep in those areas designated for girls. Some situations which may occur that would prevent this arrangement include:

- the facility does not allow separate sleeping areas
- the adult volunteers in charge decide the girls are not ready
- the adult volunteers in charge decide the environment is otherwise not conducive

Should a situation occur in which female adults share the sleeping area with girls, there must always be a minimum of two unrelated adult females present. Adult-to-girl supervision ratios as defined in *Volunteer Essentials* must be maintained.

Men must follow sleeping guidelines stated in XIV. Outdoor Program – Men at Camp, and *Volunteer Essentials*.

### **Private Transportation**

Individuals operating motor vehicles transporting girls must be registered adults, at least 21 years of age, and be properly licensed and insured for the vehicle. The number of passengers must not exceed the intended number of passengers for the vehicle. Each person must have and use a specific seatbelt. All vehicles transporting girls and/or Girl Scout equipment must be properly registered, adequately insured and operated according to state statutes. A minimum of two adults is

recommended for each vehicle. Each vehicle shall carry passenger Health Histories and Permission Slips.

## Rentals

- Only reputable vehicle rental agencies with good maintenance and service records may be used.
- Most rental agencies rent to the driver(s), not the Girl Scout troop, even if the Girl Scout troop is paying for the vehicle.
- The driver's insurance is the primary insurance; the rented vehicle replaces the driver's personal vehicle. Drivers should contact their own insurance agent to make sure their personal insurance covers the rental vehicle, and meets or exceeds the insurance requirements for the states or countries in which the vehicle will travel.
- We recommend that the driver purchase the "damage/collision waiver" insurance, which covers only the replacement value of the rented vehicle, when renting the vehicle.
- Drivers need to be experienced in driving the type of vehicle being rented.
- The use of a 15-passenger van to transport Girl Scouts is prohibited. The lease of a 12-passenger van is NOT RECOMMENDED. However, if a 12-passenger van is used, the occupant load must be a maximum of eight passengers, with the rear seat(s) unoccupied, AND the driver should have driver training/experience related to 12-passenger vans. If there is another mode of transportation available, it should be used instead of a 12-passenger van.
- Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi non-owned automobile coverage is a secondary coverage after the driver's personal insurance. To meet the council insurance requirements, the council must be notified of the vehicle rental at least one week prior of the rental, either through the Extended Trip Packet information or the Medium-High Risk Activity Approval form. A copy of the rental agreement must be provided after the Medium-High Risk Activity Approval form is approved to CustomerCare@GSGMS.org.
- Always consult *Volunteer Essentials* and *Safety Activity Checkpoints* when traveling beyond your meeting place.

## Drivers

All volunteers coordinating activities (troop leaders, SU event coordinators, etc.) where adults are transporting girls not under their guardianship must verify that each adult driving is an approved driver and that the vehicles meet the legal insurance, licensing and registration requirements. Drivers should not drive more than 12 hours in any one 24-hour period. Usage of Cell phone is prohibited while driving girls to and from Girl Scout events.

## XIII: Girl Scout Troop Formation

### Policy:

In order to allow for a cooperative learning environment, it is recommended that each Girl Scout troop has a minimum of 5 girl members.

Some exceptions to this recommendation may include:

- Troops that are from sparsely populated rural areas where no other girls are available within a reasonable distance
- Girls who require more individual time and attention from Girl Scout leaders and/or may have special needs
- Troops comprised of high school girls
- Girl Scout troops currently in the formation process who are actively seeking additional members

**Procedures:**

**Registration**

Girl Scout troops may be formed and registered at any time during the membership year. For newly formed troops, the registration process must be completed before the second meeting as a Girl Scout troop. For the purposes of activities or events, registration is effective when the membership process is completed online.

**Renewal**

Renewing Girl Scout troops should register the girl and adult members and Girl Scout leaders via the online registration system or paper registration forms.

This should take place during Early Bird registration, no later than October 1 of each year. Renewing by October 1 of each year is necessary to ensure continued insurance coverage.

**Additional Members**

Additional girls or adults may be added to a Girl Scout troop at any time during the year.

**Troop Size and Composition**

- Girls should be able to participate in a troop that is large enough to provide experience in self-government and small enough to allow for development of the individual girl.
- Troops can include girls from more than one school grade and from more than one school. Ideally, troops should reflect the diversity (economic, racial, cultural, and religious) of the community.
- For information on the troop size recommendations by program grade level and suitable supervision of troops by size, see Volunteer Essentials.

## **XIV. Outdoor Program**

**Policy:**

Camping is an integral and fun part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Because it is important to protect the safety of the girls in the program, the following policies are in place for camping:

- Each Girl Scout Troop must follow the Volunteer Essentials requirements for the ratio of adults to girls, and follow all guidelines that are appropriate to the activities they are doing while camping.

- At least one of the volunteers camping with the Girl Scout Troop must provide proof that she or he is currently certified in First Aid/CPR/AED with one volunteer having attended OLS training.
- Men who camp with a Girl Scout Troop must follow all volunteer procedures. When men are part of the Girl Scout Troop leadership team, separate sleeping arrangements must be provided. No men may sleep in the same room as girls; a separate room, tent, or sleeping area must be provided. In the case of a husband and wife team, separate sleeping arrangements away from the girls and other volunteers is recommended. (In the event of a Father/Daughter campout, additional guidelines will be provided.)

### **Procedures:**

Registration for GSGMS camps and requesting approval for camping at non-GSGMS sites should identify the type of camping format.

### **Camping Formats**

Camping is defined as being carried out in two different formats:

1. *Troop Format:* Troops/Groups of girl(s) camping at any approved outdoor facility with the appropriate number of registered and trained adult volunteers with the appropriate volunteer security status. This format can include more than one Girl Scout troop such as during a service unit campout.
2. *Non-Troop Format:* Girl(s) camping in several formats:
  - a. Camping event during which girls are supervised by a parent/guardian such as a Mom-N-Me campout.
  - b. Camping event during which girls are supervised by a parent/guardian and include members of their immediate family, such as a family camp.
  - c. Camping event during which troops/groups of girls are supervised by the appropriate number of registered and trained adult volunteers with the appropriate volunteer security status. This format can include more than one Girl Scout troop such as during a service unit campout.

Note: Service Units may choose to organize their camping events using either format as described above.

### **Camp Trained Adults**

*Troop Format:* Each Girl Scout Troop must have at least one registered Outdoor Leadership Skills trained adult and one registered First Aid/CPR/AED Trained Adult. It is strongly encouraged that this not be the same individual. Each OLS and First Aid/CPR/AED certified adult must have the appropriate volunteer security status.

*Non-Troop Format:* The number of OLS Trained adults must be one for each group of up to 30 Daisies or Brownies and one for each group of up to 50 Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors or Ambassadors. These events must have a Health Supervisor who is a registered female Girl Scout adult with First Aid/CPR/AED certification from an approved provider. Both the individuals certified for OLS and First Aid/CPR/AED cannot additionally fill any other event staff positions including but not limited to Event Coordinator, Health Supervisor or Lifeguard. Each OLS and First Aid/CPR/AED certified adult must have the appropriate volunteer security status.



Some camp activities may require that volunteers designated as camp staff complete specific American Camp Association (ACA) screening requirements. It is recommended by the ACA that staff members are at least sixteen years of age and at least two years older than the minors with whom they are working.

### **Safety-Wise Adult to Girl Ratio**

Refer to the guidelines in Volunteer Essentials – Chapter 4 Safety-Wise, Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need. Female OLS and First Aid/CPR/AED trained adults can be counted as part of the required number of adults. Each adult counted as a Safety-Wise ratio adult must be registered and have the appropriate volunteer security status.

### **Domestic Animals or Pets at Camp**

Domestic animals or pets, other than service animals, must not be brought to any Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi camp at any time. Pets belonging to on-site, regular staff will be contained while campers are on property and must have approval prior to staff living at camp.

### **Men at Camp**

Men camping with Girl Scout troops should be an active part of the adult team accompanying the Girl Scout troop/group camping. If a male volunteer is one of the adults camping with a Girl Scout troop/group, these steps must be followed:

1. Indicate on the Camp Reservation Request form the number of adults who are males. Limited space is available for males and they will be placed as space allows.
2. Designated sleeping areas for registered males at camp will be determined by the Program Manager for each camp depending on what is available for that time period. For specific details, email [camp@GSGMS.org](mailto:camp@GSGMS.org).
3. For non-council facilities, a separate sleeping area apart from girls must be designated for males.
4. Registered males CANNOT be counted as Safety-Wise Ratio adults due to the fact they must sleep in a different area than the girls.
  - a. A male cannot serve as the primary OLS Trained adult, First Aider or adult to meet adult-to-girl supervision ratios.
  - b. A male volunteer may supervise camping activities between the hours of 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. During other hours, he is expected to be in the designated separate sleeping area.
  - c. A female OLS Trained adult, First Aider and/or Safety-Wise adult must be present for camping activities involving male volunteers.

### **Vehicles at Camp**

All vehicles must park in designated parking areas. The Ranger/Site Manager has the final decision as to the safe placement of vehicles. With the exception of loading and unloading that is directly related to the arrival and departure of Girl Scout troops, all vehicles must remain parked in their designated areas. If you have special needs (such as medical, physical, and ADA accessibility), please speak directly with the Ranger / Site Manager prior to arrival. The posted speed limit must be followed at all times.

## **Personal Property**

Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi is not responsible for property damage such as loss, theft, vandalism, acts of nature to personal vehicles and effects brought to camp property for programs, events, training, Girl Scout troop camp, special events, and resident camp.

## **Camp Sleeping Arrangements**

See Overnight Sleeping Arrangements.

## **Camp Emergency Procedures**

Girl Scout troops will be provided a copy of the camp emergency procedures before attending camp.

## **Reservations of GSGMS facilities**

Only authorized access is allowed on GSGMS camp property at any time. See GSGMS website ([www.GSGMS.org](http://www.GSGMS.org)) for current guidelines.

## **Camping on Non-Council Sites**

- All sites must meet all Safety Activity Checkpoints standards and council approval must be obtained.
- To obtain council approval for camping at non-council sites for two nights or less, that are within the council geographic area and do not include planned activities that require additional certifications (beyond OLS and First Aid/CPR/AED), use the Low Risk – Activity Approval form.
- To obtain council approval for camping at non-council sites that are three nights or longer, that are outside the council geographic area, or include planned activities that require additional certifications, use the Medium-High Risk Activity Approval form. Activities that are three nights or longer or outside the council geographic area may also require additional training or certifications depending on the event.

## **Use of Council Sites**

Reservation requests may be made for activities such as picnics, hiking, outdoor skill building, and nature study. Girl Scout troops wishing to use council sites during the day for Girl Scout programs must follow Camp Reservation Procedures. No changes may be made to camp property without approval of the council. This includes leaving materials such as equipment or geocaching on site.

## **Burn Bans**

Burn bans are occasionally implemented by the Mississippi Forestry Commission for the protection of life and property. Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi will follow the forest commission's recommendations. Information will be posted online. The Camp Registrar or Ranger/Site Manager may be contacted for updates. During burn bans, only propane, solar and indoor cooking is permitted.

## **Camp Closings**

In the case of pending inclement weather conditions, emergency repairs, or other unforeseen situations, GSGMS will determine no later than noon on the date of departure to camp whether facilities will remain open for activities. Listed Event Coordinators will be notified by phone and/or email if a camp is officially closed.

## **Industrial Kitchen Reservation and Use**

Use of industrial kitchens at GSGMS camps is subject to local regulations. GSGMS will abide by any and all regulations that apply and requires that GSGMS staff, volunteers and girls do the same;

therefore, documentation that appropriate food management and/or food handling licensing has been obtained must be provided at the time the reservation is requested. Additionally, copies of that licensing must be on hand when the kitchen is used and shown upon request. In no case may children under age 14 be permitted in the industrial kitchens.

## **XV. Public Relations**

### **Policy:**

The public impression of Girl Scouts is affected by the activities of everyone in the Girl Scout Movement. Keeping positive, consistent messages before the public is primarily the function of the council's Marketing and Communications Department. By coordinating communications, Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi will provide strong, consistent messages to external and internal audiences. The Marketing and Communications Department will handle all broadcast media (television and radio) and the print and internet, as well as collaborate with Girl Scout Service Units to promote Girl Scouts with print media within our jurisdiction.

In the case of serious accident, health emergency, or death, all volunteers and staff need to be aware of the council procedures.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Girl Scout Service Unit Public Relations**

When a newsworthy event or happening in a Girl Scout service unit occurs, Girl Scout volunteers should contact the council Communications Director at [Communications@GSGMS.org](mailto:Communications@GSGMS.org), who will then draft a press release and contact the appropriate local print media, (newspapers, newsletters, etc.) for their Girl Scout Service Unit.

#### **National Public Relations**

National media are never contacted by members of Girl Scout councils; GSUSA's PR staff handles all national media contact. If a Girl Scout volunteer thinks that an event or happening has national appeal, she or he will contact the GSGMS Marketing & Communications Department. If GSGMS's Marketing and Communications Department agrees that the event or happening has national appeal, the Director of Communications will then contact GSUSA's Public Relations staff.

#### **Emergency Situations**

If an emergency situation occurs, Girl Scouts and volunteers must follow the GSGMS Emergency Procedures that include making NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. Do NOT give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact GSGMS headquarters (601.366.0607 or 601.326.4475).

#### **Product Sales Program Public Relations**

In order to give every Girl Scout an equal opportunity to meet and exceed their personal Product Sales Program goals, all Girl Scout Product Sales Program media efforts (newspaper, magazine, television, radio, billboard, etc.) are coordinated by the GSGMS Marketing and Communications Department. A single Girl Scout troop, service unit, or individual may NOT contact the media nor list contact information in an advertisement, commercial, PSA, etc. without written approval from the GSGMS Director of Communications. Individuals who violate this policy may lose the privilege of participating in the GSGMS Product Sales Program.

### **Flyers/Information in Mailboxes**

It is against federal law to insert flyers in mailboxes. Girl Scouts and Girl Scout volunteers may not place any item not bearing postage into a mailbox. This includes flyers, Product Sales Program information, letters, etc.

### **Representing Girl Scouts**

When a Girl Scout or Girl Scout volunteer is representing Girl Scouts in any way, she or he must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout movement. If a Girl Scout or Girl Scout volunteer acts in violation of this procedure, she or he may lose membership privileges. Please refer to Section I regarding Dress Code.

## **XVI. Technology**

### **Policy:**

Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials must be consulted and guidelines followed.

Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi supports the development and use of technology and it is the council's intent to protect the safety, security and privacy of all registered members of the council.

Electronic mail (email) sent to a Girl Scout volunteer list is never to be used to send solicitations of any kind, inappropriate jokes or political information.

### **Procedures:**

The use of email is a convenient and quick method of communication between council staff and Girl Scout volunteers, girls or their parents.

### **Confidentiality:**

Anyone using email should be aware that most emails are not necessarily sent through secure channels and should not send content that could be considered confidential or libelous. Individuals using email should not blanket mail an email from someone else to a list or anyone else, without the permission of the person who sent the original email. Steps should be taken to properly secure and protect personal information in possession of volunteers, whether in paper or electronic form.

### **Conflict Resolution:**

Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email exchanges to resolve issues are not recommended by council. See IV. Conflict Escalation & Resolution for more information.

### **Websites:**

See "Computer/ Online Use" Safety Activity Checkpoint for guidelines regarding websites.

### **Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule:**

Adults must be aware of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule ("COPPA") <https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/childrens-online-privacy-protection-rule> and comply with its provisions.

# Part 4: Girl Scout Finances & Money-Earning

## XVII. Girl Scout Finances

### Policy:

Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints must be consulted and guidelines followed.

All volunteers who are responsible for Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi finances, fund raising and associated collections must be registered Girl Scouts with an appropriate volunteer security status and in good standing. This includes troop/group and service unit finances.

All money collected, earned or deposited in the name of Girl Scouting must be used to meet the purpose of Girl Scouting in Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi. Such money becomes the property of Girl Scouting and is not the property of individuals. Girl Scout troop and service unit funds are not to be credited or given to individuals. Girl Scout troop and service unit funds are not to be commingled with an individual's personal or business accounts.

To safeguard Girl Scout troop funds, all Girl Scout troops and service units should open and maintain bank accounts.

*Girl Scout bank accounts may be audited by GSGMS at any time. Girl Scout bank accounts must be reconciled monthly and must maintain a positive balance at all times.*

When all of the girls in a disbanding Girl Scout troop are not continuing in Girl Scouting, the members of the disbanding Girl Scout troop will decide fund placement. When the troop is disbanding and some girls are continuing in another Girl Scout troop(s), the funds will follow the girl(s) to the new Girl Scout troop(s). All undesignated funds will be returned to GSGMS and be placed in the council fund for camp enhancements/maintenance. Since all funds raised through Girl Scouts are for that sole purpose, when a girl chooses to end her participation in Girl Scouts, she will not receive any fund disbursement.

### Procedures:

#### Bank Fees

Choosing a bank that does not charge monthly service charges or charges only minimal fees on Girl Scout Troop bank accounts is recommended. The council has a list of banks from which to choose.

#### Account Name

"GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER MISSISSIPPI" must be included in the name of bank accounts. Examples of this are "Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi Troop XXXX" or "Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi Service Unit XXX."

#### Signatures

Two authorized signers are required for each Girl Scout troop or service unit bank account but only one signature is required on each check. Any exceptions must have prior approval from the GSGMS Finance department.

For troop bank accounts, appropriate signers are Girl Scout volunteers registered with the Girl Scout troop. For service unit bank accounts, appropriate signers are Girl Scout volunteers who are active

and registered in the Girl Scout service unit – usually the Girl Scout service unit manager and one to three additional Girl Scout volunteers

For any bank account, there must be at least two people who are not related to each other, and who don't reside in the same household on each account. Any time the signers on an account are changed, the account must be re-registered with GSGMS.

### **To Open or Make any Change on a Bank Account**

In order to open or make any changes on a Girl Scout Bank Account, the signers on the account must complete the Opening or Changing a Girl Scout Bank Account and ACH Registration Forms. After completing the first page, the signers should submit it to GSGMS for approval. After approval is given, a letter of authorization will be sent to the signers. When the bank account is opened, the signers should complete the second page and submit it to GSGMS in order to register the account with Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi.

### **Managing Girl Scout Finances**

- Troops and service units will reimburse only those expenses that were approved in advance, and that directly relate to a troop activity. Expenses that exceed the amount approved may not be reimbursed. If possible, potential overages should be discussed with the troop committee before purchases or expenditures are made.
- Expenses must be submitted no later than 30 days after the expense was incurred or the date of the event, whichever is later. The troop, group or service unit may elect not to reimburse items submitted after this date. No expenses will be reimbursed if submitted beyond six months of when the expenses were incurred.
- Mileage will not be reimbursed unless the troop committee or service unit team elects to do so under special circumstances.
- Checks issued by a troop, group or service unit for reimbursement of expenses must be deposited within 90 days of issuance. The troop, group or service unit will not be obligated to honor, reissue or replace checks still outstanding beyond this 90 day period.
- Expenses should be reported including the name of the vendor, store or other location, the purpose of expense, the date the purchase was made, and a detail of the itemized amounts to be reimbursed. Itemized receipts should be provided whenever possible.
- The troop or service unit treasurer must deposit cash or checks received from third parties (parents, GSGMS, etc.) within 10 days of receiving them.
- All funds received by a Girl Scout volunteer payable to GSGMS, must be turned over to GSGMS within 30 days.

### **Permitted Money-Earning Activities for Troops and Service Units**

In accordance with the additional policies and procedures outlined below, the following activities are permitted for troops and service units:

- Restaurant night when a share of proceeds is donated to the troop or service unit.
- Bake sales or craft sales when the items are made by girls, in compliance with any local ordinances regarding food handling.
- Garage sales.

- Partnering with a small local business for donations of up to \$1000 to support troop and service unit activities or programs.
- Small program grants up to \$500 can be applied for by troops and service units.
- For volunteers earning matching dollars through their employer for volunteer hours, please refer to policy XXV Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts and Other Tax Deductible Gifts.
- See other examples included in “Chapter 5, Managing Group Finances” in *Volunteer Essentials*.

### **Tax Deductions for Donated Funds**

As noted above, troops and service units may not receive donations greater than \$1000. Any donations of \$250 or more, or donations of any amount that need a tax receipt must:

1. Be made payable to GSGMS.
2. Be submitted directly to Fund Development with a notation of which troop should receive credit.
3. 100 percent of the funds (\$1000 or less) received will be sent back to the designated troop.
4. The donating organization will be sent an official tax receipt by GSGMS.

Since only Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi holds non-profit status as a 501c (3) with the IRS, any donations or proceeds from fundraising events conducted by troops or service units are not eligible for tax receipts unless they are submitted to GSGMS for processing.

### **Pass-Through Donation Form**

All donations received by GSGMS are processed with a Pass-Through Donation form turned in before or with the donation. The Pass-Through Donation form is located on the Forms page of the GSGMS website at [www.GSGMS.org](http://www.GSGMS.org). Please reference the form for more information about the pass-through process.

*Pass-Through Restrictions:*

- Contributions made through United Way
- Donations given on Mississippi Day of Giving
- Corporate Matching Gifts

### **Prohibited Money-Earning Activities for Troops and Service Units**

- Raffles, bingo, scratch cards or any game of chance
- Auctions, live and online
- Selling of gift cards (scrip)
- Selling of coupon books or discount cards
- Direct selling of any non-Girl Scout products (like Avon, Pampered Chef, etc.)
- Soliciting non-local businesses
- Working as car hops
- When the activity takes a paying job from someone
- Grants from corporations or foundations except as noted above

- Use of any external online fundraising sites that are not related to the GSGMS product sales program. See XXVII. Other Financial Situations for additional details.

### **Approval Process**

1. For any non-council money-earning activity, the troop or service unit must complete the Low Risk - Activity Approval form and submit it for approval four to six weeks ahead of time.
2. Approval requires participation in the most both council-sponsored product sales and good financial standing.
3. If approved, the Girl Scout troop or service unit may proceed with the approved project.
4. If not approved, the troop or service unit may provide updates and resubmit the approval form.
5. Low Risk – Activity Approval forms are not required for unsolicited donations or Volunteer Hour matching gifts.

## **XVIII. Girl Scout Troop Money-Earning Activities**

### **Policy:**

Girl Scout troop money-earning activities are valuable program activities and should be suitable to the age and ability of the girls. These Girl Scout troop money-earning activities are consistent with the goals and principles of the Girl Scout program. For more specific direction, see “Chapter 5, Managing Group Finances” in *Volunteer Essentials*.

The Product Sales Program includes both fall product sales and cookie sales. These are the approved money-earning activities for Girl Scouts. Additional money-earning projects must be approved in writing by the council before the money-earning project is undertaken. In most cases, the Product Sales Program should be sufficient to support the Girl Scout troop activities unless the Girl Scout troop is planning a trip or event that will take more than one year to plan. Girl Scout troop participation in the both council-sponsored product sales (or commitment to participate) is required for approval of additional money-earning projects. The determination of how proceeds from Girl Scout troop money-earning activities are used must be a girl decision.

Permission must be obtained in writing from a girl’s parent/guardian before she may participate in Girl Scout troop money-earning projects or the Product Sales Program.

Money-earning projects will not take place from the first day of cookie pick-up to the last day of council organized booth sales.

### **Procedures:**

Money-earning activities must be managed in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. All money-earning activities must be with organizations that are aligned with the mission of Girl Scouting. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers organizing and executing money-earning activities to ensure the troop is in compliance.

### **Product Sales Program**

The primary money-earning activity for Girl Scout troops is the GSGMS Product Sales Program. Participation in the GSGMS Product Sales Program and the submission of troop financial information



through the Finance tab of the Volunteer Toolkit within the most recent 12 months may be reviewed when approval is requested for an additional Girl Scout troop/group money-earning project.

Girl members can never ask for donations, including having a tip jar present at a Girl Scout cookie booth. Troops are permitted, however, to collect funds for the specific purpose of purchasing Girl Scout cookies for a Gift of Caring project, including but not limited to Troop to Troop. If a customer gives an unsolicited donation, the troop is allowed to keep the donation.

### **Older Girl Troops Doing Service Unit Events for Younger Troops**

In the promotion of service unit events hosted by older girls, troops must advertise if planning to make a profit. In any case, profit should be modest, with advertising noting how profit will be used. Any associated income and expenses should be shared through the Finance tab of the Volunteer Toolkit.

## **XIX. Girl Scout Troop Budgeting & Reporting**

### **Policy:**

Always keep in mind that Girl Scouts is an organization for girls and all funds should be spent to benefit the girls of the troop. Regular reporting of Girl Scout troop finances is essential. Every Girl Scout troop should report at least three times per year to the families of Girl Scout troop members on the troop financial status and how its funds are being earned and spent.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Troop Budgeting**

It is recommended that Girl Scout troop funds should be spent as follows:

- 65% for the direct benefit of the girls active in the troop at the time the money is earned
- 25% may be maintained for a long-term activity planned by the girls
- 10% may be used to recognize volunteer contributions to the Girl Scout troop

Direct Benefit for the Girls could include but is not limited to:

- Renewal costs for girl members
- Girl Scout activities open to all Girl Scout troop members
- Girl Scout badges and/or patches
- Girl Scout uniform components or Girl Scout program books
- A donation to a cause the girls decide upon

A long-term girl-planned activity must be based on the girls' decision and could include:

- A future Girl Scout trip that is age appropriate and will take place within three to four years
- Assistance so that all Girl Scout troop members will have the opportunity to attend Girl Scout summer camp

Recognition of Volunteer Contributions could include but is not limited to:

- Renewal costs for adult volunteers
- Girl Scout patches
- Girl Scout adult uniform components or Girl Scout program books
- A small appreciation gift for the volunteers, such as flowers for the leader

### **Troop Financial Reporting to Troop Parents and Adults**

- GSGMS recommends that all troops use the Finance tab in the Volunteer Toolkit located within MyGS to share financial information with parents, if available.
- Parents/guardians of the girls in the Girl Scout troop/group always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Girl Scout troop
- Keeping Girl Scout troop income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings with girls and their parents/guardians about the use of Girl Scout troop funds.

### **Disbanding Girl Scout Troops**

A troop disbands when all the girl members in the troop decide to leave the troop and either are not going to re- register as a Girl Scout in any Girl Scout troop, or are going to join another Girl Scout troop. At that point, the disbanding troop number is retired, and the troop is no longer considered active. The term “disbanding troop” does not apply to one or more girls who choose to leave a Girl Scout troop that remains active.

### **Allocating Funds**

1. If none of the girls in a disbanding troop are continuing as a Girl Scout in another troop, all remaining funds must be sent to GSGMS, Funds will be used to support Girl Scouts in GSGMS:
  - a. The disbanding troop members may choose a council program area such as Destination grants or Gold Award scholarships
  - b. If the girls do not choose a specific designation, the money will be used for camp enhancements/maintenance.
2. If all of the girls continuing in Girl Scouts choose to join the same active Girl Scout troop, all funds will be transferred to that troop.
3. If the girls continuing in Girl Scouts choose to join two or more other active Girl Scout troops, funds will be divided on a per girl basis based on those girls continuing in Girl Scouts.

### **Final Financial Responsibilities**

The Girl Scout troop leader must submit final troop financial information through the Volunteer Toolkit within 30 days of disbanding the troop. The leader should also complete the Disbanding Troops Form, located on the GSGMS website under the Forms section.

If no girls are continuing in Girl Scouts, a check should be sent for the remaining Girl Scout Troop funds payable to the Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi, Attention: Accounting, with the SU # and Troop # written on the memo line on the front of the check. If the girls have decided on a designation for the funds, this information should be included with the check.

### **Girl members transferring to another active troop or to become an individual member**

When a girl decides to move her membership to another active troop the following year, it is appropriate to transfer a proportionate share of the troop funds to her new troop. In the case of the

girl deciding to become an individual member (Juliette), the appropriate share of troop funds would go to GSGMS to be held for her participation in Girl Scout activities. The portion should not be based on a girl's specific participation in any money-earning activity.

To be considered for a share of the troop funds, a girl's parent or guardian must be in good financial standing, meaning she or he does not have an outstanding debt due to the troop or GSGMS.

GSGMS does not recommend that a girl transfers during the course of the GSGMS Cookie Program after the initial order has been placed by her troop and before all cookie rewards have been distributed.

## **XX: Girl Scout Service Unit Funding**

### **Policy:**

GSGMS determines annually the rebate to Girl Scout service units derived from each Girl Scout service unit's participation in the Product Sales Program. These funds are to be used for operations of the Girl Scout service unit and guidelines are to be followed. Since these funds are available through the efforts of girls and Girl Scout troops, every effort should be made to use the funds in the same year in which they are collected.

After reaching Product Sales goals, service units may engage in other permitted money raising activities as detailed in procedures.

### **Procedures:**

Money-earning activities must be managed in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. All money-earning activities must be with organizations that are aligned with the mission of Girl Scouting. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers organizing and executing money-earning activities for the service unit to ensure the service unit is in compliance.

### **Source of Funds**

Service units may receive funds from the GSGMS Product Sales Program and Girl Scout service unit events. The per package amount for cookie rebates is approved annually. Money collected from service unit events should balance out with expenditures. If there is money left over, it should be used for the next girl event.

Service units are encouraged to limit the amount of time spent on external fund raising activities so they can spend time on girl programming and adult development and recognition. Service units are not allowed to conduct any money raising activities from the first day of cookie pick-up to the last day of council organized booth sales.

### **Receiving Funds**

Service units may receive funds directly only if the previously required Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report is on file with the council. Funds for Girl Scout service units that have not filed a Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report, or that have a staff member serving as Girl Scout service unit manager, are held in a custodial account. Written requests to release or use custodial funds must be approved in advance by council.

## **Corporations**

Service units may request donations up to \$1000 or program grants of \$500 or less from businesses within their local geographies. Corporations and foundations with more than 50 employees are not to be solicited directly by service units or individuals for purposes of donations. Handling of these funds should be in accordance with the Tax Deductions for Donated Funds procedure.

## **XXI. Girl Scout Service Unit Budgeting & Reporting**

### **Policy:**

Always keep in mind that Girl Scouts is a girl organization and all funds spent should benefit the girls of the service unit. At least two times during the year, troop leaders and service unit team members should be informed about the current status of the Girl Scout service unit income and expenses.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Managing Girl Scout Service Unit Funds**

The Girl Scout service unit manager is accountable for the management of Girl Scout service unit funds, even if other volunteers are appointed by the council to help manage the Girl Scout service unit bank account funds. Any volunteer appointed must be a registered member of GSUSA, complete the background check process, and support the principles of Girl Scouting and the goals and objectives of Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi and GSUSA.

#### **Service Unit Budgeting**

It is recommended that Girl Scout service unit teams develop a budget that includes projected sources of funds and anticipated expenses for major events in the upcoming year.

As a guideline, it is recommended that Girl Scout service unit funds should be spent as follows:

- 75% for activities that provide direct benefit to girls
- 15% operational expenses
- 10% adult recognition

Girl Scout service unit funds may be used for the following:

- Postage or postcards
- Office supplies such as paper, copies, or checks
- Girl Scout leader appreciation gifts or events
- Reduction of service unit event fees
- Service unit equipment
- Resource materials such as handbooks or songbooks
- Annual meeting attendance for delegates
- Girl Scout troop start-up funds
- Membership recruitment events

### **Service Unit Financial Reporting**

Members of the Girl Scout service unit always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Girl Scout service unit. Keeping Girl Scout service unit income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings about the use of Girl Scout service unit funds. Accounting of Girl Scout service unit operational funds and individual event funds are maintained separately, then combined for reporting on the Girl Scout Service Unit Annual Financial Report. **This report is due to GSGMS by June 30 each year**, recapping the entire SU fiscal year of June 1 to May 31. A copy of this report should be retained by the service unit team for SU records. Service unit accounts are subject to audit by the council at any time.

Service unit team members managing the SU finances should obtain bills and receipts for all Girl Scout service unit expenses and deposits and attach them to the Girl Scout service unit copy of the required financial report. A copy of the report must be shared with the Girl Scout service unit members.

## **XXII. Financial Reimbursement for Designated Council Operational Volunteers**

### **Policy:**

The concept of volunteer service, time and talent given without remuneration, is essential to the future of the girls who want and need Girl Scouting. Within this concept, it is recognized that special situations will warrant meeting some out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers whose needed skills and services would not otherwise be available.

Officers of the council, board members, certified volunteer trainers, and other council-level volunteers may – from time to time – incur expenses related to carrying out their responsibilities. Volunteer expenses may be itemized as IRS expenses, or may be reimbursed all, or in part, by the council in accordance with council procedures.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Designated Council Operational Volunteers**

Designated council operational volunteers include council task group volunteers and council trainers. Designation of volunteers at this level is defined at the time of volunteer appointment.

#### **Reimbursable Expenses**

Expenses that will be reimbursed may include, but are not limited to, the following: reimbursement for gasoline, postage, rental fees, mileage, parking fees, toll charges, airport transportation, business meals, overnight lodging, airfare, and meeting supplies.

#### **Making a Request**

To request council reimbursed funds for the expenses, the volunteer must:

1. Obtain preapproval.
2. Forward a completed expense report with receipts to the lead staff member assigned to the task group responsible for the activity.
3. Allow at least three weeks for processing and disbursing.

### **Reimbursement Process**

The appropriate budget manager reviews and approves the request and forwards a Payment Authorization Request to the accounting department for processing.

### **Remaining Funds**

Receipts and money remaining from an advancement of funds must be returned to Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi within two weeks following the activity or event.

## **XXIII: Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts and Other Tax Deductible Gifts**

### **Policy:**

All voluntary contributions intended to benefit the Girl Scout program in the Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi jurisdiction, regardless of value, form or designated use, will be made only to the council and must follow current IRS guidelines. Incorporated as a public charity and designated as a 501(c) (3) organization, the council is the only entity to which tax-deductible contributions may be made. The Federal Internal Revenue Code determines any tax deduction available to a donor.

Because Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts are adult-generated funds and not generated by the girls as money earning program activities, they must be considered separately. Once Volunteer Hour Matching Gift funds are received at the council headquarters, 100 percent may be returned to the Girl Scout troop or service unit if a Pass-Through Donation Form was received regarding the volunteer hours.

In cases when a company will match volunteer hours with a donation to an organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c) (3) charitable organization, council will verify hours as requested, and all contributions must be receipted by Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi. Individual Girl Scout troops are not recognized as 501(c) (3) charitable organizations and therefore may not deposit these gifts.

Donations received as matching grants for volunteer service will be passed through to the troop or service unit.

### **Procedures:**

In order for the funds to be appropriately distributed the volunteer must follow these steps:

1. Complete the paperwork required by the company and submit it to the company for processing.
2. Send a copy of the submitted paperwork to Accounting immediately upon requesting the grant. Include the completed Pass-Through Donation Form if applicable. Email the information to [CustomerCare@GSGMS.org](mailto:CustomerCare@GSGMS.org), subject line "Volunteer Hours".
3. Include the following information:
  - a. Who is the volunteer requesting the grant?: Full Name, Service Unit #, Troop #, Address
  - b. What is the name of the company to which the grant request is directed?
  - c. How many volunteer hours are being reported?
  - d. What amount is being requested?
  - e. Will the funds be returned to the troop or service unit?

- f. If the funds are to be returned to the troop, who is the troop leader?: Full Name, Service Unit #, Troop #, Address

When checks are presented either to the council or to the volunteer, they will be deposited by the council, and handled as a Pass-Through Donation. Volunteer Matching Gift checks must not be deposited in Girl Scout troop funds. Should a payment for volunteer hours not be delivered to the council, the volunteer's hours will no longer be verified and no tax letter verifying the donation will be sent to the company. Refer to XVII. Girl Scout Finances – Tax Deductions for Donated Funds.

## **XXVI. Collection of Outstanding Funds**

### **Policy:**

To protect the integrity of council-approved Girl Scout troop money-earning activities, all efforts will be made to ensure that outstanding balances are paid.

The Girl Scout troop should not assume debt responsibility for any individual upon completion and timely submission of a Parent Debt form for any remaining balance due by individuals at the conclusion of the sale.

Persons with an outstanding amount due to Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi beyond 60 days may not be allowed to serve in any volunteer capacity for the council until the account is paid in full.

Girls with parents/guardians having delinquent or outstanding funds may not participate in council-sponsored money-earning activities until the debt is cleared, with the exception of a troop booth sale.

### **Procedures:**

#### **Program Participation**

Girls may continue to participate in Girl Scout troop and service unit activities if their parents/guardians have delinquent or outstanding balances with the council. Girls with parents/guardians with delinquent or outstanding funds may not participate in council-sponsored money-earning activities until the debt is cleared.

#### **Girl Scout Troops**

Girl Scout troop outstanding funds will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the debt should be assigned to an individual or volunteer. Eligibility for the troop to participate in the following activities may be withheld:

1. Money-earning activities will be determined on a case-by-case basis
2. Events that require activity approval

#### **Course of Action**

All avenues available to the council, including use of collection agencies and legal action, will be pursued regarding outstanding debt or delinquencies.

#### **Resigned or Terminated Volunteers**

If a volunteer resigns her or his position or is terminated, any balances owed the council are still considered outstanding until paid in full.

## XXV. Other Financial Situations

### **Policy:**

Adult members acting in a Girl Scout capacity may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by GSGMS in which the council is the beneficiary (such as United Way). Girls may not engage in any direct solicitation for money.

Any permission for endorsements, individual testimonials or authorization of books, play, promotion pictures, radio and TV programs about Girl Scouting shall be first referred to the GSGMS Chief Executive Officer for further action in keeping with the policies of GSUSA.

For safety and security reasons, sales and marketing on the Internet for any Girl Scout troop/group money-earning activities may not be conducted by individual girls, parents, or other adults except as provided for in the Girl Scouts of the USA Product Sale Guidelines and with appropriate parental permission. Sales on the Internet include any financial transaction concluded on any website, including online auctions or public sale sites. Marketing includes advertising the sale and the solicitation and receipt of order commitments. (*The Blue Book of Basic Documents – Internet Sales.*)

Sales on the internet of Girl Scout merchandise such as uniforms, insignia, publications, and equipment, may only be conducted by duly authorized and licensed Girl Scout councils, council shops, retail agencies and/or GSUSA licensed vendors. Permission to sell on the internet must be obtained from GSUSA. (*The Blue Book of Basic Documents – Internet Sales.*)

No soliciting of funds using any external online fundraising sites that are not related to the GSGMS cookie program is permitted. Prohibited sites include, but are not limited to: gofundme.com, kickstarter.com, giveforward.com and crowdrise.com. Any money solicited in this manner will be retained by Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi.

### **Procedures:**

Consult the noted sections of the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*. Individual violations will be reviewed and discussed with the party involved as they arise based on the circumstances of the situation.