



Policies & Procedures

*Approved by Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council's
Board of Directors on 11/07/2018*

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Invest in Girls, Change the World!

Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council welcomes you on this new journey to help girls discover a world of new and exciting things! As volunteers you are vital to the success of not only our movement but to the lives of the girls you will lead. If your passion is to “Live out Loud” then we need you, your talents, life experiences, and knowledge - anyone can teach a girl to soar and reach her full potential! Everyone has something to offer to Girl Scouting. Volunteers can participate as much as they want: short-term, on-going, working directly with girls, behind the scenes, with a troop, or even at the administrative level. There are many opportunities available. Whatever amount of time you can give, it means a lot to the girls.

Volunteer Philosophy

Volunteers are our movement’s greatest role models! By offering our girls new ways to see and change the world, or get involved in the community, our volunteers teach them the importance of not only helping others, but giving back! Our mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. These policies are designed to ensure volunteer position satisfaction and to utilize the talents of volunteers effectively to create quality programs in a positive environment.

Volunteer & Staff Code of Ethics

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

Girl Scout Promise

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

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

Girl Scout Law

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

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Introduction:

Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council Policies

Members of the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council shall follow these policies as established by Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council's Board of Directors and the national policies as established by Girl Scouts of the USA. The policies outlined below relate specifically to the work of council volunteers. Council staff have policies to which they must adhere, which can be found in the document entitled *Employee Handbook Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council*. The Board of Directors has the sole responsibility of approving and amending policies for the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council.

All material in this document is subject to change and amendment. For clarification on any information contained in this document call GSSGC at 909-307-6555.

Diversity & Inclusion / Affirmative Action

The Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council embraces the concept that excellence must be achieved through diversity and is committed to securing representation of people to reflect the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of our communities. We uphold our commitment to the "Affirmative Action for Volunteers" policy of Girl Scouts of the USA, which states: "There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status." In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures are utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups for committees and at training levels.

1. Volunteer Essentials Training (formerly Basic Leadership Training (BLT)) for any Girl Scout position will include affirmative action training
2. Council staff shall maintain current lists of all girls for placement into troops in compliance with the affirmative action policy.
3. Council staff will provide support to the all volunteers to ensure diversity and inclusion throughout the Girl Scout program.
4. Council staff will annually review membership ethnic and school statistic reports in an effort to provide support to administrative regional volunteer team members to ensure diversity throughout the Girl Scout program.
5. Council-wide recruitment procedures for all girls and adults will be developed and implemented with an emphasis on reaching under-represented populations.

Membership

Girl membership shall be open to any girl between the ages of 5 and 17 or K to grade 12 including transitional kindergarten who accepts the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Adult membership shall be open to any person who meets the following requirements:

1. Be a minimum of 18 years of age
2. Accept the principles and beliefs as stated in the [Preamble to the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA](#) (can be found on GSUSA's website).
3. Pay a non-refundable annual membership fee or hold a lifetime membership.

4. Subscribe to the Promise and Law as well as all policies established by Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council (GSSGC).

To register as a troop/group in GSSGC:

1. The **minimum** size of a troop/group for Daisy (D) , Brownie (B), Junior (J), and Cadette (C) Girl Scouts shall be no less than five girls and two adults.
2. The **minimum** size of a troop/group for Senior (S) or Ambassador (A) Girl Scouts shall be no less than three girls and two adults.

If, at any time, a troop/group drops below the needed number of registered people, they will have 60 days to become compliant or must register the remaining girls as individually registered Girl Scouts (“IRG” on GSUSA paperwork).

The designation of a troop/group (i.e. D, B, J, C, S, or A) shall be dependent on the majority of registered girls in an age level.

In regards to multi-age/grade level troop/groups: grade level specifics apply at all times. (i.e. money earning activity guidelines shall apply to specific levels, extended trip rules, partitioning of funds, etc.)

In regards to bridging, Girl Scouts may begin to earn badges and recognitions for their new level once bridged. However, due to progression they would not be eligible to follow policies designed for the next level or participate in a program designed for the next level until the new school year starts. For example travel or summer programs.

All volunteers participating in the movement **MUST** be registered as members of Girl Scouts.

Volunteer Appointment Process

Categories of Volunteers

In Girl Scouts we have many different types of volunteers who work with our organization. These volunteers fall into two categories, Girl Scout volunteers and community partners*.

Girl Scout Volunteers are members of our organization and volunteer as individuals. These policies apply to those volunteers and this category is more clearly defined below.

Community Partners* are volunteering for Girl Scouts but are representing another organization. These types of volunteers are often presenters or offer some type of manual labor. These policies do not apply to these volunteers, but all Girl Scout policies related to girls must be followed when interactions occur. Community partners may never supervise girls unless they are also a background screened/cleared Girl Scout volunteer. In addition, they may not have fiduciary responsibility unless previously approved by the chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio (CEO) or his/her designee.

*When community partners are assisting at events (such as Mega-Drop) appropriate insurance must be arranged.

Furthermore, Girl Scout Volunteers fall into two categories, operational volunteers and governance volunteers.

Governance Volunteers are elected to their positions and play a direct role in governing the council. Governance volunteers include members of the board of directors, board committee members, region chairs, delegates, etc.

Operational Volunteers are appointed to their positions through an application process and include leaders, co-leaders, assistant leaders, trainers, episodic volunteers, program/event volunteers, , etc.

Position Descriptions

Each volunteer position will have a written position description that defines specific responsibilities and clarifies expected performance of duties.

Application Process

Each candidate for a volunteer position supervising girls or with fiduciary responsibility **MUST** complete the following application process:

1. Complete an application form.
2. Pay a fee to undergo a criminal history background check.
3. An interview and reference checks may be conducted randomly.
4. A DMV printout may be required for volunteers transporting girls.

In addition, all volunteers wishing to work with the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council must complete any training required for the position into which they are placed.

Volunteer Selection

Every potential adult volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the job, willingness to complete the required application process, willingness and availability to participate in training, and willingness and ability to supervise the health and safety of the girls.

Selection of adult volunteers is dependent on the results of the criminal history background check and other pertinent information such as the interview, reference checks, etc. Certain criminal records will automatically disqualify the applicant from serving as a volunteer. These may include, but are not limited to, crimes against children, felony offenses against persons and/or family, crimes defined as public indecency, crimes involving weapons, arson, DUI convictions, any violent crime, serious drug related offense, or other similar convictions.

If there is a question regarding the applicant's qualifications to serve as volunteer, applications will be reviewed by the CEO or his/her to determine whether initial or continued placement is appropriate.

Providing false information in the application process is an automatic disqualification.

The health and safety of the girls is paramount. If a registered sex offender resides in the household of a Girl Scout volunteer, the applicant or volunteer will be reviewed on a case by case basis. At a minimum, the volunteer must notify council and every parent/guardian in writing.

If, after the application is approved, a registered sex offender becomes a member of the household, the volunteer **MUST** immediately report this to the council CEO in writing.

Every troop must have at least one volunteer designated as an “01”; however they may have multiple “01”s acting as “co-leaders.”

Every volunteer position in Girl Scouting is open to qualified men as well as women. Men working directly with girls **MUST** serve as “co-leaders” with unrelated women leaders of the troops/groups. This policy adheres to GSUSA standards as stated in *What We Stand For*.

If troop leadership is related by blood or marriage, living in the same household, or sharing a domestic partnership, then a third non-related or unaffiliated volunteer must be present at all times when girls are present.

See Council-Sponsored Product Sale booth rules regarding cookie/fall product season for current regulations as supported by Girl Scouts of San Geronio Council and the board of directors.

Volunteer Placement

Every attempt will be made to place qualified applicants in the positions they request, consistent with the needs of the council. If the position requested is not available, or the individual is not selected for that position, the individual may be offered another position for which she/he may be qualified. If one is currently available, and a volunteer may request reassignment as another position becomes available.

Volunteer Appointment

Volunteer appointment shall be based on the qualifications of each individual and the needs of the council.

A volunteer agreement will be completed at the time of appointment to a volunteer position and for each subsequent year of volunteer service. It will include expectations of continuity of service, specific expectations for job performance, and the signature of the volunteer and his/her supervisors. A position description and a copy of the council policies will accompany the agreement.

Volunteer agreements, appointments and reappointments are at the discretion of the CEO or his/her designee and shall be based on the guidelines set forth in this document.

Code of Conduct

As a member of the Girl Scout movement, it is expected that a high code of ethics and a high code of conduct, as defined by the Girl Scout Promise and the Law, be adhered to when representing Girl Scouting. Unacceptable volunteer behaviors that may be cause for immediate suspension, termination, or removal from the troop/group environment are outlined in this document.

This includes but is not limited to the parents working with troops who do not follow policies and procedures.

Volunteers must safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of all girl and adult members at all times.

Volunteers and/or family members shall not use their position to solicit for personal gain, (e.g., consultant, supplier of goods or services, paid instructional services, or in any other capacity which promises compensation of any kind) unless the facts are disclosed in full faith and authorized by the CEO.

Performance Appraisal of Volunteers

The purpose of the performance appraisal is to assess a volunteer's performance and areas of needed growth. The *Volunteer Agreement* and/or *Position Description* will serve as the basis for appraisal.

It is recommended that the volunteer prepare a written self-appraisal to be submitted to the designated council staff prior to the annually scheduled performance appraisal. Volunteer appraisals will be reviewed by the appropriate council staff with the volunteer and recommendations are made regarding continued placement, improvements, and/or new assignments. A copy of the appraisal is signed by the volunteer and the designated council staff and filed in the volunteer's personnel file.

All *Volunteer Performance Appraisals* that include significant concerns regarding volunteer performance or conduct **MUST** be reviewed by the CEO or his/her designee.

Reappointment of Volunteers

Reappointment of volunteers is done on an annual basis depending on the willingness to perform the duties set forth in the job description and the past performance of the volunteer.

Release of Volunteers

Release of volunteers is at the discretion of the CEO or his/her designee. A volunteer may be released if:

- the volunteer receives a negative performance appraisal or does not submit a requested self-appraisal in a timely manner
- the personal conduct of the volunteer does not comply with the high code of ethics and conduct as defined in the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- the volunteer is unable and/or unwilling to fulfill the duties as outlined in the position description and/or as specified in the volunteer agreement
- the volunteer has completed the maximum allowable years for his/her position

In addition, unacceptable volunteer behavior that may be cause for immediate suspension or termination shall include, but is not limited to:

1. willful violation of Council or National Girl Scout Policies
2. willful creation of discord
3. willful damage and/or misuse of property
4. violence of any kind
5. child abuse as defined by California State Law

6. drugs – use, sale, possession, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or sale of legally prescribed drugs or misuse of legally prescribed drugs at a Girl Scout sponsored event
7. improper conduct while under the influence of prescription drugs including but not limited to transportation of girls while on a controlled substance
8. alcohol – use, possession of or being under the influence of alcohol is prohibited at all girl programs, activities, and events
9. smoking – smoking in non-designated areas or in the presence of girls is prohibited. As per California state law, you must be a minimum of 50 feet away from a non-smoker when smoking. As a Girl Scout volunteer you may, at no time, leave the girls without the correct Girl Scout *supervisory* ratio for the purpose of smoking.
10. firearms/ammunition/weapons - no firearms or weaponry shall be in possession of, on the person, or in a vehicle, of any Girl Scout member or non-member accompanying them while engaged in Girl Scout activities UNLESS the person is a sworn peace officer or a registered/licensed instructor for a safety program on use of firearms/ammunition/weaponry.
11. inappropriate, abusive, profane, or offensive language.
12. any inappropriate conduct, behavior, or acts as defined by council staff and the CEO, during Girl Scout activities
13. willful misuse of council, regional and/or troop/group funds or credit/debit cards as defined by council staff and the CEO.
14. refusal to submit an accurate and timely *Financial Report*, due by June 15 each year or within 30 days of change of leadership, troop split, dissolution of troop/group, or on demand from designated council staff.
15. failure to fulfill the conditions of the volunteer agreement and/or the volunteer position description.
16. falsification or significant omissions of any information on the *Volunteer Application* form and/or council records.
17. harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment or abusive language or behavior that creates a hostile environment directed towards any person to include but not limited to girls, council staff, fellow Girl Scouts, or members of the public.
18. failure to maintain a positive representation of Girl Scouts of San Geronimo and GSUSA at all Girl Scout related activities and events.
19. adverse results from a criminal history background check or Department of Motor Vehicle report.
20. willful misuse of social media, inflammatory comments, abusive language, misrepresentation of the GS Law and Promise, selling cookies/fall product on a public page or misrepresenting council.
21. a registered sex offender becoming part of the volunteer's household, whether the volunteer's role is governance or operational.

Process for Release/Suspension of a Volunteer

1. Designated council staff will bring to the attention of a member of the senior management team or the CEO any issues that may require termination/suspension of an appointed volunteer.
2. Termination/suspension of services prior to the end of appointment will be based on reasons delineated in this document and/or at the discretion of the CEO.
3. Except in cases involving offenses that require immediate termination, prior to releasing/suspending a volunteer, the following process will be followed:

- a. An interview shall be conducted (via phone or in person) at the discretion of the CEO with regards to the offending incident. At that time the volunteer will be told of the specific performance areas that are not satisfactory based on observable and documented information.
- b. If, at the discretion of the CEO, a probation period is required, a time period, not to exceed 90 days, will be established, at which time improved performance must be evident.
- c. If a satisfactory level of performance is not achieved within the established time period, an official notice of release from the volunteer position will be communicated, in writing, to the volunteer by the CEO or designated council staff member.
- d. All circumstances, including all written documentation and communication concerning release from a volunteer position, shall comply with state regulations concerning confidentiality.
- e. In all cases, reasons for non-reappointment and release will be documented and discussed with the volunteers by designated council staff.
- f. Volunteers will be informed of the council grievance procedures at the time of their non-reappointment or release.

Resignation of Volunteers

Volunteers may initiate termination of services at any time. A volunteer unable to complete his/her term, or who chooses to terminate his/her services at the end of a term, should give written notice to his/her volunteer supervisor or council representative at least thirty days in advance. She/he should make arrangements for an exit interview, and to share all information and materials with designated council staff in order to ensure the uninterrupted experience for the girls.

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

In some cases, council staff will assume the responsibility of the member's volunteer position until such time as arrangements can be made for options deemed suitable by a member of the management team or the CEO.

All troop/group records, equipment, funds, and/or major supplies **MUST** be returned to designated council staff with 72 business hours of resignation or termination. A financial report is due within 72 hours of council terminated leadership of troop/group.

Grievance Policy and Process

A grievance is defined as an alleged violation of the terms of GSUSA or GSSGC policies, or a conflict between two or more individuals. A grievant may appeal in accordance with the procedure set forth below. If this process proves unsatisfactory, the grievance can be formally presented in succession to the staff person responsible, then the grievance committee, and finally to the CEO, who will be the ultimate authority.

Grievance Process:

1. All efforts will be made by the parties involved to resolve the issue directly, with each other, before formal proceedings are initiated.

2. If unresolved, and within a timely manner of the occurrence, either party may bring the situation, in writing, to the attention of the council staff who will then investigate and provide a solution, explanation, or recommendation.
3. The council staff will meet with the volunteer within ten working days of receipt of the grievance and shall deliver an answer in writing, to the volunteer within ten working days of the meeting.
4. If the grievance has not been resolved, the aggrieved party may file a written appeal with the grievance committee within ten working days from the delivery of said answer. The grievance committee will meet with the volunteer and investigate the situation and; within ten working days after the receipt of the appeal, shall deliver an answer to the volunteer.
5. The grievance committee will be appointed by the CEO. The composition of the grievance committee will be composed of:
 - one staff person
 - one policy-making volunteer, and
 - one operational volunteer
6. The aggrieved party may submit up to three names of operational volunteers for consideration by the CEO as a member of the grievance committee.
7. If the grievance is still not adjusted, the aggrieved party may file a written appeal with the CEO within ten working days from the date of the said answer. The CEO or his/her designee will make the final decision regarding the outcome of the grievance and respond in writing to the volunteer.

Health and Safety

Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council ensures that the Girl Scout program is delivered in a reasonably safe and secure environment.

The council provides safety guidelines and support to Girl Scout leaders by answering questions, providing training, suggesting resources, interpreting guidelines, selecting and approving sites, and recommending program consultants for specific activities. Everyone bears some responsibility: staff, volunteers, the parents/guardians of the girls, and the girls themselves.

Child Abuse

Currently, California law defines an abused child as one who is: physically abused, sexually molested, emotionally abused, under constant verbal attack or torment, without proper food, clothing, or shelter, or is left alone for long periods of time.

Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with members are strictly prohibited.

If a volunteer is told or suspects a child has been abused, he/she *should* report the information immediately to the council staff assigned to their area. Council staff must then report the information immediately to the CEO or his/her designee(s) who will then make a report or designate a staff member, to make a report to Child Protective Services. All reports are held in confidence.

Safety Policies

All Girl Scout safety and security guidelines, standards, and activity check points, as listed in

- *Safety Activity Checkpoints*
- *Safety Guidelines*

- *Volunteer Essentials (formerly BLT)*
- *GSSGC Policies & Procedures*
- *GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents*
- *Safety alerts*

must be used in order to ensure the safety of girls and volunteers participating in Girl Scout activities.

Instructions on how to access the *Safety Activity Checkpoints*, *Safety Guidelines* are provided in the Volunteer Essentials Training (formerly BLT). It is the responsibility of the troop leader(s) to become familiar with the contents of all of these documents.

All these documents can be found at www.gssgc.org in the forms and resources section.

Permission for Participation

Parent or guardian permission is required for girls to:

- become a member of Girl Scouts.
- participate in all Girl Scout programs, activities, and events, including product sales.

The following forms are used to demonstrate parent/guardian permission:

Girl Membership Form

Signature of parent/guardian is required on hard copy submission indicating permission for a girl to become a member of Girl Scouts. If electronic form is used the payment indicates permission

Annual/Event Specific Permission Slip

Signature of parent/guardian indicates permission for a girl to:

- participate in troop/group meetings.
- participate in troop trips and troop or council events and activities outside of the regular troop/group meeting place, as long as the trip or activity is less than three nights and not considered a high risk activity as defined in any of the documents referenced in “Health and Safety” above.
- receive emergency medical treatment.

Product Sales Permission Slip

Signature of parent/guardian indicates permission for a girl to:

- participate in the council product sales.

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

Troop/group leaders must have a signed copy of the *Annual Permission Slip* or *Single Use Permission Slip* and *Girl Health History Form* for every girl in their troop/group on hand at every Girl Scout program, event, activity, and troop/group meeting.

For any girl both in a troop or individually registered, who is transported to an activity, leaders or parents **MUST** bring a copy of the signed permission slip and a girl health history form to the activity that the girl is participating in and submit it to the event coordinator or designee.

First Aid & CPR Certification

An adult certified in both American Red Cross (or equivalent as determined by GSUSA and outlined in *Volunteer Essentials*) First Aid and CPR **MUST** be present for all organized Girl Scout activities. This standard also includes traveling as a troop/group.

American Red Cross first aid/CPR or equivalent (courses are made available through the council. Volunteers can contact other community services for additional courses available in local areas.

Handling of Serious Accidents, Major Emergencies, or Fatalities

A current *Major Emergency Procedure* card listing these procedures **MUST** be in the possession of the troop leader(s) or registered adult in charge while girls are participating in any organized Girl Scout activity to include Girl Scout travel. This card **MUST** be in the possession of each driver transporting Girl Scouts to and from any organized Girl Scout activity or during any travel with girls. All procedures listed on the cards **MUST** be followed to ensure the safety of all concerned. It is the responsibility of each troop/group leader to be familiar with the procedures outlined on the card.

Smoking

Smoking - Smoking in non-designated areas or in the presence of girls is prohibited. As per California state law, you must be a minimum of 50 feet away from a non-smoker when smoking. As a Girl Scout volunteer you may, at no time, leave the girls without the correct Girl Scout ratios for the purpose of smoking.

Contagious Conditions

For the health and welfare of all girls participating in an activity, girls with contagious conditions (i.e., lice, chickenpox, measles, and mumps) will not be allowed to participate until they are no longer contagious, as determined by a health care professional.

When a leader or designated council staff member suspects or identifies any signs or symptoms of a contagious condition, they shall contact the parent/guardian concerning their findings. If there is any chance the Girl Scout may have a contagious condition, she will not be allowed to interact with other girls until she is no longer contagious, as determined by a health care professional.

Information Technology and Individual Privacy

GSSGC encourages the use of electronic communications for legitimate and authorized Girl Scout program purposes. An electronic communication is defined as any communication that is broadcasted, created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, or printed by any electronic communications service, including email and telephone. Contents of all electronic communications shall conform to law and policies set forth by GSUSA and GSSGC regarding protection of intellectual property, copyright, patents, and trademarks. The Girl Scout brand and all Girl Scout trademarks and copyrights are the sole property of GSUSA and their use must be preapproved in writing by the appropriate GSSGC staff.

Additionally, the misuse of GSSGC's electronic communications in any of the following manners is prohibited and may lead to, at a minimum, ineligibility to volunteer for GSSGC and/or criminal charges:

- for any purpose restricted or prohibited by law, regulation, or GSSGC policies
- accessing and displaying any type of sexually explicit images or documents
- for personal purposes, including monetary gain, or for commercial purposes that are not directly related to GSSGC business or otherwise authorized by appropriate GSSGC authority
- capturing, opening, intercepting or obtaining access to electronic communications, except as otherwise permitted by the appropriate GSSGC authority
- to harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct GSSGC business
- representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of GSSGC unless authorized to do so
- employing a false identity (the name or electronic identification of another), directly or by implication
- forging e-mail headers or content (i.e., constructing an email so it appears to be from someone else)
- obtaining unauthorized access to electronic communications, members' personal information, or breach of any security measure
- performing unauthorized distribution of any members' personal information
- interfering with the availability of electronic communications resources, including but not limited to:
 - sending or forwarding e-mail chain letters or their equivalents in other electronic communications services
 - "spamming," i.e., sending electronic junk mail or junk newsgroup postings
 - "letter-bombing," i.e., sending an extremely large message or sending multiple messages to one or more recipients to interfere with the recipient's use of electronic communications resources
 - participating in denial of service attacks or any disruption of GSSGC websites or the GSSGC wide-area network

Media Guidelines

Media guidelines are necessary for any organization to ensure the right message gets to the right audience at the right time. Guidelines help organizations build strong contacts with media representatives and the community. Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council has a marketing & external relations department that is responsible for developing and maintaining media relationships.

The need to talk with the media should be carefully evaluated and discussed with the marketing and external relations department before giving information and/or interviews.

AT NO TIME ARE INDIVIDUALS TO CONTACT THE MEDIA. All inquires, ideas, contacts, requests, etc., must be forwarded to the marketing and external relations department.

Vice President External Relations
 1751 Plum Lane
 Redlands, CA 92374
 T: (800) 400-GIRL or (909) 307-6555
 marcomm@gssgc.org

Interviews and Media Comments

There are times when the media will “just show up” at a local event or at a program. During these cases, you are expected to escort the media. Please follow these steps below:

1. Immediately call the council media team in the marketing and external relations department.
 - a. Contact information is listed above.
 - b. After hours follow the prompts for an emergency to speak to the on-call staff member.
 - c. You may ask any office to contact the marketing and external relations department.
2. If at a school site, contact the school administration representative.
3. Verify that the person is a reporter/photographer/etc. Ask for identification such as a business card.
4. Write down the person’s information: Name, phone number, and e-mail.
5. Write down the name of the publication or media outlet.
6. Identify yourself to the reporter, stating that you are with Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council and your troop number and region.
7. Remember that everything you say may be printed. Answer questions positively. Never make up an answer or try to answer a question that is best answered by someone else. **NEVER PROVIDE PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE GIRLS WE SERVE. DO NOT GIVE GIRLS’ NAMES OR AGES.**
8. As soon as possible after the event/program (within 24 hours), notify the marketing and external relations team via e-mail about what happened. Please be detailed - what was asked, what you said, did they take photos, who did they talk to, etc.

Do not ever say, “I’m not allowed to talk to the media.” Instead try the following talking points:

“Hello, my name is _____. I am the troop leader of troop _____ for Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council.”

“I’d be happy to help you as best as I can.” Please direct them to a council staff member

OR

“I can help point you in the right direction in order to get your questions accurately answered.”

Please be as helpful as possible. If you do not know the answer or get stuck, refer the reporter to the marketing and external relations department. Simply state:

“That question is best answered by our marketing and external relations department. I’d be happy to pass along your information to them. You may also contact them directly. Here are their business cards.”

OR

“I’d be happy to connect you with someone who can better answer that question.”

OR

“I’d be happy to get that information for you.”

Photos

When the media takes the photo - The media is a public entity and may take photos of anyone in a public venue without our permission. If you are at a school site, please refer the reporter to the administration. If you are at another venue, due to the diversity of our membership base, please quickly let the participants know that photos are being taken. You may use the following talking point if needed:

“Hello everyone, _____ with the local newspaper is here to write a story about the great things you are doing in the community/here today. _____ will be taking some photographs as well. Please see me if you would prefer not to be interviewed or photographed.”

When the council or service area takes the photo - A signed *Photo Consent Form* MUST be signed when the council or service area is taking photos for publicity purposes. Consent forms can be found online at www.gssgc.org in the forms section.

All completed release forms should be sent to the marketing and external relations department along with any photos. Please be sure to identify all the girls and/or adults who appear in the photos.

Messaging Guidelines

To ensure GSSGC’s position in the community, it is critical that the appearance and exposure of the Girl Scout brand be consistent. All members of GSSGC must speak with one voice and with one message in all areas - from the High Desert to the Low Desert, from Southwest Riverside County to Needles and Blythe.

Consistent messaging is important because it:

- builds trust among the community and within the GSSGC membership.
- demonstrates a level of professionalism.
- dispels myths and rumors about Girl Scouting in the community.
- unites the Girl Scout Movement under a common goal.

The key to effective marketing is providing accurate, consistent messaging to the media and to the community. Talking points are distributed on a regular basis on various topics including Girl Scout Pathways, our new marketing pieces, and for council-wide projects and campaigns such as the annual cookie program. These talking points will be provided to you through your local service center. It is your responsibility to review and understand the information.

In addition to verbal messages, written messages are just as important to the communication plan. To keep our messaging consistent, here are a few words that are sometimes used incorrectly in letters and e-mail:

Do

Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council
Council*
Girl Scout or Girl Scouts
cookie dough
Girl Scout Leadership Experience
learning petals

Don't

San Gorgonio Girl Scouts
council*
Scout or Scouts
money for cookies
Girl Scout Program
Daisy petals or petals

*According to GSUSA’s style guide when referring to Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council as the “Council;” the “C” in council should be capitalized. When referring to all of the councils across the county, then lowercase.

Additional Materials

Several additional materials are available as reference materials including a *GSSGC Fact Sheet*, *Photo Release Form* and copies of recent talking points. Please contact the director of marketing, external relations and diversity for materials and more information.

Guidelines for Using Social Media

For Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio, the power of social media both helps and hinders the ability to do good work, whether it’s Facebook, Twitter, or some other form. We see both sides of Facebook and other social media sites dozens of times each day especially during the cookie season. The purpose of this information is to offer guidelines that will help all use the power of social media to accomplish GSSGC’s goals. With the advent of Facebook pages in the regions and areas, as well as thousands of personal Facebook pages, it becomes absolutely necessary to follow some rules. Failure to follow these rules will result in a demand by GSSGC to either take down the offending site or remove all references to Girl Scouts and GSSGC.

When using social media, it will be helpful to keep in mind the purpose of this tool. Over 50 years ago, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur delivered what is now known as his *Farewell Speech to the Corps of Cadets at West Point*. The general concluded his remarks by saying that his last conscious thoughts before he died would be “of the Corps, and the Corps, and the Corps.” When logging onto social media, the first conscious thoughts must be of the Girls, and the Girls, and the Girls.

Now for the guidelines, no one can dictate how you use your personal social media, but these guidelines are rules and policies and must be followed if the Girl Scout or GSSGC names and logos are used. They govern the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Facebook page, which is the ONLY social media site where you will find answers you can depend on 100% regarding Girl Scout programs (including fall product and cookies), membership recruitment, volunteerism, GSSGC changes, and Council events.

- **Use Appropriate Sites**
 - **Not Allowed:** *You MAY NOT post to any public pages (i.e., Temecula Talk, VV News, SoCal fb, Buy Sell Trade, etc....) AT ALL as an avenue of selling your cookies/fall product. You may respond within the posts if someone seeks product but you MAY NOT post personal information*
 - **Acceptable media sites include:** personal family pages, family and personal twitter, or family and personal instagrams

- **Remember Your Audience**

Social media posts have come back to haunt people—sometimes years later. You may know who’s “friended” you on your own Facebook page, but you cannot know everyone who might

see your post on another person's Facebook page.

- **Be Positive**

Remember the Girl Scout Promise and Law before posting. And consider this: If you think you should post anonymously, you should not post at all. It's sometimes hard to resist using social media to criticize things you don't like or, sadly, to tear down people with whom you don't agree.

- **Tell the Truth**

Ask yourself if you're telling the whole truth or leaving information out to bend the truth to be what you want it to be. Are you relating facts of which you have personal knowledge or passing along rumors and stories that might not be true?

- **Have a Purpose**

Before posting a comment, have a goal in mind. You may be asking a question, sharing information that you have learned or trying to drum up interest in a project or issue that's dear to your heart. Ask yourself, does this post move you toward your goal?

- **Add Value**

Say something helpful, witty or informative. Use social media to move ideas forward, encourage girls and your Girl Scout colleagues, and offer positive suggestions.

- **Speak for Yourself**

When you are sharing your personal opinion, use the first person—that is "I" and not "we". When offering advice or information regarding Girl Scouts, be clear that you are sharing your personal experience and knowledge of Girl Scouts, and that you are not speaking for Girl Scouts or GSSGC.

- **Play Nice**

Remember that you are a Girl Scout and live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Social media is no more the place for mean, disrespectful comments than any other social gathering place. Don't call other people names, make unfounded accusations, resort to foul language, or use racial or ethnic slurs.

- **Give Attribution and Respect Copyrights**

Don't use other people's material without permission. If using, give the originator credit for the idea or material. Furnishing links to articles or material on websites is acceptable, if those websites acknowledge the source or author of the material. Never use other people's material or ideas as if they were your own.

- **If it's Confidential, Keep It That Way!**

Social media is no place to share your personal business or the personal business of others. Once something is out there, it can spread like wildfire. Although you only meant to share with your friends, you cannot control who they share your comments with. So if someone has told you that something is confidential keep it that way and keep it out of your conversations on social media.

- **Be Social**

The name "social media" comes from the idea that online conversations are taking place,

much like they might in your living room or over coffee after church. It's not a one-way conversation; it's give and take, back and forth. If you blog and people comment on your blog, respond nicely to their comments. Acknowledge them and the value of their points of view, just as they acknowledge and value yours.

- **Use Common Sense**

Think of social media as a giant billboard. What you post can be seen by anyone—your boss, your co-workers, your sister Girl Scouts, your mom. A poorly chosen comment could damage your council and wreak havoc on your life.

- **Your Daughter Is Watching**

Imagine that your daughter (or someone else's daughter) is reading what you post. Let your conscious thoughts always be of the girls, and the girls, and the girls.

- **Enjoy the Interaction**

Have fun using social media. Where else can you connect with old friends and make new ones in a split second? Where else can you learn new things and then immediately share that knowledge with others? Where else can you get help with a thorny problem and benefit from the experiences of hundreds of other people? Where else can you celebrate your triumphs, share your disappointments, and be reassured that many other people think and feel the way you do about Girl Scouts and serving the girls?

Financial Management

“All money raised, or earned, and other assets received in the name and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be authorized by a Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the United States of America and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Such funds and other assets become the property and are administered by the Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. Such assets are not the property of individuals, geographic units, or communities within a Girl Scout Council.” (Blue Book of Basic Documents)

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of San Geronimo to ensure that the above national policy is followed within our jurisdiction. It is also the responsibility of the board to ensure that GSSGC uphold its responsibility to its donors and to the community as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. The following policies and procedures provide the structure with which to do this.

Fundraising, Money Earning Activities, and Solicitation Definitions

Fundraising – the act or process of raising funds, as for nonprofit organizations. Fundraising is an adult ONLY action.

Money Earning Activities – Activities for the purpose of earning money to accomplish a financial goal for a troop/group activity.

Solicitation – The action of asking for financial or in-kind donations.

Fund Ownership

By law, all troop funds are the property of the Girl Scouts San Gorgonio.

Financial Accountability

Those assuming stewardship of any Girl Scout funds within the jurisdiction of the Council are accountable to the Council in all financial matters. The Council authorizes the troop to open accounts and hold funds in a designated institution in accordance with Council policy. The Council may have reason to require access to Troop/accounts in order to fulfill its fiduciary responsibility or to administer policies. Any misappropriation, mishandling, and/or any problems that occur regarding Girl Scout funds must be reported immediately to the appropriate supervising Council staff member

Volunteer Appointment and Responsibilities

Duly appointed volunteers authorized by the Council to establish a bank account are ultimately responsible for proper recordkeeping, management of the account or accounts, reporting of all funds in the accounts, and submission of timely reports required by GSSGC. Failure to follow all procedures or properly manage funds will result in the volunteer's release from all volunteer positions and other legal actions up to and including criminal prosecution.

Bank Accounts

Troop/Group/Day Camp/Service Unit

Each subordinate unit of GSSGC (troops, groups, day camp, etc) must open a business checking account into and out of which all funds flow. This account must only be used to support the Girl Scout program. Subordinate unit funds deposited into the personal accounts of volunteers is regarded as fraud and prosecution will be pursued to the full extent of the law.

Each subordinate unit account must be in the name of Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio, with the mailing address of the council regional office or regional post office box. The GSSGC federal identification (EIN xxxx) number must be used on each account and it must be titled in this format "Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio, Troop # XXXXX"

Policy Detail

Each subordinate unit will open a business checking bank account in accordance with the procedures below.

1. All troops/groups are required to establish a bank account if, at any time, troop/group funds are expected to exceed \$50.00.
2. Troop bank accounts and the funds therein are the property of Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio. Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio reserves the right to randomly audit troop accounts with or without prior consent of the signatories.
3. Money earned during a program-year should be spent during that year. It is appropriate to have a \$350-\$500 account balance to begin the next year. Special circumstances requiring larger carry-over balances must be disclosed and described on the annual finance report. In certain cases, troops with a multi-year plan to save for high-cost travel events may carry-over larger balance from one year to the next.
4. Any funds donated to a Girl Scout unit must be handled according to Policy 2.8, service unit/troop/group Gift Acceptance, in this document.

5. Service unit event expenses must never be processed through a troop/group account. troops/groups hosting a service unit event or regional event should process all event related monies through the regional restricted account.
6. Checks are never to be signed without a payee written on the face of the check.
7. The troop/group may obtain no more than two debit/check cards to be used for deposits and payments without express permission of GSSGC. The card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit/check card must not be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit/check card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely annual reporting, and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit/check card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit/check card privilege.
8. Online banking is authorized on troop/group bank accounts to view account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements when allowed by the bank. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all account signers. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help prevent cardholder/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change of signers on the account.
9. All bank accounts are to be set up to opt out of overdraft protection. This action will prevent the account from going negative by declining any attempt to make a transaction that would cause the account to have a negative balance.

Opening a Bank Account Procedures

1. Determine the two volunteers approved by the Council who will be signers on the bank account.
2. Consider using one of the banks found on the *Preferred Banks* document. To receive a copy of this document, email troopbanking@gssgc.org. These banks provide free business checking accounts for Girl Scout troops and provide online view access. As well as, some banks may provide free starter checks or other benefits. Preferred banks are added as they agree to work with GSSGC. Email GSSGC at troopbanking@gssgc.org if there is a problem with a specific branch.
3. Contact GSSGC at troopbanking@gssgc.org and request an open/close Change letter
4. After the bank has received the letter from GSSGC authorizing the unit to open an account, visit the bank to fill out the signature cards. Banks generally require that you bring your social security number and driver's license to the bank. Assure that the mailing address on the account is the address of GSSGC.
5. ATM/debit cards are acceptable for troop/group use and may be issued only to the authorized signers on the account. Credit cards are not acceptable for troop/group use.

Changing Bank Accounts

Change of banking accounts must be coordinated with the troop/group leaders and designated council staff. Changing bank accounts is discouraged during cookie sales.

Stewardship of Funds

Subordinate Units (Troop/Group)

All subordinate unit funds must be deposited into the unit's checking account as received (i.e. there should be no cash on hand).

All subordinate units are required to complete and submit a troop financial report each program year to GSSGC. All itemized receipts of purchases, bank receipts/deposits, and monthly bank statements must be kept on file with the subordinate unit and may be requested at any time by any girl member, any parent of a girl member or by GSSGC for the life of the unit and for two years after the unit disbands. A request for a Change of signers letter or a disbandment form must also be completed when the leadership of the unit changes. Failure to complete this report will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including release (termination) from all volunteer positions.

All funds must be deposited into the unit account and all itemized receipts of purchases, bank receipts/deposits, and monthly bank statements must be kept on file for a period of two years after disbandment.

Income and expenses must be documented as they occur in the unit's records. The Council reserves the right to audit, close, or place a hold on any GSSGC bank account if established procedures are not followed or if mismanagement is suspected.

Subordinate unit financial records should be open for inspection by any girl member, any parent of a girl member, or service team member within the unit or by GSSGC at any time.

Disbanding of Troops or Termination of a Program

When a troop/group disbands, the signers of the bank account must:

1. close the bank account and obtain a cashier's check for the remaining balance of funds.
2. complete and submit an up-to-date finance report and troop disband form.
3. submit forms and all property purchased with funds to GSSGC within one (1) month of the disbandment.

The funds from a disbanding troop/group shall be held in trust for a period of one (1) year from date of notification at GSSGC for the membership of the disbanded troop/group pending reorganization or placement of the girls in other troops/groups. The amount distributed to other troops/groups where girls are placed will be proportional, based on the number of registered girls in the disbanded troop. Any money remaining at the end of this time shall be designated for financial assistance. No money will be directly given to any individual member.

If a subordinate unit bank account has been dormant for one (1) year or more, Council staff will be authorized to close the account and request that the financial institution issue a check for the balance in the account made payable to Girl Scouts of San Geronio.

Merging, Reorganizing, and Splitting of Troops

Money does not belong to any individual girl. If a girl drops out of Girl Scouts, she does not get a proportionate share of troop funds. If a girl transfers from one troop to another, no troop money is transferred to the new troop. When a troop/group merges with another existing troop, all funds of the former troop will be transferred to the existing troop/group account. Troops that reorganize or split must first consult with the finance department. After this consultation, troop funds will be allocated based upon the decision of the girls. It is the recommendation of GSSGC that girls decide to allocate funds based upon the percentage of girls from the original troop. If an agreement cannot be reached it is at the discretion of the CEO or his/her designee to determine how funds will be allocated.

Delinquent Funds

Leaders of subordinate units with amounts due to GSSGC that are more than 30 days past due and other volunteers with amounts due to GSSGC for more than 30 days will not be allowed to serve in any volunteer position, nor will they be allowed to handle money, product, or merchandise for the Council until the amount owed is paid in full. Reappointment to a volunteer position is at the **discretion of the Council. The Council reserves the right to take appropriate measures including legal action if the funds owed are not** remitted to the Council office. Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims court or report to law enforcement.

Misuse / Co-mingling of Funds

Volunteers who misuse or co-mingle funds for which they are responsible may be released from all volunteer positions with GSSGC. Girl Scouts of San Geronio retains the right to file criminal and/or civil charges.

GSSGC volunteers who are check signers are personally responsible for all financial consequences of overdrafts that they initiate.

Failure to Remit Funds

GSSGC will make a good faith attempt to collect any money owed and reserves the right to use outside collection agencies. If restitution is not paid within 30 days, GSSGC may file criminal and/or civil charges. GSSGC reserves the right to restrict or terminate volunteer participation of any person who owes money to the Council.

Bad debt from a product sale will restrict future participation until paid in full.

Troop/Group Funding

Troops/groups may be financed in any of the following ways: Council-sponsored product sales, additional troop/group sponsored money earning projects (which must be preapproved by the Council), and, if necessary, through dues. Funding for troop/group activities is primarily the responsibility of the troop/group, the girls, and their families.

See supporting document:

- Money-Earning Application

Girl Scout funds may not be used to the benefit of a private individual. Benefits for girls from product sales or any other troop/group money earning project may not be based on a dollar for dollar calculation. In other words, the benefits to girls cannot be proportional to what they earned in the Council-sponsored product sales. Troop profits from the sale must be used to provide programs and benefits that are offered to each member of the troop. **Any violation of this policy risks the tax-exempt status of GSSGC** and the tax-deductibility of donations and is cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Partitioning Funds

GSSGC does not sanction partitioning of funds.

Partitioning funds for any age level is not a council sanctioned practice. Per GSUSA guidance and the suggested national lexicon, troop proceeds are a troop/group activity and not earned by individual Girl Scouts.

This indicates that partitioning proceeds in the name of a specific girl is not a sanctioned practice.

Girls may not receive individual credit for the amount of funds or the portion of the troop account that resulted from their contribution, be it troop dues or their money earned or product sales program troop proceeds.

The IRS requires that 501(c)(3) organizations must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests

Money Earning

Council Sponsored Money Earning

The selling of Girl Scout cookies or other Council-sponsored products is an integral program of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience focusing on financial literacy and entrepreneurship. Girls learn to set goals, budget, plan, market to others, work as a team, and many other skills necessary to a successful sale activity. Adults serve in a supporting role but should never assume sole responsibility for sales. Troop/group leaders are required to present the opportunity to participate in Council-sponsored product sale programs to the girls they lead, and make the information available to the parents/guardians of the girls.

Girl participation in any Council sponsored product sales programs are based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of a parent or guardian
- Council guidelines
 - Girls should not be penalized for non-participation
 - Other policies regarding product sales will be distributed via the appropriate product sales handbook before the appropriate product sales program
- An understanding of, and ability to interpret to others, the Troop/group goals
- Correct business procedures
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as meeting health and safety laws
- Adherence to guidelines for personal protection
- Planned arrangements for safeguarding the money

Non-Council-Sponsored Group Money Earning

Troops/groups may participate in approved money-earning activities in which the troop is the sole beneficiary of the profit after the girls have supported GSSGC through participation* in both Council-sponsored product sale programs. All Girl Scout troops/groups and individuals must have permission from the Council to conduct any money-earning activity. Money-earning projects must occur only when there is a need for such funds to support program plans. The money-earning project must be appropriate for the age level. The income from troop/group money-earning activities never becomes

the property of the individual members - girl or adult.

*The definition of participation is determined before the start of each sale and communicated in the product sale manual.

Girl members may not participate in product demonstration parties, raffles, drawings, games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, the sale or endorsement of commercial products, and/or “give-back type” fundraisers (such as in-restaurant fundraisers script) as these endorse other establishments/organizations. All money-earning activities must also comply with state and local laws regulating sales by minors, food handling, etc. and sales may not be transacted on the Internet (for example, through a site that has an electronic shopping cart), except as approved for council-sponsored product sales (see *Volunteer Essentials*).

Girl Scout groups or individuals **MAY NOT** conduct non-council-sponsored money-earning activities **during the weeks of cookie booth sales.**

Age Level Policy on Participation in Money-Earning Activities

All troops/groups having money earning activities **MUST** also participate in both council sponsored product sales in every membership year.

- *Daisy Girl Scouts* may participate in council sponsored product sales and may not have any other money earning activities, except participating in recycling.
- *Brownie Girl Scouts* may, with written permission from council, have one money earning activity beyond the council sponsored product sales each membership year.
- *Junior Girl Scouts* may, with written permission from council, have two, money earning activities beyond the council sponsored product sales each membership year. If more are needed, designated council staff will approve on a case-by- case basis
- *Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador Girl Scouts* may, with written permission from council, have three money earning activities beyond the council sponsored product sales each membership year. If more are needed, designated council staff will approve on a case-by-case basis,

Girls planning Girl Scout Gold Award or Special Service Projects

Girls planning Girl Scout Gold Award projects or special service projects that require funds need to develop proposals that must be approved by the Gold Award committee before money-earning activities approved via the *Money-Earning Activity* form are implemented.

Parental permission is required for girls to participate in all money earning activities.

Individually Registered Girls

Girls who are individually registered may participate in GSSGC product sales programs.

- Individually registered girls (IRG) earn individual girl rewards.
- Individually registered girls do not earn proceeds.

Proceeds are always and only a *troop/ group* opportunity. As such when participating as an Individually Registered Girl Scout in the product program the participating group of IRG's will be operated as a *troop/ group* entity.

- This troop/ group will earn credits “paid” out at the same rate as troop proceeds.
- Credits will be equally split based on all girls participating and held at council as “credits” not proceeds or dollars.

- Individually registered girls who participated in the product program may request access to these credits from this account to apply to any GSSGC programming, for membership registration, and/or for use in the council shop.

Individually Registered Girls may not participate in additional money-earning activities unless they are working on their Girl Scout Gold Award or participating in council-sponsored trips including GSUSA destinations and have permission from the appropriate staff via the Money Earning Activity form. All funds earned by individually registered girls may be used for only these two stated purposes and belong to the Council not to any individual girl.

Solicitation for Girl Scouting

Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. All Girl Scout groups and individuals must have permission from the fund development department before asking organizations, businesses, corporations, foundations, or individuals for financial or in-kind gifts. Soliciting executive offices of major corporations is not permitted. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money.

Raising Money for Other Organizations

No Girl Scout member, in their Girl Scout capacity or in Girl Scout uniform, may raise or solicit money for any other organization or participate in walkathons, telethons, or similar activities that raise money for other organizations. Girl members may support other organizations through contributing a portion of their treasury or through service projects.

Please remember:

- **No outside money earning activities may occur during a council-sponsored product sales program.**
- **To participate in a money earning activity other than the council-sponsored product sales program a troop, group, or individual must complete the *Money-Earning Activity Request* form.**

Gift Acceptance

Council Gift Acceptance

The Council has detailed *Stewardship Guidelines* for acceptance of gifts. Questions should be directed to the CEO or his/her designee. Designated “gift solicitors” may accept unrestricted cash gifts only on behalf of the Council. All other gifts must be referred to the chief executive officer or chair of the board of directors or his/her designee for approval before acceptance.

Service Unit/Troop/Group Gift Acceptance

A monetary gift of \$250 or above specifically earmarked for a troop/group or service unit must be sent to and processed through the Council. A gift less than \$250 may be sent to GSSGC if the donor wishes that GSSGC issue an acknowledgement or requests documentation for a tax deduction. The funds must benefit the entire troop/group or service unit not a specific individual. Funds will be disbursed from GSSGC to the troop/group or service unit. The troop/group or service unit is responsible for thanking the donor. In some cases, the Council will also send acknowledgement/thank the donor.

A monetary gift of less than \$250 specifically earmarked for a troop/group or service unit may be sent directly to that Troop/Group or Service Unit. The funds must benefit the entire Troop/Group or Service Unit, not a specific individual. No notification to the Council is required unless donor requests documentation for tax purposes.

- The troop is responsible for thanking the donor.
- Documentation of tax deductibility of the donation cannot be provided by the troop/service unit.
- Documentation can only be provided if the gift is processed through the Council.

All monetary gifts are to be reported on the annual finance report to the Council.

Monetary gifts donated directly to troops/group or service units or given through the Council and restricted for troops/groups or service units are limited to a combined total of \$500 per year.

If in-kind gifts are solicited and received by a troop/group or service unit in support of fund raising events which benefit the Council (e.g. family partnership events), the Council must be notified that these gifts were received so that the Council can properly acknowledge, thank, and provide the appropriate tax documentation to the donor.

If in-kind gifts are solicited and received by a troop/group or service unit in support of troop/group or service unit activities (e.g. food for a camp out, Gold/Silver/Bronze projects, etc.) no notification of the Council is required.

- The troop is responsible for thanking the donor.
- Documentation of tax deductibility of the donation cannot be provided.

All significant in-kind gifts are to be reported on the annual finance report to the Council.

Financial Assistance

The Council shall designate funds for financial assistance for girls or adults based on need and without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Girls can use this assistance for:

- Membership
- Resident camp & summer opportunities
- Programs
- Essential uniform pieces:
 - Daisy Girl Scout membership pin or Brownie Girl Scout membership pin or contemporary membership pin or traditional membership pin
 - WAGGGS pin
 - Insignia tab
 - Wavy flag
 - Council ID
 - Troop number patches (up to 5 numbers)
 - Age level tunic, vest or sash
 - One age level Girl Guide or Journey book of choice

Adults can use this assistance for:

- Membership
- Training
- Essential uniform pieces:
 - Contemporary membership pin or traditional membership pin
 - WAGGGS pin

- Insignia tab
- One Leader *How to Guide* book for any age level Journey

To request financial assistance, complete an online application at GSSGC.org. Assistance will be granted based on need and availability of funds.

Troop leaders who apply for financial assistance on behalf of members of their troops must do so only with the permission of a girl's parent or guardian and must keep the financial circumstances of each girl's family confidential.

Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council, under the guidance of the board of directors, will ensure that the council's funds are managed in a fiscally responsible way by following these guidelines:

- Only registered Girl Scout members are permitted to participate in council-sponsored product sales. In the event that a girl participates in a sale who is not a registered member, rewards will be held by the council until registration can be verified, completed, or processed.
- Girls at all age levels are part of the decision-making process in determining troop/group dues, troop/group money-earning activities, troop/group budgeting activities, and uses of collective funds. The funds are for Girl Scout activities and are **NOT** to be retained or used by individuals as their property.
- All funds are the property of the Girl Scouts of San Gorgonio Council and never become the property of an individual girl or adult.
- All money earning funds are troop funds and not individual girl monies.

Troop/Group Finances

As a girl-led organization GSSGC encourages the involvement of girls in managing troop funds. Depending on the age of the girls this may include voting on expenditures, determining the need/amount for troop dues, authorizing and recording troop expenditures and deposits, etc. Troop leadership should determine the level of participation that is appropriate for girls based on the concept of progression in Girl Scouts.

Troop Dues

Troop dues should be determined based on planned budget and troop operational needs. Troops/groups should reassess the need for dues once participation in each product sale has been completed. Troops/groups may assess reasonable dues on average \$1-\$5 per meeting. . It is important to note no girl will be denied Girl Scouting for lack of ability to pay troop dues. It is encouraged that troop dues are paid by girls per meeting as there are leadership skills that are learned through this action.

Contact the membership department at GSmembership@gssgc.org for recommendations on girls who cannot pay and possible financial assistance.

Troop/Group Finances – Use of Funds

Girls should decide how to disburse funds acquired as a result of girl planning.

Juliette/ Independently Registered Girls Participating In The Product Sale

Girls who are individually registered may participate in GSSGC product sales programs.

- Individually registered girls (IRG) earn individual girl rewards.
- Individually registered girls do not earn proceeds.

Proceeds are always and only a *troop/group* opportunity. As such when participating as an Individually Registered Girl Scout in the product program the participating group of IRG's will be operated as a *troop/group* entity.

- This troop/ group will earn credits "paid" out at the same rate as troop proceeds.
- Credits will be equally split based on all girls participating and held at council as "credits" not proceeds or dollars.
- Individually registered girls, who participated in the product program, may request access to these credits from this account to apply to any GSSGC programming, for membership registration, and/or for use in the council shop.

If a girl does not reregister by October 1 of the new Girl Scout year she will lose all access to these credits.

Disbanded Troops

Prior to disbandment the troop/group should vote and agree on disbursement of funds and/or property.

If a troop disbands without a plan (and if it is realistic to expect that the troop/group may reorganize) all of a troop/group's funds will be held in a council restricted account for one year.

After one year, disbanded troop/group funds may be redirected by the council to assist girls with financial needs (i.e., camperships, destinations, handbooks, uniforms, and event fees) or to provide start-up funds for newly registered troops requesting financial aid. All requests will be put in writing and be based on financial need. Disbursement of funds is at the discretion of the CEO or designated council staff.

Reorganized Troops

If a troop/group reorganizes (as a whole) within the same year as they disband, they may request, in writing, from the Council to have all funds previously affiliated with the troop/group returned to the troop/group.

If individual troop members re-register in another troop, in that same year, a percentage of the troop funds will follow them into the new troop.

No troop/group reorganization and/or troop/group disbanding will be allowed during product sales programming periods. If there are no other avenues other than a separation during a council sale the troops sale must come to a close, product paid for in full, and then the separating can begin, not before.

If a troop/group splits or separates into multiple troops/groups, the CEO or designated council staff retains the right to mediate an equitable division of assets.

Occurrence of Theft of Troop Funds

Should the theft of troop funds occur, a police report must be filed within 24 hours. If theft or embezzlement is suspected, then the council representative must be notified within a reasonable

amount of time and all pertinent information pertaining to the alleged crime must be turned over to the designated GSSGC representative immediately. Notification may not occur via Facebook or any Social Media channel.

The finance department will immediately take control of the finances of the troop and perform an extensive audit. Once the audit is performed, if evidence of theft or embezzlement is found, a police report will immediately be initiated by the finance department. GSSGC will comply with the requests of all law enforcement officers and the district attorney's office to prosecute the individual to the best of our ability on behalf of the girls. The volunteer in question will be immediately suspended from his/her position until the resolution of the situation. If criminal charges are filed, the volunteer will be immediately released from his/her position working with the girls and/or the property of GSSGC.

Reestablishing an Account After a Crime.

Should a crime be committed involving the funds of any troop or group, the account in question will immediately be administered by GSSGC. A new troop/group account will be opened immediately if leadership is available. Start up funds will be determined by the CEO and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. As the funds of any troop are meant for the girls to further their Girl Scout experience, at the discretion of the CEO, girls will be provided with credits for opportunities to participate in Girl Scout programming through in-kind means. Meaning, girls will be allowed to attend programming opportunities through council, representing an amount determined by the CEO. This amount will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Annual Financial Reports

All financial records belonging to a troop/group must be readily available at any time to any troop member or council representative requesting inspection. All troops/groups that handle money are required to file an annual financial report. A *Troop Financial Report* form must be completed and submitted to the designated council staff:

- By June 15th of each year.
- Within 30 days of change of leadership within a troop/group, including disbandment of troop.
- At any time as deemed necessary by designated council staff.

It is the responsibility of the troop/group leader to submit the troop/group financial report. Failure to submit the financial report may result in a troop/group's inability to participate in product sales and disciplinary action up to and including removal of the troop/group leader.

Regional Funds

Regional Credit Cards

Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council, under the guidance of the board of directors, will ensure that the council's funds are managed in a fiscally responsible way. Regional credit cards will be issued at the discretion of the CEO or his/her designee, only. Volunteers designated to use a regional credit card must agree to the terms set forth in the credit card agreement for Volunteers. Volunteers may not contact the issuing financial institution at any time, for any reason but must bring issues, concerns, or questions to the council's finance department for help and clarification.

Regional Imprest Account

Regional imprest accounts are maintained by the Girl Scouts of San Geronio Council for each region. The self-checking accounts are maintained at a fixed balance of \$1000 by regular replenishments. The accounts may be used by the region for paying small routine operating expenses or to pay items approved through the purchase order system. Volunteers designated to use the imprest account must agree to the terms set forth in the *Imprest Account Agreement for Volunteers*. Volunteers may not contact the issuing financial institution at any time for any reason but must bring issues, concerns, or questions to the council's finance department for help and clarification.

Troop/Group Overnight Experience

Troop/group camping is defined as an experience of 24 or more consecutive hours **NOT** exceeding two nights planned and carried out by Girl Scouts and their troop/group leaders.

At least one registered adult accompanying the troop/group on the trip **MUST** have completed the council's *Basic Outdoor Training* course at least sixty (60) days prior to the overnight experience.

Troop/group leaders need to have girls participate in troop/group progression for a minimum of one (1) month prior to this overnight experience and should consider the experience and interest of the girls before taking the troop/group on any overnight experience.

Progression is defined as an adult trained in *Basic Outdoor Training* working with girls to progress from an introduction to time away from a parent/guardian to a point where they can comfortably be away from a parent/guardian overnight. This process should take a minimum of 30 days and be accomplished in a minimum of four (4) separate meetings.

At least one adult, who is currently certified in first aid/CPR (or equivalent), **MUST** accompany the troop/group participating in an overnight experience. The *first aid/CPR* provider **MUST** have current certifications in both areas.

For council owned and/or operated properties, an Application for *Troop/Group Overnight Stay or Horseback Riding* **and Site Reservation** forms **MUST** be submitted a maximum of six (6) months and a minimum thirty (30) days prior to an event or trip. Failure to do so may result in the trip being denied.

Cancellation of council owned and/or operated site reservations must be made in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance in order to be considered for a refund.

For any overnight experience at locations other than council owned and/or operated properties, an *Application for Troop/Group Overnight Stay or Horseback Riding* **MUST** be submitted a maximum of 6 months and a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the date of the overnight experience. Failure to do so may result in the trip being denied.

When choosing a non-council owned location, it is preferred that a nationally known or accredited facility is used. This would include American Camp Association (ACA) accredited camps, KOA campgrounds, Forest Service campgrounds, AAA approved hotels, etc. If not using one of these types of facilities, ensure proper safety procedures and liability insurance is in place.

A current copy of the adult's first aid/CPR certification(s) **MUST** be submitted with the *Application for Troop/Group Overnight Stay or Horseback Riding* form.

Proper adult supervision and guidance for each activity are essential. (See the *Volunteer Essentials (AKA BLT) and Safety Activity Checkpoints* for recommended ratios of adults to girls). Men may serve as the *Basic Outdoor* trained adult volunteers or in any other position as long as a non-related female is also present.

During overnights, males should camp with their Girl Scout groups/troops whenever possible; however, they are required to sleep in areas separate from girls and to have separate bathroom facilities. In single toilet restrooms all participants may use the same facility as long as there is only one person inside at a time and there is a way to lock the door.

Male sleeping areas, tents, or structures should never have girls inside. Whether sleeping in tents or structures, the **male sleeping area must be clearly delineated** to ensure girls will not accidentally go to the men's area/tent at night.

In some situations, men may need to set up their own tent outside or away from the girls and use a restroom facility outside of the unit. There is no specific distance designated as long as the girls will not accidentally put themselves or their male chaperones in uncomfortable situations.

At the discretion of the other responsible adult volunteers, a male may share a tent with a female he is related to by blood or marriage.

Please remember: It is the responsibility of the *Basic Outdoor* trained adult(s) to provide adequate training and preparation for the girls and adults prior to participation in any overnight experience. The training should be conducted in a progressive manner and consist of a minimum of four trainings over a period of no less than 30 days.

Travel

Travel is defined as any travel to or from any place other than a regular meeting site.

When planning activities that include travel, the age, ability, and experience of the girls should be considered. For travel purposes girls are considered their current level until the new school year regardless of when they bridge to a new level.

Not all travel/overnight activities are permitted for every level. Please follow GSUSA safety activity checkpoints when choosing activities and determining supervision ratios.

Travel Process

To travel, additional training may be required and paperwork must be submitted using the following guidelines:

- A *Special Activity Plan* must be completed anytime a troop meets or travels to a location away from the regular meeting site. This form must be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the trip travel.

- An *Application for Troop/Group Overnight Stay and Horseback Riding* form must be completed for overnight stays of 24 hours or more. The *Special Activity Plan* does not need to be completed as this form replaces that one. Please note this form must be submitted a maximum of six (6) months and a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the trip travel.
- An *Extended Trip Travel Application* must be completed when traveling more than two (2) nights and/or more than 700 miles round-trip or any place outside the continental United States. Please note this form must be submitted at least 2 months prior for domestic travel & 4 months prior for international travel.

Mileage Policy

Daisy Girl Scouts can participate in Girl Scout activities involving travel of 300 ground miles or less round-trip within the continental United States. Daisy Girl Scouts are permitted to participate in overnight experiences. However, consider if additional parent or guardian support will be needed for your troop or group when planning activities. Parent/daughter and family overnights are encouraged by GSSGC at this age level.

Brownie Girl Scouts can participate in Girl Scout activities involving travel of 400 ground miles or less round-trip within the continental United States.

Junior Girl Scouts can participate in Girl Scout activities involving travel of 700 ground miles or less round-trip within the continental United States. Junior Girl Scouts participating in a council-sponsored* **bridging activity** trip may participate in extended trips of three or more nights involving travel of 1000 ground miles or less round-trip within the United States.

*Council-sponsored events are not limited to GSSGC. For instance, Girl Scouts of Northern California offers a dynamic program for bridging at the Golden Gate Bridge. **Please note:** The San Francisco Bridging Event is more than 700 miles round trip from our council and must follow the extended trips process.

Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts can participate in extended trips of three or more nights with unlimited travel miles within the continental United States (see Extended Trips).

- International trips/travel outside of the continental United States are available to Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts who have successfully completed other overnight troop trips of at least 1000 miles roundtrip or three (3) or more nights. International trips are considered extended trips and must follow the *Extended Trip Travel* guidelines.

*Council sponsored travel ie Product Program (Entrepreneurial) Reward trips and or council travel clubs do not fall under the same guidelines as council sponsored reward trips and travel clubs are council chaperoned and fall under council programming. This is the only exception to the council mileage policy.

Extended Trips

Extended trips are intended to be girl-planned, girl-led, and girl-learning experiences. They are not intended as family experiences. Any adult acting as a chaperone on an extended trip must be a registered and trained Girl Scout volunteer.

If chaperone expenses will be paid for by troop/group funds, then only the number meeting *Girl Scout* ratios may be paid for with troop funds.

Permission to use troop funds to pay for adult expenses must be granted by 100% of the girls attending the trip.

Extended trips are trips involving more than two (2) nights and or more than 700 miles round-trip or any place outside the continental United States. Extended trips are limited to Bridging Juniors, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts.

Insurance for Extended Trips

Troops or groups on trips for more than two (2) nights are **NOT** covered by the basic Girl Scout insurance plan. Additional insurance for each participant **MUST** be purchased through Mutual of Omaha's optional Girl Scout plan, obtained through the council.

Required Medical Examinations

Each individual member of a troop/group participating in an overnight experience of more than two (2) nights **MUST** have a medical examination within twenty-four (24) months prior to departure.

Application for Extended Trip

A completed *Application for Extended Trip Travel* **MUST** be submitted to the designated council staff member for approval according to the following time frame:

1. A trip of more than two (2) nights must be received by council two **(2) months in advance**.
2. A trip exceeding 700 miles round trip must be received by council two **(2) months in advance**.
3. A trip outside the continental United States must be received by council four **(4) months in advance**.

All girls and adults traveling on an extended trip with the troop/group **MUST** take the council's *Extended Trip Training* (ETT) and conduct the planning with the troop/group at least six months* prior to the trip travel activity. If, at any time prior to the trip, the number of people attending the trip who have not been trained exceeds the number of people attending the trip who have been trained, then the new people will be required to attend *Extended Trip Training* prior to leaving on the trip.

*Bridging Junior Girl Scouts attending a council-sponsored bridging event, such as the San Francisco Bridging Event, must attend the *ETT – Bridging Juniors Training* at least three (3) months prior to the date of travel.

Transportation

All adults transporting girls in non-commercial vehicles **MUST** be registered members of GSUSA and background screened by GSSGC.

While transporting girls, adults must comply with all state, local, and federal laws at all times to include but not limited to posted speed limits, seat belt, and child booster seat laws. In addition, regardless of the state you are driving, in volunteers must comply with the state of California's cell phone/text message laws and vehicle insurance coverage.

Male drivers must have a female adult present in the car during transportation of girls.

All passengers **MUST** have their seat belts buckled whenever the vehicle is in motion and use appropriate child safety seats.

Private passenger or rental vehicles may be used during Girl Scout activities provided each passenger has a proper seat with seat belt and that the vehicle is not overcrowded.

Vehicles must be properly registered, insured, maintained, and operated by adults over the age of 18 with a valid state driver's license for the type and size of vehicle and have valid insurance as defined by the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

No individual under the age of 18 shall transport girl members on behalf of Girl Scouts of San Geronimo Council.

Whenever a vehicle is leased or rented to transport girls for any Girl Scout activity, a nationally recognized company with a positive rating must be used. Troop leaders are designated as authorized signers when renting/leasing using Girl Scout funds. A10 passenger or more vehicles may require specific licensing. Review the California DMV regulations for more information.

Whenever a vehicle is **chartered** to transport girls for any Girl Scout activity, a Certificate of Liability insurance naming GSSGC as additionally insured must be obtained, Proof of appropriate insurance and proof of the most recent maintenance must be on file at the council service center prior to departure.

All required transportation contracts and/or agreements binding on the council **MUST** be submitted to the Council Service Center for approval and **MUST** be signed by a person authorized by the Council Board of Directors.

Refunds

All participants in Girl Scout programs, events, and activities shall adhere to the specific refund policy as defined on the registration/information materials for the specific activities and events. (e.g. council approved flyers, web information posted on the council's official web site or distributed in official council e-mails, council approved day and resident camp brochures etc).

Unless otherwise stated the refund policy is:

- If a mandatory deposit is required, it is non-refundable regardless of reason.
- Activities costing over \$15 will be subject to a 15% cancellation fee; activities costing \$15 or less are non-refundable.
- Written notification of cancellation must be received at least thirty (30) days prior to the activity to be considered for a refund.
- In case of emergency cancellation, a written note must be received within ten (10) days of the activity's conclusion to be considered. If emergency is medical in nature a written doctor's statement must be provided to be considered for full or partial refund.
- If a participant leaves an activity early due to homesickness, unacceptable behavior, or parental request, no refund will be made.
- If a participant must leave early due to illness or injury, request for prorated refund must be made in writing within ten (10) days of the activity's conclusion to be considered.
- A full refund including deposit will be made if the activity is cancelled by council.
- A full refund including deposit will be made if the participant cannot be placed or does not meet the event guidelines.
- No-shows are non-refundable. Membership registration fees are non-refundable.

Adult Volunteer Training

All volunteers **MUST** participate in training appropriate to their position.

Completion of *GS101* and *Volunteer Essentials* (formerly *Basic Leadership Training* (BLT)) is a prerequisite to beginning a Girl Scout troop.

All volunteers **MUST** take *GS 101* or another similar training that is more appropriate to their position (i.e. *Volunteering for Girl Scout Series & Events*) prior to assuming any duties as related to a volunteer position.

In addition, any volunteer acting as a troop/group leader, co-leader, assistant leader,, or other similar position **MUST** also take the Volunteer Essentials Training prior to assuming any volunteer duties on behalf of GSSGC. Participating in any council training **DOES NOT** constitute appointment to any volunteer position.

A training card will be issued to each volunteer completing *Volunteer Essentials Training*. Volunteers are responsible for updating their training card as additional courses are completed for their own records.

Within six months of appointment as a troop/group leader, co-leader, assistant leader, or other similar position, the volunteer **MUST** take grade level specific Journey training. In the case of a multi-level troop, the volunteer will take the grade level training that matches the majority of the girls registered in the troop/group. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal as a volunteer and notification of all registered members in the troop/group.

To attend training courses, registered attendees must be members of GSUSA. If new leaders (not yet registered) are in attendance, the additional insurance required will be provided by council. Priority registration will be granted to all registered adults. Girls, 14 and older, may register in courses based on space availability.

Participants **MUST** register within the designated time frame posted on the council approved registration/information materials prior to the date of a course. Courses may be cancelled or rescheduled due to no/low enrollment. Course fees **MUST** accompany registration.

All volunteers **MUST** participate in training required for their position. Failure to do so may result in the removal and/or suspension of the volunteer from the position.

If for any reason a participant cannot attend the class originally registered for, they have a one-time transfer opportunity to another class. They will have 30 days to apply this transfer opportunity to any upcoming class on the calendar.

Conclusion

All material contained in this document is subject to change and amendment. The most recent version can be found at the council website (www.gssgc.org) in the forms and resources section. For clarification on any information contained in this document or to express concerns please call GSSGC at 909-307-6555.