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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](mailto: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](mailto:troopbanking@gssgc.org) if there is a problem with a specific branch.
3. Contact GSSGC at [troopbanking@gssgc.org](mailto: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 Geronimo 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***

“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. All money received from their participation in these product sales programs will be held in a fund by GSSGC. Girls may request funding 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 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](http://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 Geronimo 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 GS[membership@gssgc.org](mailto:membership@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**

Only troop/groups may earn troop proceeds no individual girl may earn proceeds. As such our individual girls may not have proceeds and/or credits held in their name. All Juliettes participating in the product sale with our pathway program must meet\* at least four times a year. During these meetings our Juliettes will be:

- Planning, budgeting, and voting on the use of funds, learning Girl Scout traditions and songs, as well as operating in a troop setting. Three meetings will be specific to programming and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the last meeting will be a campout planned by the girls in this girl-led pathway program.
- Pathway funds must be used within one year.
- Juliettes will need to fill out a yearly *Troop Financial Report* to indicate use of their funds, if there is any funding remaining - this indicates planning has occurred.
- Juliettes who sold previous to the 2015-2016 membership year will be grandfathered in based on previous guidelines until such time their Juliette Credits expire (at the latest June 1, 2019).  
The following policy applies to these grandfathered Juliette Credits:

- All girls who leave Girl Scouts, whether from not registering or from graduating to adults, have no access to credits. Any non-reregistering girl must use their funds before the new Girl Scout year. All graduating Girl Scouts must use their credits before the new Girl Scout membership year or when they become adult members.

If a girl does not reregister by October 1 of the new Girl Scout year she will lose all access to the “troop Juliette funds.” There is no grace period. Re-registration is imperative.

\* If girls choose not to attend the meetings they may still participate in the product sale but will be bound by the decisions of the girls present.

### **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.

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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Gorgonio 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 Gorgonio 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.

## ***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 councils 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](http://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.