

# Girl Scouts of North East Ohio

## Operational Volunteer Policies

**The purpose of these operational volunteer policies is to support the safety of all persons involved in Girl Scout activities and the success of the programs and opportunities offered by Girl Scouts of North East Ohio. The following policies were developed to ensure consistency and continuity throughout Council practices. Failure to follow the volunteer policies set forth in this document will lead to the dismissal of volunteer.**

### **Definitions**

**Standard** - something considered by an authority or by general consent as a basis of comparison; an approved model. A rule or principle that is used as a basis for judgment.

**Policy** - a definite course of action, adopted by the Board of Directors, that must be followed for the sake of consistency throughout Council practices.

**Procedure** - an act or a manner of proceeding in any action or process; conduct.

### **Introduction**

This manual outlines the policies of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO). It is not the intent of this document to repeat national policies, but to adopt specific policies to clarify those areas needed to be defined for local use.

All members of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) are responsible for the policies in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents (Leaders Digest)* and for the recommended guidelines outlined in *Safety-Wise*. These two documents are published by Girl Scouts of the United States of America and are used throughout the national organization.

In addition, all federal, state and local laws must be followed. In some cases, policies are stricter than the law.

A policy is a course of action established by the Board of Directors that must be followed.

Within the following document the term GSNEO may also be referred as “the Council”.

Within the following document the term operational volunteer is defined as any person important to the delivery of Girl Scout programming, whose performance of their duties positively affects the health and safety of the girl membership or other adult volunteers, and/or the financial health of the Girl Scout troop/group, program, or the council. This includes, but is not limited to, the following volunteer positions: Troop Leader, Troop Co-leader, Service Unit Director, Service Unit/Troop Treasurer, Service Unit Team Member, Product Sales volunteers, Program Volunteers, Day Camp Volunteers, and Adult Learning Facilitators.

## **Equal Opportunity for Volunteers**

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability, age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran's status, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action efforts shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of under represented population groups.

## **Membership Registration**

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law, become a registered member with Girl Scouts of the United States of America and individually pay annual membership dues, and/or become a lifetime member. Those working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity must abide by GSNEO policies, procedures and practices. Only members registered for the current membership year (Oct 1 through Sept 30) are covered by Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance Basic Coverage. This insurance is secondary to any other insurance the member may have.

### ***Uniforms***

GSNEO will adopt the adult uniform as defined by the GSUSA. GSNEO recognizes the importance of the uniform tradition; however uniforms are not required for participation in Girl Scouting.

## **Volunteer Development**

GSNEO will use a volunteer management process that will be consistent with the GSUSA volunteer management philosophy.

GSNEO desires to provide volunteers with a single entry system process that is consistent and progressive for all volunteers.

The single entry system aids GSNEO in managing the volunteer development process. These steps include but may not be limited to:

- |  |                         |                      |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Recruitment and Welcome of Volunteers | 3. Assessment           | 7. Support           |
| 2. Submission of Application Materials   | 4. Background Screening | 8. Training/Learning |
|  | 5. Notification         | 9. Recognition       |
|  | 6. Orientation          | 10. Evaluation       |

GSNEO shall maintain the confidentiality of all volunteer applicant materials.

### **Step One (1): Recruitment and Welcome of Volunteers**

The recruitment process consists of various methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions. Potential volunteers will be given a general Girl Scout and GSNEO overview, and the appropriate materials for membership. This may include a volunteer application, reference forms, background screening authorization, and an interest indicator.

### **Step Two (2): Submission of Application Materials**

After the initial contact is made, the volunteer candidate must submit the appropriate application materials in order to proceed through the process.

Only one (1) application is required per volunteer, no matter how many positions the volunteer may be applying for or hold.

### **Step Three (3): Volunteer Assessment**

There will be an assessment process for all volunteers. The process will assess the volunteer candidate by identifying his/her interests, skills, experience, talents, and availability as they meet the needs of GSNEO.

### **Step Four (4): Background Screening**

The Council's primary concern is always to safeguard the safety and best interests of its girl members. Therefore, background screenings must be conducted on operational volunteers regardless of their position.

Prospective GSNEO operational volunteers must complete and sign a form authorizing the Council or its agents to conduct a criminal background search. Without a completed authorization form a person cannot serve in or be appointed to a volunteer position within the Council.

GSNEO reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been arrested; who has been convicted of certain crimes; who has pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes; who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for certain crimes and/or who has committed acts that are considered contrary to the community standards of justice, honesty, or good morals.

The conduct or offenses that may disqualify a person from volunteer participation in the Council, as well as the process used to determine disqualification of a person from volunteer participation, are set out below. The decision whether to exclude altogether or limit a prospective volunteer's participation in the Council is exclusively within the discretion of the Council. Factors to be considered by the Council in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the conduct and offenses, and the length of time since the conduct or offenses occurred.

Providing false information on the application, including drivers license number, social security number and date of birth, may be grounds for exclusion from volunteer participation in the Council, regardless of the criminal background search.

### ***Appealing the Accuracy of the Criminal Background Record***

Any applicant who disputes or desires to contest the information provided by the reporting agency must file a written notice with the Council within 30 days of being notified that her or his application for volunteer participation has been denied and/or restricted. The volunteer will have

an opportunity to review the criminal history report as provided by the reporting agency. It is the applicant's responsibility to appeal the report received from the reporting agency and to arrange for any corrections to be sent to GSNEO.

The Council cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided by the reporting agency, to the Council or its agents, or for any actions taken by the Council in reliance on such information. The Council has no control over the information provided by the reporting agency. The Council is entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the criminal history report until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript has been provided. Even if an applicant submits corrected background information, the Council retains exclusive discretion to exclude or limit an applicant's participation.

***Disqualification from Volunteer Participation***

Notwithstanding the status as an operational volunteer or member, no registered sex offender is allowed to attend Girl Scout meetings or activities. Activities will not be held in the home/dwelling of a registered sex offender.

If the Council learns (via a criminal background search or otherwise) that a prospective volunteer has been convicted of, had pled guilty to, has received deferred adjudication for, or has pled no contest to one of the following crimes under the laws of the State of Ohio, another State, or the United States:

***Automatic disqualification:***

1. Crimes against children, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations
2. Felony offenses against the family
3. Felony offenses against persons
4. Crimes defined as public indecency
5. Crimes involving the use of weapons
6. Arson
7. Any violent crime or felony drug-related offense, other than those drug offenses specifically identified below.

***Possible Disqualifications:***

Conviction of drug, alcohol, controlled substance, theft, and crimes involving moral perpetuity offense may be cause for the council to ban participation in Girl Scout activities. Several factors such as date of disposition and frequency will be used to assess the applicant's standing.

For all other conduct and offenses the Council shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. The decision whether to allow volunteer participation shall be within the absolute discretion of the Council.

GSNEO reserves the right to re-screen any volunteer on a periodic or episodic basis as needed.

If a person is charged with any misconduct or offense, involvement with the Council as a volunteer may be temporarily suspended during disposition or investigation of the occurrence.

### **Step Five (5): Notification and Placement of Volunteer Candidate**

Based on the results of the assessment process, GSNEO shall accept or decline the volunteer candidate's application and notify volunteer candidate of same. Additionally, the volunteer candidate has the option to accept or decline a position.

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. This decision may be made in conjunction with GSNEO staff, the volunteer candidate, and other GSNEO volunteers. Candidates may request reassignment for which they will be evaluated.

All operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one Girl Scout membership year. (See "Step 10: Evaluation")

All decisions regarding placement of a volunteer for GSNEO are final.

### **Step Six (6): Volunteer Orientation**

Each volunteer shall be provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, GSNEO information, and the support systems available. Orientation can be done one-on-one or in a group setting.

### **Step Seven (7): Volunteer Support**

GSNEO volunteers will be given support specific to the volunteer position or role. This can be done one-on-one or in a group setting.

### **Step Eight (8): Training**

Upon appointment to a volunteer position, all operational volunteers will complete appropriate training that is designated for their position within six (6) months of appointment. Exceptions to this are: diversity training (within one (1) year), and short-term volunteers.

### **Step Nine (9): Recognition and Appreciation**

GSNEO recognizes the value of our volunteers. Therefore, a recognition system shall be administered annually.

### **Step Ten (10): Evaluation**

#### ***Volunteer Performance Appraisals***

Volunteer performance appraisals shall be performed by an administrative volunteer and/or GSNEO staff member at the end of volunteer term of service, as defined by the signed position description. The performance appraisal will evaluate the volunteer's past performance, adherence to GSNEO and Girl Scouts of the United States of America policies, standards and procedures; support of the Girl Scout purpose, values and GSNEO goals as well as the completion of the adult learning requirement and the fulfillment of the position description. Upon completion of the performance appraisal, one of the following will occur:

### ***Reappointment***

Upon a satisfactory performance appraisal, the volunteer will be reappointed to the position for which they were evaluated. There will be a mutual acceptance of position accountability, expectations, and time of commitment between the volunteer and GSNEO.

### ***Reassignment***

Upon completion of the performance appraisal, the decision to reassign the volunteer to a different position is dependent upon their performance, interest, adult learning, and the recommendation from administrative volunteers (if applicable). This decision may be made in conjunction with GSNEO staff, the volunteer candidate, and other GSNEO volunteers. The decision to reassign a volunteer will be provided in writing and will be documented in their volunteer file. There will be a mutual acceptance of the reassigned position accountability, expectations, and time of commitment between the volunteer and GSNEO.

### ***Release***

Either GSNEO or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release a volunteer from a position either during or at the end of the term. GSNEO may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with GSNEO or GSUSA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement. GSNEO staff will follow protocol for release, including the confidentiality policy of GSNEO. The volunteer will be notified of release verbally and in writing. It will also be documented in the volunteer's file.

### **Conflict Resolution**

The most effective way of resolving conflict is calm, open discussion between the persons involved. The council encourages the immediate resolution of conflict among the parties involved. (i.e., volunteers, staff, parents, etc.) However, if the resolution is not acceptable to any party involved, then a request should be sent to the appropriate immediate supervisor, (i.e. volunteer to Service Unit Director, Service Unit Director to Membership Development Specialist, Membership Development Specialist to Service Area Director, etc.) at which time the conflict resolution process will begin. The conflict resolution process may be used by all volunteers. The conflict resolution process may include steps that facilitate open discussion, mediation, documentation, solutions, and decisions. GSNEO is committed to hearing from all parties to find an amicable solution. When this is not possible additional steps will be taken with the final step including involvement of the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer will make the final decision which is binding on all parties.

## **Harassment**

GSNEO is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

GSNEO expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran's status, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

If any volunteer feels that she/he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to their Service Area Director or to the Chief Executive Officer. The Service Area Director, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions.

## **Sexual Harassment**

It is against GSNEO's policies for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. GSNEO reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSNEO any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, sexually harasses another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, abusing the dignity of another through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct and threats or suggestions that a volunteer's status is conditioned upon toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances. Some examples of sexual harassment include telling of sexual jokes or stories; the presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials; touching of another person's clothing, hair or body; making sexual comments about another person's body; making sexual comments or innuendoes; asking personal questions about another person's social or sexual life; staring; leering; and making sexual gestures.

If any volunteer feels that she or he has been subjected to sexual harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to their Service Area Director or to the Chief Executive Officer. The Service Area Director, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions.

## **Child Abuse**

GSNEO is committed to an environment that is free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts, and it is against GSNEO's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, mentally, emotionally, or verbally abuse or neglect any child, including girl members.

Physical or corporal punishment shall not be permitted at any Girl Scout activity. At no time is discipline to include depriving any girl of sleep or food; placing the girl alone without supervision; threats of corporal punishment or excessive physical exertion.

GSNEO reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with GSNEO, any volunteer implementing Girl Scout program who has been engaged in or found guilty of child abuse and neglect as stated in Step Four (4):  
Background Screening.

If a person has knowledge of or reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred, they need to report it to the local child protective agency as well as contact their Service Area Director, Director of Member Services, or the Chief Executive Officer immediately.

### **Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco**

Adults in a role of leadership, supervision, or in any way affiliated with a girl program event or activity shall not: use or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any improperly used controlled substance; use tobacco on any council owned properties except in designated areas; use tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs in the presence of girl members at anytime during Girl Scout activities. Alcohol and/or illegal drugs are not to be brought onto GSNEO properties.

### **Carry and Conceal Policy**

It is the policy GSNEO that no members, participants, guests, or any other individuals shall have the right to carry, conceal or possess any gun, knife (any knife not intended for specific program use) or any other kind of weapon while involved in any Girl Scout activity or while involved in any activity that is sanctioned by GSNEO, or that occurs in conjunction with GSNEO activities, or occurs on the property or premises under the ownership or control of GSNEO.