



COVID Guidance Updated March 4, 2022:

From the start of the pandemic, Girl Scouts have proven themselves to be strong community supporters, going above and beyond to keep themselves and others safe. Thank you.

COVID-19 remains an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Volunteers should continue to take all reasonable precautions to limit exposure and prevent community transmission.

This guidance is based on updated information from the CDC.

#### **Guidelines:**

1. **Set clear expectations and communicate with families on any plans for your troop** so that they know what to expect and can make decisions that best fit their personal situation.
2. **Remind potential participants to stay home if they are sick.** Individuals should assess themselves before attending in-person events. Please do not attend an event if you have any known symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been exposed to COVID-19, follow guidance from the Ohio Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/docs/covid-19-guidance-quarantine.pdf>. When in doubt, lean on the side of caution.
3. **Maintain good hygiene.** Allow for handwashing, sanitizing, and physical distancing.
4. **Clean and sanitize** high touch surfaces, equipment, and shared supplies regularly.
5. **Consider physical distancing.** There are no longer recommended group size limitations; however, consider physical distancing as a strategy to prevent spreading illness.
  - Meet outdoors and spread out, if possible.
  - If meeting indoors, consider the facility and establish a maximum capacity to accommodate physical distancing.
6. **Masks.** Know the COVID-19 Community Level where you live and mask accordingly.
  - COVID-19 Community Levels are a tool to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Find the COVID-19 Community Level for your county at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>
    - **If levels are low (green)**, wear a mask based on your personal preference, informed by your personal level of risk. Masks are optional.
    - **If levels are medium (yellow)**, take precautions to protect those who are immunocompromised. Consider wearing masks to keep others safe. Masks are recommended.
    - **If levels are high (orange)**, masks are required when physical distancing cannot be maintained (indoors or outdoors) regardless of vaccination status. If girls are wearing masks, then adults should also wear masks to serve as good role models.

- **Know before you go.** If COVID-19 Community Levels are different from where you live than where you are going, follow the strictest guideline. Wear a mask to keep others safe.
- In some cases, local ordinances, our community partners, and outside vendors may require a mask. Please be aware of these requirements and follow them, if applicable.
- Because GSNEO is a regional organization, if COVID-19 Community Levels rise with a considerable amount of our population, GSNEO may require masking at events that bring groups of people from across the council together. Please watch for notifications prior to the specific event.
- Individuals may choose to wear a mask more often than required.

As always, we'll continue to monitor the situation and update these guidelines as needed. Please feel free to contact GSNEO Customer Care at 800-852-4474, [customer care@gsneo.org](mailto:customer care@gsneo.org), or via Live Chat with any questions that you might have.

## FAQs

### **What if COVID-19 Community Levels are different from where I live than where I'm going?**

Know before you go. If COVID-19 Community Levels are different from where you live than where you are going, follow the strictest guideline. Wear a mask to keep others safe. For example, if you live in a community that is rated low (green) but are going to an event in a community that is rated high (orange), then masks are required. This helps prevent you from bringing COVID-19 back home to your community. Alternatively, if you live in an area that is high (orange) and you are attending an event in an area that is medium (yellow), wear a mask even though it might not be required at the event. This helps prevent your group from bringing COVID-19 into a neighboring community.

### **What about Troop Camping?**

Troop camping is generally a smaller group of girls (one troop) that camp in one housing unit; please follow the guidelines above.

### **What about Service Unit Campouts?**

Service unit campouts usually involve multiple troops or groups camping together in multiple housing units. Following guidance from the American Camping Association and the Ohio Department of Health for camping, we strongly recommend a pod or cohort structure that limits housing units from mixing with one another if levels of COVID-19 community spread are high (orange). This prevents widespread exposure to COVID-19. If there are shared mealtimes or "all camp" events, allow for pods to be physically distant from one another. Follow guidance for good hygiene and extra cleaning protocols.

### **What about Service Unit Events?**

Service unit daytime/evening events should follow the guidelines listed above, including masking when required, good hygiene, and extra cleaning protocols. Prior to the event, Service Units should plan to communicate if masks will be optional, recommended, or required based on the current level of COVID-19 community spread. If levels of COVID-19 community spread are high (orange), we strongly

recommend a pod or cohort structure to limit the possibility of widespread exposure should someone test positive for COVID-19.

**Are there times when masks should not be worn?**

Even when COVID-19 Community spread is high, there are times when masks should NOT be worn. Masks should not be worn when participating in watersports (ex. swimming and boating) or when actively participating in vigorous physical activity. Additionally, masks should not be worn while sleeping and can't be worn while eating. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, encourage physical distancing in these situations when community spread is high.

Never put a mask on someone that's having difficulty breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove them without assistance.

**What is your policy regarding mask exemptions?**

When COVID-19 community spread is high and you can't be physically distant, face coverings are required for people who can safely wear them. The State of Ohio offers exemptions for people who may have difficulty wearing masks, including people with severe asthma or breathing issues, hearing aids, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, or claustrophobia. Generally, these conditions should be noted on a member's health history form as they may require accommodation beyond a mask exemption.

**How should I accommodate a group of girls where some require mask exemptions and others are immunocompromised?**

In these situations, we've found that setting a goal to be inclusive and hosting a caregiver/family meeting to discuss the needs and expectations of group members has resulted in a positive outcome. Groups have openly discussed their comfort level and assessed their individual risk, determining a satisfactory compromise regarding meetings, program events, and camping trips. If a compromise cannot be reached, please contact our Manager of Volunteer Relations for further assistance.

**If we are outside and masks aren't required, can I wear one anyway?**

Yes, individuals may choose to wear a mask more often than required.

**Can I require everyone that is participating in a Girl Scout event to have a vaccine?**

No. GSNEO encourages, but does not require, vaccination for girls, volunteers, or staff. Deciding to receive a vaccine is a personal decision and GSNEO encourages everyone to respect the privacy of fellow members and their families. Vaccination status is private medical information.

**Can we require everyone in our troop or group to take a COVID-19 test before participating in a Girl Scout activity or camp out?**

At this time, GSNEO is not *requiring* a negative COVID-19 test to participate in meetings, programs, or overnight camping trips.

With the increased accessibility of testing, however, troops may decide to voluntarily take a test before their event, campout, or trip as an extra layer of precaution. Individual families may choose to participate in testing or not. In other words, troops may request, but not require COVID-19 testing.

- Please note that testing is best done within 72 hours of the event, campout, or trip start; however, the closer the better.

- Please consider cost and accessibility when suggesting this option to your group.
- Maintain confidentiality. Like vaccination status, test status and test results are private medical information. Individual participation and results should not be shared with the group.
- Please know that even with a recent negative COVID-19 test, protocols for physical distancing, masking, good hygiene, and extra cleaning should still be followed.

**Can we participate in activities where an outside vendor or program provider requires attendees to show proof of vaccination OR a negative COVID test?**

Yes. In some cases, our community partners and outside vendors are requiring proof of vaccination or a negative test. It is recommended that participation criteria are communicated and shared during the planning phase so that girls and their caregivers can evaluate requirements and their ability to participate. Individual families may choose to participate or not. For troop-related activities, we encourage consideration and selection of activities that promote inclusivity and belonging.

**I've been exposed to COVID-19, can I attend an upcoming event?**

The Ohio Department of Health has released a [flow chart](#) based on the CDC's updated guidance following an exposure to someone with COVID-19. Regardless of vaccination status or symptoms, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate for at least 5 days. However, if symptoms are improving, isolation may end on the sixth day following either symptom onset or a positive COVID-19 test if the person consistently wears a mask for the next five days. Detailed quarantine and isolation guidance are available in the flow chart. The flow chart can be found here:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/docs/covid-19-guidance-quarantine.pdf>

**What if there is a COVID-19 exposure at an in-person Girl Scout event?**

If you need to report a positive COVID-19 test result for someone who has recently attended any Girl Scout-related meeting or event, please maintain confidentiality and [complete this form](#). GSNEO will provide templates to help notify participants that they have been exposed to COVID-19.