



COVID Guidance Updated October 4, 2021:

The safety of our members is of primary importance to GSNEO.

This guidance is based on information from the Ohio Department of Health. We have adopted these guidelines to limit transmission of COVID-19 within groups participating in GSNEO meetings, trainings or events.

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

**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 or are unvaccinated and have been exposed to COVID-19.
3. **Maintain good hygiene.** Allow for handwashing, sanitizing and social distancing. Avoid self-serve food and drink stations.
4. **Clean and sanitize** high touch surfaces, equipment, and shared supplies regularly.
5. **Meet physical distancing guidelines.** There are no longer recommended group size limitations; however physical distancing is still recommended.
  - Meet outdoors and spread out, if possible.
  - If meeting indoors, consider the facility and establish a maximum capacity to accommodate physical distancing.
6. **Masks.** If you cannot maintain physical distancing with your group (indoors or outdoors), then masks are required regardless of vaccination status. If girls are wearing masks, then adults should also wear masks to serve as good role models.

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, [customercare@gsneo.org](mailto:customercare@gsneo.org), or via Live Chat with any questions that you might have.

## **FAQs**

### **Can we have a group larger than 10?**

Yes, there isn't a limitation on group size; however, you should consider the site and accommodate physical distancing. Follow the guidance above for good hygiene and extra cleaning protocols.

### **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. 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, good hygiene and extra cleaning protocols. We recommend a pod or cohort structure to limit the possibility of widespread exposure should someone test positive for COVID-19.

### **If I'm vaccinated, do I have to wear a mask?**

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.

### **Are there 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.

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 you can't be physically distant, face coverings are required for people who can safely wear them. The State of Ohio offers exemption for people who may have difficulty wearing masks, including 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.

**Will there be more opportunities for participation in training and program events?**

We'll be reviewing each training and program event individually. If there is room to increase capacity, we'll utilize the waitlist to fill the spots available.

**Do I need an appointment to visit a GSNEO Council Shop?**

No. GSNEO shop appointments are no longer required, and walk-ins are welcomed! For your convenience, curbside and materials pick-up can be scheduled. [Shop | Girl Scouts of North East Ohio \(gsneo.org\)](#)

**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.