



VOLUNTEER POLICIES

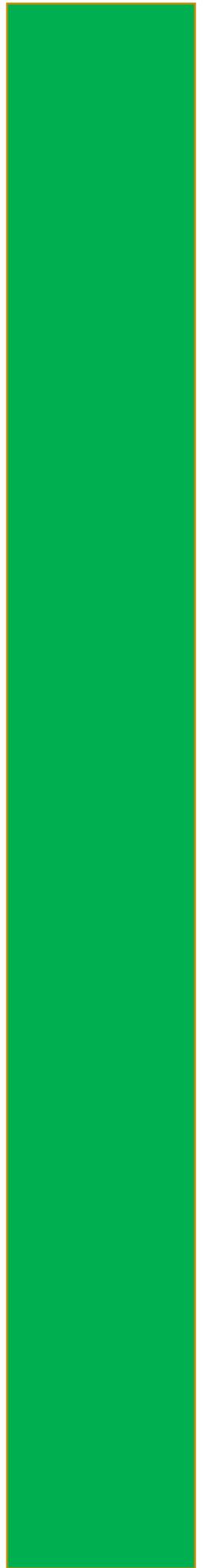


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I. INTRODUCTION

This document 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 adhering to the policies, practices, procedures, and guidelines in the Blue Book of Basic Documents, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Checkpoints. These documents are published by GSUSA and are used throughout the national organization. Links to these documents can be found at gsneo.org.

In addition to all the standard volunteer policies, board members have additional policies and standards of conduct that apply to that particular position that are reviewed after election to the board. A board member may not, while serving as a member of the GSNEO Board of Directors, serve in any operational volunteer position for GSNEO.

Within this document, the term GSNEO is used interchangeably with the words “the council.” Also, the term “volunteer” is defined as any person who is not a paid staff member but delivers Girl Scout programming, and whose participation affects the health, safety, and/or finances of the girl or adult membership.

There is a glossary of terms at the end of this document.

II. VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

Volunteers are Girl Scouts of North East Ohio’s (GSNEO’s) greatest asset in guiding generations of girls to become leaders in their own lives and in the world. It is through this volunteer leadership that the Girl Scout Movement serves girls and realizes its mission to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. To ensure job satisfaction of volunteers and to utilize the talents of volunteers effectively, it is essential that the following policies be established and maintained. Together we can work to ensure the safety and well-being of all members.

III. VOLUNTEER WELLNESS

Volunteer service can involve multiple commitments. Enthusiasm, energy and positive attitudes are essential to providing girls and adults with worthwhile and enjoyable leadership experiences. To this end, it is vital that adult volunteers not overextend themselves by volunteering for too many overlapping roles. Building a broader base of adult support by encouraging others to participate increases and expands the opportunities for everyone to grow and share. GSNEO is committed to providing enriching quality experiences for both girls and adults.

POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

GSNEO maintains a strong policy of equal volunteer opportunity. In keeping with GSUSA's Blue Book of Basic Documents; we recruit, train, promote, and dismiss volunteers on the basis of competence and volunteer position performance, without regard to race, creed, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, disability, socioeconomic background, or any other characteristic protected by law. Furthermore, to assure that the membership of GSNEO reflects the diversity of population groups within its jurisdiction, GSNEO is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and outreach in the recruitment, selection, placement, development, and recognition of volunteers and in the extension of Girl Scouting to adults in all communities within its jurisdiction. GSNEO will place special emphasis on efforts to recruit volunteers from under-represented populations.

Adults and volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Girl Scouts welcomes all girls in grades K-12, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, family structure, religion, and socioeconomic background. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved (e.g. financial constraints, religious holidays, accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places).

Any volunteer who engages in or encourages discrimination in any form is subject to release from their volunteer position at the discretion of GSNEO.

POLICY: MEMBERSHIP

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement must be registered as members with GSUSA and pay membership dues as outlined by GSUSA. At times there are adults who are working on a short-term project, such as Cookie delivery, or in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity, who do not work with girls or Girl Scout funds directly, in which membership is not a requirement.

Girls may participate in more than one troop/group, however, each girl may only have one Girl Scout membership.

Families with a girl(s) in more than one troop/group need to consider the following;

- Duplication of program experiences; both troops/groups may be working on the same Journeys or badges.

- Clarity about the Magazine & Snack and Cookie Program; dividing up the orders and efforts of the girl so that it is clear prior to the start of the sales.

Girl Scouts does not permit girls to have multiple profiles or registrations in our system. Families with shared custody arrangements should work together with troop/group leaders to ensure an optimal Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

POLICY: VOLUNTEER ROLE

A volunteer is any adult (18 years of age or older) who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of the council. A volunteer should be appointed prior to performing the task. Volunteers must be at least 2 years older than the girls they are supervising.

All adults accompanying troop/group meetings or activities on a regular basis, or attending any overnight activity or who at any time assume care, custody, or control of girl members and/or Girl

Scout money must be both a registered adult member of GSUSA and an approved, appointed volunteer of GSNEO.

Volunteer eligibility is determined and acceptance is completed online. Prior to applying for the position it is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to review a Volunteer Position Description for the role for which they are applying.

Volunteers are appointed on an individual basis for a period of up to three (3) years, and renew their role annually by visiting the online MyGS member community, including Lifetime members. A volunteer may be released at any time due to failure to fulfill the requirements of the position or a change in the needs of the council.

All volunteers must be thoroughly familiar with the information in the Safety Activity Checkpoints and be responsible for ensuring that all Girl Scout activities meet required safety standards.

All troops/groups must have at least two registered, approved, adult volunteers, including at least two of whom are unrelated (i.e. not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child), and who do not live in the same residence, and at least one of whom identifies as female.

POLICY: REPRESENTING GIRL SCOUTS

While in uniform or representing Girl Scouts, both girls and adults must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that embodies the Girl Scout movement and aligns with the Girl Scout mission. Volunteers must act in the best interest of GSNEO by conducting themselves professionally and in accordance with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

POLICY: TRAINING

In order to ensure volunteers are prepared to deliver high-quality programming and leadership, they need to complete training for their role. Volunteers are encouraged to continually enhance and develop their skills throughout their leadership volunteer experience.

All volunteers who work with girls or adults and deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) are required to complete basic leadership training. Additional required training expectations are outlined on each volunteers' position description and in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Volunteer training is offered in a variety of ways to best meet varied and unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning and interactive online learning.

Training records are kept on file by GSNEO. Volunteers should also keep personal records of their training history.

Troops may decide to cover the cost for volunteer training as a troop expense.

POLICY: RECOGNITION

GSNEO will create a culture of appreciation that includes both formal and informal methods to recognize all volunteers for their time, talent, and impact. This system will include council and GSUSA Adult Recognition Awards.

POLICY: SIZE OF GROUPS

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to encourage individual development. Group sizes will vary based on the method of program delivery (i.e. virtual, in-person).

Girl Scouts' adult-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls (council may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions). These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

Multi-level troops should follow adult-to-girl ratios for youngest girls in troop.

During the summer in between program years, troops must use younger ratio even if troop bridges in spring (e.g. Daisy troop that bridges to Brownies in May still needs to use Daisy ratios until start of new program year on October 1).

See Volunteer Essentials for adult-to-girl ratio chart.

Troops must have a minimum of 5 girls to remain active, with the exception of troops meeting the following criteria:

- 2-4 unrelated girls
- 2 unrelated, approved Direct Primary volunteers
- Open bank account
- Open on the Opportunity Catalog to a total of 5+ girls

Troops who do not meet these criteria as determined by GSNEO will be disbanded and the girls will be transferred to Juliette, or Individually Registered, status. Exceptions can be made at GSNEO discretion.

POLICY: APPROPRIATE AGE LEVEL TROOPS/GROUPS

Girls participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in groups or independently, in these program age-levels.

- Girl Scout Daisies: Grade K-1
- Girl Scout Brownies: Grade 2-3
- Girl Scout Juniors: Grade 4-5
- Girl Scout Cadettes: Grade 6-8
- Girl Scout Seniors: Grade 9-10
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: Grade 11-12

Certain situations, such as a troop leader with multiple daughters close in age, may lead to the creation of a multiage-level troop. For guiding principles on multiage-level troops, and to ensure that all girls are receiving a Girl Scout experience appropriate for their age level, see Troop Leader Basics training on the Learning and Resources Nook at training.gsneo.org.

Parents may choose to send girls to GSNEO summer programming designated for the girls' previous or upcoming grade level (e.g. girl going into 2nd grade could attend either Daisy or Brownie camps).

Pre-K girls entering Kindergarten in the fall who purchase the extended-year membership may participate in Girl Scouts starting May 1, but are not eligible to attend Girl Scout camp.

Girls with cognitive disabilities should be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.

POLICY: UNIFORMS

Girl Scouts at each level have one required element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins and awards when they participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouts. For Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes, the unifying look is a tunic, vest, or sash combined with their own solid white shirts and khaki pants or skirts. Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors have the option of wearing a scarf that unites their look with that of Girl Scout sisters around the world. Girl Scout Daisy and Brownies also have a full uniform ensemble available. Scoutship is available upon request for families with financial barriers.

Girl Scout badges, awards, and other insignia should be presented, worn, and displayed only after Girl Scouts have completed the requirements outlined in official program materials.

Adult volunteers are encouraged to wear official membership pins when representing Girl Scouts (e.g. troop meetings, field trips, cookie booths). Pins and fun patches may be displayed on the official GSUSA adult vest following specified GSUSA guidelines. Adults are never permitted to wear girl-earned insignia (e.g. badges, highest awards). For formal Girl Scout events (e.g. Volunteer Recognition Celebration, Women of Distinction, Board meetings) adults should wear an official Girl Scout scarf or tie for men, official membership pins, and their own navy blue business attire.

POLICY: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Volunteers will be provided with the opportunity to review their performance and obtain feedback from their volunteer or staff supervisor. Responsibilities, duties, and expectations of each volunteer position will be established and outlined in the position description.

The purpose of a performance review is to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of GSNEO volunteers, to provide coaching, evaluate changes that need to be made, help assess whether a position is a good fit or make any other recommendations to help the volunteer be successful in her/his role. Generally, performance reviews are conducted at the end of a volunteer's position term, although a performance review and coaching may occur throughout the year.

In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the volunteer will be asked to make changes or to fulfill specified requirements to correct the unfavorable behavior within a specified timeframe. Failure to improve performance will subject a volunteer to reassignment or release.

POLICY: RESIGNATION

A volunteer may resign from her/his position at any time. Here are the steps:

1. Prior to giving notice, we encourage her/him to discuss the reason(s) with the assigned staff or volunteer supervisor.
2. At least two weeks prior to leaving, the volunteer should submit a written resignation outlining the specific position(s) from which she/he is resigning and the reason(s) for leaving.
3. When applicable, we ask that the volunteer assist in identifying a replacement and communicate her/his decision with members of the service unit team.

The volunteer may be required to balance Girl Scout funds/accounts and return property and records. The volunteer and their supervisor will be responsible for completing all necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition.

POLICY: REDIRECTION/RELEASE

A volunteer may be released from a volunteer position or redirected to a new position because of these reasons, among others:

- Restructuring of volunteer positions;
- Abuse, neglect, mishandling, or mistreatment of girls or adults;
- Conviction of a felony;
- Misappropriation of funds or outstanding debt;
- Acts of discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability unrelated to the individual's ability to perform designated volunteer duties, religion, economic status, or any other basis protected by law;
- Failure to maintain strict confidentiality when handling sensitive or privileged information;
- Membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA or GSNEO;
- Ineffectiveness or inability to perform the assignment;
- Unsatisfactory completion of objectives or failure to take corrective action;
- Excessive absence or tardiness from volunteer assignment;
- Violation of GSUSA policies or GSNEO policies;
- Misalignment with council business processes, procedures, or program;
- Actions not consistent with the Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and/or Girl Scout Law.

Volunteers who are released or redirected from their volunteer position are still considered members of GSUSA and GSNEO unless it is determined that they are not able to meet the membership requirements related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Movement or by supporting the mission and values of the organization.

Volunteers who are released or redirected from a volunteer position may or may not be restricted from attending and/or participating in Girl Scout activities/events depending on the nature of the situation.

All volunteers who are redirected or released will be notified in writing. GSNEO will maintain confidentiality, however, it may be necessary to notify other members impacted by the change in volunteer status.

A redirected or released volunteer who wishes to dispute GSNEO's decision must submit their dispute in writing within 30 days to the Director of Volunteer Support and Services or designee.

POLICY: VOLUNTEER DISQUALIFICATION, RESTRICTIONS, AND SUSPENSIONS

The safety of our members, both girls and adults, is a crucial consideration in the appointment of a volunteer. To become an approved volunteer (with or without restrictions), you must:

- Be a registered member of GSUSA.
- Agree to the terms outlined in the volunteer position description.
- Complete a required CBC conducted by GSNEO and its approved vendor before volunteer appointment and at least EVERY THREE (3) YEARS if you:
 - Work with, drive or supervise girls;
 - Work with Girl Scout money or product (cookie/magazine and snack programs);
 - Work with girl or adult members' personal information; or
 - Attend an overnight activity.
- Girls are not to be left in the care of adults who are not registered and approved by GSNEO.
- Only registered and approved adult volunteers are authorized to handle Girl Scout funds.

Volunteer Disqualification

A non-exhaustive list of conduct or offenses that may disqualify a person from volunteer participation, as well as the process used to determine are below.

Automatic Disqualification:

- Federal or State felony conviction within the past ten years (Subject to council review)
- Federal or State felony offenses against persons, including family members
- Federal or State felony drug-related offenses
- Crimes against children, the elderly, the disabled, and other vulnerable populations
- Sexual offenses
- Crimes defined as public indecency
- Crimes involving the use of weapons
 - Arson
- Any violent crime
- Outstanding warrant
- More than 2 offenses involving driving under the influence or equivalent, or any combination of misdemeanor convictions with at least one occurring in the last 10 year
- Providing false information during the CBC screening process (including driver's license number, Social Security number, or date of birth regardless of the result of the criminal background check)

Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in GSUSA and may not participate in any capacity, including as a volunteer, with Girl Scout programs. Volunteers may not knowingly hold activities where a registered sex offender is present, and registered sex offenders may not knowingly be present where Girl Scout activities are being held. No registered sex offender is permitted to attend Girl Scout meetings, events, or activities whether in-person or in a virtual space. Holding Girl Scout activities in the home/dwelling of a registered sex offender is strictly prohibited. Registered sex offenders are not permitted on Girl Scout properties.

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

The factors used to determine disqualification of a person from volunteer participation is as follows: the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, the position for which the person seeks to volunteer, the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, the circumstances under which the crime was committed, the degree of rehabilitation and the number of crimes committed by the prospective volunteer.

GSNEO reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has:

- been arrested;
- been convicted of certain crimes;
- pending charges against them;
- 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;
- pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes.

Volunteer Restrictions

Volunteer approval may be restricted to specific roles for any reason including criminal offenses or misconduct.

Volunteer approval may include a funds handling restriction if there is a record of:

- Stealing
- Petty theft
- Misuse of credit cards
- Passing bad checks

Volunteers with a funds handling restriction are limited to the roles of Helping Hands, Field Trip Driver, or Field Trip Chaperone at the troop level, may not hold Service Unit Team roles, and may not serve as GSNEO bank account signers.

Volunteer approval may include a driving restriction if there is an offense involving but not limited to:

- Driving under the influence
- Reckless operation
- Loss of license

Volunteers with a driving restriction are not permitted to transport girls and may be restricted from holding volunteer roles.

Volunteer Suspensions

GSNEO reserves the right to re-screen any volunteer on a periodic or episodic basis as needed. If a volunteer 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. If a volunteer is arrested or charged with anything that leads to automatic disqualification, their role will be immediately suspended during the legal investigation. It is the responsibility of all volunteers to report their own policy violations and convictions, and those of fellow volunteers of

which they become aware. Additionally, it is the responsibility of all volunteers to report illegal activity which occurs in a Girl Scout setting to both law enforcement and GSNEO by filing an Incident/Accident Report Form within 24 hours.

Appeals Process

Any applicant who wishes to dispute the accuracy of 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 CBC for volunteer participation has been determined ineligible and/or restricted. The volunteer will have an opportunity to review the criminal history report 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.

An applicant may also submit a written appeal to the council if they feel they should still be considered despite their convictions and wish to further explain the results of their CBC. These appeals will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the council.

If a person becomes ineligible to volunteer or if they are given restrictions, they may be considered for reinstatement or restriction removal by request to the Director of Volunteer Support and Services or designee. The person making the request may:

- Be required to take additional training
- Be required to pass another CBC
- Be reconsidered after a waiting period determined by GSNEO
- Be asked to provide character reference letters
- Be denied at council discretion

If an ineligible volunteer does not request to be reconsidered, suspensions and restrictions are considered indefinite.

POLICY: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships.

Volunteers agree to follow the GSNEO Conflict Management process, which is found in the Volunteer Relations Conflict Management Roadmap.

When possible, volunteers are encouraged to try to work out a solution through the Self-Resolution Meeting process outlined in the Volunteer Relations Conflict Management Roadmap. All volunteers are expected to continuously uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law in words and actions.

If a conflict persists, engage your local service team and/or staff support team for assistance. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision.

Conflicts that are escalated will be handled by GSNEO's Volunteer Relations team.

POLICY: CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal, medical and/or financial information about any girl or adult member which becomes known to a volunteer must be treated as confidential and may only be shared when necessary to access Scoutship or other support available from GSNEO for that individual, and only through

established systems or the appropriate GSNEO staff member/process. Health or medical information may be disclosed to the extent necessary solely for treatment or emergency purposes.

Names, addresses and phone numbers of girls and adults must not be shared with any individual or business outside of Girl Scouting except as required for safety or for emergency purposes. Confidential information about members must not be published through any means including any internet channels or social media.

Volunteers should be aware that most emails are not necessarily sent through secure channels, and must only send content which is not confidential. Steps must be taken to properly secure and protect personal information in possession of volunteers, whether in paper or electronic form.

Volunteers must exercise good judgment and care at all times to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosures of confidential information. Conversations in public places should be limited to matters that do not pertain to information of a sensitive or confidential nature.

The privacy of all members must be respected and protected.

POLICY: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY

GSNEO 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 conform to law and policies set forth by GSUSA and GSNEO regarding protection of intellectual property, copyright, patents and trademarks. The Girl Scouts brand and all Girl Scout trademarks and copy rights are the sole property of GSUSA and their use must be preapproved in writing by the GSNEO Marketing Department.

Electronic surveys may not be created and distributed by volunteers to girls under the age of 18, in accordance with The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). This act specifically protects the privacy of children under the age of 13 by requesting parental consent for the collection or use of any personal information of the users. Volunteers must follow COPPA regulations.

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

- For any purpose restricted or prohibited by law, regulation, or GSNEO 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 GSNEO business or otherwise authorized by appropriate GSNEO authority.
- Capturing, opening, intercepting or obtaining access to electronic communications, except as otherwise permitted by the appropriate GSNEO authority.
- To harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct GSNEO business.
- Representing, giving opinions, or otherwise making statements on behalf of GSNEO 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 GSNEO websites or the GSNEO wide-area network

POLICY: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Girl Scout publicity should be focused on interpretation of the objectives and accomplishments of the Girl Scout movement.

Media permission, which reads, "When participating in Girl Scout activities I may be photographed for print, videotaped, or electronically imaged. Images may be used in promotional materials, news releases, and other published formats (print or electronic) for either the local Girl Scout Councils or Girl Scouts of the USA. The images will be the sole property of either the local Girl Scout Council or Girl Scouts of the USA." is granted during online membership registration. Parents/Caregivers may choose to restrict their child from being photographed during online registration. Volunteers must ensure that parental permission has been granted prior to photographing or videotaping any girl member.

In any situation involving public information on behalf of GSNEO or GSUSA, statements can be made solely by the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair of the Board of Directors, the Director of Marketing, or his/her designee.

POLICY: SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Troops/groups and service units agree to assume responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of all Girl Scout members and the integrity of the Girl Scout brand when creating and utilizing social media/web sites, and agree that GSNEO is not responsible for the content of these unofficial sites. The following guidelines are in place so that girls are protected online, especially if posting pictures and/or meeting dates and times on social media.

- The page name should be the service unit name or Group/Troop #xxxxx and it must be stated in the "Info" or "About" section: "This group is affiliated with Girl Scouts of North East Ohio, and administrated by GSNEO volunteers. It is not officially endorsed or regularly monitored by GSNEO."

- Designate at least two unrelated, registered, and background checked adult volunteers as administrators to help monitor the group page. Service unit page administrators must be active in a service unit team role and/or appointed by a GSNEO staff member.
- GSNEO staff must be granted access to view and/or be made a page administrator of service unit or Group/Troop social media pages upon request. GSNEO has jurisdiction over affiliated Girl Scout specific platforms; if the page administrators are contacted by GSNEO or GSUSA and asked to remove any content/links or to add/delete members, they must comply with the request. It is important to reflect the Girl Scout Promise and Law (see "Representing Girl Scouts" policy). When sharing links to commercial sites, ensure they are in line with the Girl Scout brand (see "Conflict of Interest" policy).
- Pages may use the solid Girl Scout trefoil but not the official service mark for GSNEO or GSUSA. Contact the council marketing department with copyright questions and for permission to use Girl Scout images and logos. Service units are encouraged to use branded cover photos created and shared by the marketing department. Proprietary information and publications (i.e. Badge or Journey requirements) are the property of GSUSA and are not to be shared electronically.

Maintain privacy by creating a "closed" group and utilizing appropriate privacy settings. Only service unit members, volunteers, parents, and girls older than age 13 in that service unit or group/troop (and GSNEO staff members) should be allowed to join. Use caution when posting members' last names and location information.

Any social media page that violates GSNEO policy will be considered out of compliance, and the volunteer administrators may jeopardize their volunteer roles.

Volunteer Personal Social Media

Volunteers who choose to affiliate with GSNEO/GSUSA/Girl Scouts on their personal social media pages (i.e. "Troop Leader at GSNEO" in "About" section) may be asked to remove the affiliation if reported for content not aligned with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Volunteers may also choose to include the following disclaimer on their personal social media pages, if choosing to affiliate with GSNEO/GSUSA/Girl Scouts: "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the positions, strategies, or opinions of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio or Girl Scouts of the USA." Please note that GSNEO volunteers are expected to uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law at all times and may be removed from their roles for public statements in direct conflict with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Family Communication

Troops must include all parents/caregivers, and service units must include all volunteers who wish to be included on social media, unless there is a legal or GSNEO based restriction. If any member of the page violates GSNEO policies or creates an uncomfortable environment, page administrators may request to remove that member by consulting with GSNEO staff.

Whether through social media or other channels (phone, email, newsletter, etc.), troop leaders must establish clear communication with all parents/caregivers who request to be included, unless there is a legal or GSNEO based restriction.

Refer to policies regarding cyberbullying in the section "Anti-Harassment," sharing of information in the section "Emergencies," and virtual meeting guidelines, including the Internet Safety Pledge in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

POLICY: SENSITIVE ISSUES

Girl Scouts of the USA is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical organization, and does not take a position on or develop materials pertaining to sex education. Our role is to equip girls with the self-confidence and decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. Parents/caregivers make all decisions regarding Girl Scout program participation that may be of a sensitive nature.

Volunteers agree to seek written parent/caregiver permission through the Sensitive Issues Consent Form prior to engaging in planned discussions or programs with girl members that may be considered sensitive (e.g. reproductive health, religious beliefs). If unplanned discussions of a potentially sensitive nature are brought up by girls, volunteers are encouraged to use their best judgement in determining whether the discussion can be postponed until parent/caregiver permission is received. If the topic is timely and volunteers find it crucial to address for the health and well-being of the troop (e.g. a girl starts her period at camp, and some of the girls are expressing fear or concern, or are sharing information), they may engage in a limited conversation and inform parents/caregivers as soon as possible.

POLICY: FLYERS/INFORMATION IN MAILBOXES

It is against federal law to insert flyers in mailboxes. Girl Scouts and Girl Scout volunteers may not place any matter not bearing postage into a mailbox. This includes flyers, Cookie Program information, letters, etc.

POLICY: CONTRACTS

As designees of the Chief Operating Officer, appointed Service Unit Directors may sign contracts/agreements on behalf of their service unit or their troops when the maximum obligation assumed by the service unit and/or one of the troops in the service unit is no more than \$1,000.

As designees of the Chief Operating Officer, appointed Direct Primary Volunteers (Troop Leaders, Troop Admins, and Troop Program Guides) may sign contracts/agreements on behalf of their troops when the maximum obligation assumed by the troop is no more than \$250.

Additionally, approved drivers may sign rental car agreements on behalf of the troop/group/service unit for Girl Scout related travel.

No other volunteers are authorized to enter into any contract or agreement on behalf of GSNEO or any subordinate unit. Volunteers needing contracts signed should contact GSNEO Customer Care.

POLICY: RECORDS RETENTION

Permission forms must be retained by troop leadership in a secure location for the current program year, and submitted with GSNEO Incident/Accident Report Form (required) if an incident occurred during a Girl Scout meeting or trip.

Personal Health and Medical Forms must be retained by troop leadership in a secure location for the current program year in accordance with the "Health and Medical Policy," and outdated forms should be shredded.

Financial records, including receipts, must be kept on file by troop bank account signers in a secure location for seven years in accordance with IRS regulations, even after a troop has

disbanded or graduated. Troop bank account signers may retain hard copies or store files digitally for convenience.

POLICY: PROPERTY

No person should use or alter GSNEO property or equipment without permission from GSNEO.

The use of Girl Scout of North East Ohio properties and/or equipment, for personal gain or for the purposes of solicitation or distribution of literature for non-sanctioned Girl Scout events is prohibited.

No sale or solicitation of materials or services of any type is allowed on GSNEO properties without the written permission of Program Department of GSNEO.

"Solicitation" means requesting another person to purchase goods and/or services; donate goods, services, or money to any person or organization; or sign petitions or the like for any purpose.

POLICY: BEHAVIOR

Any adult, member or otherwise, whose behavior is not in keeping with the standards outlined in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, Volunteer Essentials, their respective position description, as well as those set forth by this council may be ineligible to volunteer, may be terminated from their position, or may be barred from attending Girl Scout activities. All adults are compelled to comply with the guidelines set forth in the Parent/Caregiver Support Agreement.

Volunteers must work with council staff to attempt to resolve girl behavior issues that negatively impact the troop environment. Council staff will make reasonable efforts to engage the parent/caregiver of the girl in question for assistance in resolving behavioral issues. GSNEO reserves the right to remove a girl from a troop after reasonable efforts have been made to correct behavior not aligned with Girl Code of Conduct Agreement.

POLICY: ANTI-HARASSMENT

The council 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 with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcomed harassment, hostility and bullying; and therefore, it will not be tolerated.

This policy includes physical violence as well as intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about harassment or hostility, whether in person or through some other means of communications such as writing, telephone, voice mail, electronic mail, or any form of social media.

Bullying/Cyberbullying

According to the US Department of Health and Human Resources, "bullying" is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength, typically repeated over time.

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs online. Whether cyberbullying occurs in email, a text message, an online game, or on a social networking site, it is prohibited. This includes rumors or images posted online where other people may see them. GSNEO will cooperate with police, schools, and other organizations that share our values who are attempting to enforce laws, regulations, and rules regarding cyberbullying regardless of the potential punishment.

Anyone, regardless of volunteer or member status, who violates this policy and/or refuses to abide by this policy, is prohibited from holding volunteer positions with GSNEO and from attending Girl Scout activities, events, and meetings. Any volunteer who engages in or encourages bullying is subject to release from their volunteer position.

Sexual Harassment

The council reserves the right to refuse membership or reappointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who is guilty of sexual harassment.

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 that could create a hostile environment include telling of sexual jokes or stories, the presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials, 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.

POLICY: CHILD ABUSE

The council supports and maintains environments that are 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 the council's policy for any volunteer to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer who in the judgment of the council poses a risk of injury to a minor or is believed to have abused or neglected any child or who has been convicted of any crime against a child.

If any volunteer reasonably suspects or reasonably believes a girl member is being abused, that volunteer must immediately report these suspicions to the Department of Job and Family Services, by calling 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453). Reports can be anonymous. The reporting volunteer must also complete and file a GSNEO Incident Report (found on the GSNEO.org forms page).

POLICY: WHISTLE BLOWER

Retaliation against anyone who has reported an allegation of harassment, sexual harassment, or any violation of any council policy is expressly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination of the person who has engaged in the retaliatory behavior.

POLICY: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

GSNEO relies on dedicated, and trusted, volunteers to promote the mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any volunteer member or any member of their family or any party, group, or organization in which the volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of GSNEO.

Volunteer members or any member of their family, acting individually, or on behalf of another entity to which they have allegiance or obligation, should not utilize their position with GSNEO for any personal advantage or for the advantage of another entity.

Volunteers should not use for personal advantage or for the advantage of another entity, confidential information or material acquired through their position at GSNEO (including but not limited to rosters, mailing lists, telephone directories, branded materials, social media pages, and the like).

POLICY: ANIMALS

Animals may not be brought onto any GSNEO property or into any activity without the written permission of the Chief Executive Officer or her/his designee. Exceptions will be made for animals needed to assist persons with disabilities and for fulfilling program activities.

POLICY: SMOKING/VAPING/TOBACCO

The use of smoking/vaping/tobacco products is prohibited whenever girl members are present in any environment, including vehicles transporting girl members.

Smoking/vaping/tobacco products may not be in view of girl members in any environment.

Smoking/vaping/tobacco products may not be used inside GSNEO offices or camp buildings.

Smoking/vaping/tobacco products are permitted only in designated outdoor areas at GSNEO camps as indicated in The Compass for each camp property.

POLICY: DRUGS/ALCOHOL

No person may purchase, consume, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs/substances, or prescription or over-the-counter medications which impair performance or judgment on GSNEO property, in the presence of girls, during any GSNEO-sanctioned activity (including volunteer meetings), while conducting council business, or in Girl Scout branded clothing.

Alcohol or any substance which may impair one's judgment must never be used by volunteers, adult members, or any other adult in the presence of a girl member, immediately prior to, or during a girl member activity. Alcoholic beverages may be served to/consumed by adults of legal age at council events when girls are not present only when previously approved by the council Board of Directors or Chief Executive Officer.

POLICY: FIREARMS/WEAPONS

Firearms and/or weapons are prohibited at any Girl Scout activity and on council-owned or leased property except when in the possession of a sworn officer of the law, a certified instructor, licensed wildlife control personnel, and/or trained adult while conducting a council-approved Girl Scout program activity.

POLICY: FIRST AID/CPR/AED TRAINING

A general first-aider is an adult who has taken Girl Scout approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR, as well as AED (Automated External Defibrillator) training through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American

Heart Association. General first-aiders are required to be present for any troop activities beyond a regular troop meeting. GSNEO strongly encourages all troops to have a general first-aiders present at all times, and makes certification accessible and affordable. Additionally, troops must always have a first aid kit present.

POLICY: EMERGENCIES

If an emergency occurs, Girl Scout volunteers must follow GSNEO Emergency Procedures. These guidelines ensure that safety is the number one concern in any emergency situations and volunteers are guided to seek help, and report the incident, efficiently and effectively. Volunteers should not make statements of ANY KIND to the media. Do NOT give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact the GSNEO. If you have an emergency after business hours, call the emergency phone line at 330-472-2389. Volunteers must also refrain from posting and/or sharing pictures or comments on social media related to the emergency situation.

Volunteers are required to submit the Incident/Accident Report Form to GSNEO within 24 hours of an incident/accident.

If a volunteer is subpoenaed regarding an incident that occurred during Girl Scouts, the volunteer must notify council.

POLICY: HEALTH AND MEDICAL

GSNEO respects the privacy of its members. Personal Health and Medical Forms are to be completed annually for all girls and adult volunteers. One copy stays in the troop leader/event coordinators possession and one goes with the adult driver/chaperone if applicable (note that this information should be kept confidential; you may wish to keep the forms in a sealed envelope in case of emergency).

It is important for you to be aware of any medications a girl or adult volunteer may take or allergies they may have. Keep in mind the following:

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's parent/caregiver (council can provide the necessary form).
- Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, EpiPens or diabetes medication. You must have documentation from the girl's parent/caregiver that it is acceptable for the girl to self-administer these medications.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood. Before serving any food, ask whether anyone has food allergies and make any necessary accommodations.

POLICY: COVID-19

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Volunteers should take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, themselves, and families, and to prevent additional community transmission. Volunteers must follow all location specific Department of Health guidelines and any additional guidelines provided by GSNEO as updated information becomes available.

POLICY: TRAVEL/TROOP TRIPS

To be considered a Girl Scout trip/activity, the troop/group leader must provide parents/caregivers with written details (date, time, locations, and brief description) of the trip/activity prior to its occurrence. The trip/activity must meet all requirements in Safety Activity Checkpoints, and either the Annual Permission Form or Permission Form must be signed by the parent/caregiver and returned to the troop/group leader. The Annual Permission Form allows for troop trips/activities that are 1) located within one hour's driving time of the regular meeting place, 2) not exceeding 6 hours and 3) not considered high risk activities as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints (ex: high ropes, zip line, equestrian). Trips/activities outside of these parameters require a separate Permission Form. Activity Consent, Hold Harmless and Release Agreements may be required, depending on the activity.

When taking an overnight trip beyond GSNEO properties and GSNEO programs, all troops/groups must acquire proper council approval through the trip application process as well as written parental permission. Extended trips (3 or more nights) and international trips require trip training. Within a camp or overnight setting, males must not share sleeping, dressing, or restroom facilities with non-related females. As a courtesy, GSNEO also recommends sharing trip information with the local Service Unit Director.

Activity insurance purchased through GSNEO is required for Girl Scouts taking extended trips of longer than three (3) days and two (2) nights and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Activity insurance is mandatory for all foreign travel.

For property rentals (i.e. AirBNB, VRBO, HomeAway) see additional requirements in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

See supporting documents:

- *Trip Application*
- *Annual Permission Form*
- *Permission Form*
- *Activity Consent, Hold Harmless and Release Agreement (required for International Travel)*

POLICY: TRANSPORTATION

Volunteers who drive vehicles for Girl Scout trips must be eligible volunteers at least 21 years of age, with a minimum of 3 years driving experience, valid driver's license, and carry current motor vehicle insurance in compliance with Ohio State Law. Accidents and violation records will be reviewed by GSNEO staff. A driving restriction may be placed on an individual prohibiting them from driving members on behalf of GSNEO based on the number and severity of violations or accidents. The primary volunteer in charge of a Girl Scout outing or trip should inquire with all drivers that they are eligible volunteers, without a driving restriction, have a valid driver's license, and a current auto insurance policy. It is not necessary for the primary volunteer to maintain a copy of these documents.

When the troop/group is arranging transportation, girl members are not permitted to drive other girl members to Girl Scout activities. How parents/caregivers decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is their decision and responsibility.

GSNEO does not permit use of fifteen passenger vans, flagged as unsafe by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, for transporting girls.

Uber, Lyft, Curb, and similar ridesharing companies are not permitted to transport girls because the safety, credibility, and insurance of the drivers is far more difficult to qualify than that of traditional or well-known charter and rental companies.

Checklist for Drivers

- When driving a car, RV or camper, take the following precautions and ask all other drivers to do the same:
- Ensure all drivers are approved volunteers at least 21 years old.
- Girls should not be transporting other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip, and recheck them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date including, but not limited to: your driver's license; vehicle registration; any state or local inspections; and insurance coverage.
- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same. Girls under 12 must ride in the back seats.
- When applicable, the caregiver will supply and install the booster seat in the designated vehicle. For further information please refer to the Ohio Child Booster Seat Law.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state, including the speed limit. Some additional guidelines include: keeping a two-car-length distance between you and the car ahead of you; not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device while driving; not using ear buds or headphones while driving; and turning your lights on when your windshield wipers are on.
- Plan rest stops every few hours and avoid driving for extended periods at night. If traveling with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.
- Do NOT drive when you are tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

POLICY: GIRL SCOUTING FOR FAMILIES

Girl Scouts serves girls in an all-girl, girl-led, and girl-friendly environment. GSNEO also embraces the family in Girl Scouting and strives to provide opportunities for family engagement. Adult family members are encouraged to engage through volunteer opportunities. Troop, service unit, and council-sponsored activities may be open for participation by family and friends.

It is recommended to purchase non-member insurance through GSNEO whenever you expect that non-members (e.g. siblings, parents/caregivers) might be attending an event. Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic activity insurance plan upon registration. Non-member insurance is, low-cost, easy to obtain, and available for events where non-members may accompany a troop.

See Girl Scout Activity Insurance Enrollment Form at gsneo.org.

POLICY: PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

While participating in Girl Scouts, girls may sometimes participate with other organizations (e.g. field trips, partnership at school events). In these situations, all Girl Scout policies must be followed.

Marketplace Confusion

To protect the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and reinforce our programming as unique, girl-only, and best in class, we must ensure that activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program. Activities must be conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scout volunteers, and follow Safety Activity Checkpoints, Volunteer Policies, and other requirements.

Protecting Use of Girl Scout Materials

Girl Scout materials are to be used only for purposes of Girl Scouts and are protected as intellectual property of Girl Scouts of the USA. Materials include but are not limited to: Girl Scout logo, tag lines, and/or program and badge requirements.

Note about Boy Scouts of America/Scouts BSA

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Scouts BSA program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. While we know Boy Scouting is an important part of many members' and volunteers' lives, local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past may now create risks or challenges for Girl Scouts.

POLICY: MEETING PLACES/CAMPS/SITES

A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls and adults. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

See Volunteer Essentials for a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations.

GSNEO does not recommend using your own home as a meeting place.

POLICY: BANK ACCOUNTS

All troops, groups, day camps, and service units must open a separate business checking account into and out of which all funds flow. All Girl Scout accounts must have two signers who are responsible for funds. Bank account signers cannot be related (i.e. not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child) or live in the same residence. Bank account signers must be authorized by GSNEO to handle finances and be active in one of the following roles: Troop Leader, Troop Admin, Troop Program Guide, Treasurer, Product Sales Manager, or Service Unit Team position. These accounts, the signers, and the use of GSNEO's EIN must be authorized in writing by GSNEO. One additional savings account per troop is permitted, which must be authorized in writing by GSNEO. Each troop, group, day camp, and service unit may only have one checking and one savings account at any given time.

These accounts must only be used to support the Girl Scout program; money earned by girls can only be used to fund their Girl Scout experience. Examples of appropriate uses for troop funds include community service and Take Action projects, Girl Scout troop meeting supplies and trips, and other girl-led Girl Scout troop activities.

Funds of more than one troop/group may not be co-mingled in one bank account; each troop must have its own bank account. Co-mingling of funds will be regarded as misappropriation.

Subordinate units must follow GSNEO procedures when opening accounts, closing accounts, or changing bank account signers at a financial institution. The council has the authority to change bank account signers, request bank statements, or close unit accounts whenever it deems necessary.

The unit may obtain no more than 2 debit/check cards. The debit/check card must not be used for personal purchases. The cardholder(s) are responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card(s), and are legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Online banking is permitted.

Both appointed bank account signers are responsible for good stewardship of funds including up-to-date recordkeeping, monthly review of bank statements, responsible management of funds, and submission of timely reports to affected girls, their parents, and GSNEO.

All Girl Scout funds must be deposited into the unit account within 72 hours (\$100 or less may be kept on hand as petty cash) and all itemized receipts of purchases, bank receipts/deposits and monthly bank statements must be kept on file in accordance with GSNEO's records retention policy.

If troops, groups, day camps, or service units need to change bank account signers on existing troop bank accounts, they must complete the "Request to Change Bank Account Signers" form. Bank accounts are subject to being closed by GSNEO if the account is not in compliance with policies (e.g. signer no longer on troop roster; signer's membership is not renewed; signer is no longer in approved role).

Signers on service unit bank accounts must be active in a service unit team role. Service unit members must be active in a troop to cosign on their account. Volunteers may request to serve as a bank account signer on up to three bank accounts (e.g. three troops; two troops and one service unit) in which they actively participate in the approved roles (see above); to sign on additional accounts requires approval from the Volunteer Support and Services Director or designee.

POLICY: FUND OWNERSHIP

By law, all troop, group, day camp, and service unit funds are the property of the GSNEO. Leaders of these units are appointed stewards of these funds until they are no longer in that role.

Equipment purchased with Girl Scout funds are the property of GSNEO and not the personal property of any individual.

In accordance with IRS regulations, Girl Scout funds do not belong to individual girls or adults. Merging, reorganizing, or splitting troops should consult with their Community Membership Executive regarding a decision about any transfer of funds.

The best way for members to make electronic payments to a troop/group or service unit is with a consumer bank-to-bank transfer by adding the troop/group or service unit as a vendor. To collect funds at an event, GSNEO allows sites that transfer funds directly to the bank account authorized by GSNEO. Troops/groups and service units are prohibited from opening PayPal and similar accounts that do not send collected funds directly to the troop bank account.

POLICY: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Volunteers who oversee Girl Scout funds whether for troops, groups, service units, day camps or any other reason, are accountable to GSNEO and to the membership of the group in all financial matters.

The appointed leaders are responsible for good stewardship of funds including up-to-date recordkeeping, monthly review of bank statements, responsible management of funds, and submission of timely reports to affected girls, their parents, and GSNEO. Receipts showing how the money was spent must document all cash withdrawals. If cash is collected, receipts must be provided that document the reason for the payment. Leaders are encouraged to recruit a volunteer with administrative skills to handle bank account record keeping. Failure to exercise proper stewardship over finances will result in a funds restriction or release from volunteer appointment.

All troops, groups, day camps, and service units are required to submit an annual finance report to GSNEO. Parents/caregivers can view completed troop finance reports on the Volunteer Toolkit, therefore it is important to comply with this policy as financial transparency at all levels of Girl Scouting encourages trust and confidence. Additionally, any registered Girl Scout and their parents/caregivers will be given access to view financial records upon request. GSNEO will communicate with families in troops who miss the finance report deadline in an effort to increase transparency.

Troops that fail to submit their annual finance report may be denied approval for money-earning and/or trip applications. Bank account signers who violate GSNEO finance related policies may be restricted or removed from their volunteer roles and/or the bank account after reasonable notice is given.

Note that only Direct Primary Volunteers (Troop Leaders, Troop Admins, and Troop Program Guides) have access to the Finance tab on the Volunteer Toolkit and must work with the Troop Treasurer (if there is one in place) to submit the finance report. Treasurers may request access from GSNEO to the Volunteer Toolkit for a period of up to two weeks in order to submit the finance report.

Financial Review:

GSNEO reserves the right to review subordinate unit accounts.

If a troop/group or service unit fails to submit its annual finance report, it is subject to financial review by GSNEO. Other situations that may result in a financial review include but are not limited to: complaints from parents/caregivers, suspected misuse, mismanagement, or theft of funds, or other policies broken. Financial reviews may be initiated at the full discretion of GSNEO.

POLICY: FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT

Adults with funds or outstanding property due to GSNEO more than 30 days past due are not permitted to handle money, product or merchandise for GSNEO, and any of their current volunteer roles may be suspended. When the amount is paid in full and/or property is returned, the volunteer may request to be reinstated which is done at the discretion of the council. GSNEO reserves the right to restrict or terminate volunteer participation of any person with a history of financial misconduct. Adults with an outstanding balance due to GSNEO are ineligible to volunteer, and girls in their household are restricted to online sales and cookie booth sales during product programs.

Restriction, redirection, or dismissal may occur as a result of delinquent and/or mismanagement of funds. Reappointment to a volunteer position is at the discretion of GSNEO.

GSNEO will make a good faith attempt to collect any monies owed and reserves the right to use outside collection agencies. If restitution is not paid within 30 days, GSNEO retains the right to file criminal and/or civil charges.

GSNEO reserves the right to take legal action if the funds owed are not remitted. Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims court, report to law enforcement, and submission to legal and or collection agency.

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

POLICY: MONEY-EARNING

Non-Council-Sponsored Group Money Earning:

Troops/groups and service units may participate in approved non-council sponsored money-earning activities in which they are the sole beneficiary of the profit after they have supported GSNEO through participation in both Girl Scout-sponsored product programs. The definition of participation is determined before the start of each sale and communicated in the product program manuals.

See Money Earning Modules under Money Matters section in the Learning and Resources Nook (training.gsneo.org).

- All non-council sponsored money-earning activities (troop and service unit) must be approved by GSNEO prior to planning and/or implementation of the activity.
- Parental permission is required prior to girls participating in any money-earning activities.
- Money-earning projects must be purposeful and occur only when there is a need for such funds to support Girl Scout program.
- In accordance with IRS regulations, Girl Scout funds raised by a troop, group or unit belong to the troop, group, or unit treasury to be used by the members of the troop, group, or unit equally. Funds never become the property of any individual girl or adult member; and no separate accounting of funds earned should be kept for any reason at any time.
- All money-earning activities must comply with state and local laws regulating sales by minors, food handling, etc.

In order to remain in compliance with National Policies and/or IRS Regulations, the following restrictions are in place. Girl and adult members MAY NOT participate in the following activities when earning money in the name of Girl Scouts (see Volunteer Essentials for an appropriate list of money earning activities):

- Product demonstration parties (for example, PartyLite, Scentsy, Thirty-One, etc.)
- Raffles, 50/50 raffles, drawings, games of chance (gambling)
- The sale or endorsement of commercial products (products sold at retail, for example, candy bar sales, event tickets, wrapping paper, bags of chips, cans of soda, etc.)
- The re-sale of Girl Scout merchandise for profit
- "Give-back type" fundraisers (such as in-restaurant fundraisers) as these endorse other establishments/organizations
- Raising or collecting money for other organizations (see below)

- Merchandise sales transacted on the internet in the name of Girl Scouts (for example, Etsy, Craigslist, Facebook, etc.)
- Online campaigns that directly solicit cash (for example, Go Fund Me)

Girl members may not directly solicit cash (including a donation jar). See Gift Acceptance/Fundraising policy for adult member guidelines.

Additionally, to prevent unfair competition among troops and the risk of overwhelming the community, Girl Scouts may not conduct non-council-sponsored money-earning activities during the weeks of cookie booth sales.

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, bell-ringing, or similar activities that raise money for other organizations. Girl members may support other organizations through contributing a portion of their treasury or through volunteer service projects. Violation of this policy could risk the tax-exempt status of GSNEO and the tax-deductibility of donations.

Troops/groups may be financed in any of the following ways:

Council-sponsored product programs, additional money-earning projects (which must be preapproved by the council), and if necessary, through dues. Funding for girl activities is primarily the responsibility of the troop/group, the girls and their families.

The money-earning project must be appropriate for the age-level.

According to GSUSA Guidelines:

- Daisies may only participate in GSUSA Sponsored Product Programs
- Brownies may participate in up to one non-Girl Scout sponsored money-earning activity
- Juniors may participate in up to two non-Girl Scout sponsored money-earning activities
- Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors may participate in an appropriate number of money-earning activities to support the budget of their planned activities

See *Money-Earning Application at gsneo.org in the "forms" section.*

Money-Earning for Service Units:

Service units may be approved to conduct up to two money-earning activities per membership year. Funds raised must be used to support a project or event that benefits all of the girls in the service unit. For example, proceeds from a service unit dance may be used as a money-earning activity to pay for a camping trip for the entire unit. If service units are interested in using funds beyond direct programming to girls (including scholarships or support of highest awards), they need to speak with and get approval from the Director of Girl Experience or designee. Service units must be in good financial standing with the council with a current bank account and current finance report on file. At least 75% of the Service unit must participate in both council-sponsored sales before participating in non-council-sponsored money-earning.

This does not prohibit service units from charging a reasonable fee for volunteer training events or girl programs. One example of a girl program at a service unit would be a father/daughter banquet. It is expected that service units will charge fees for these training events and programs sufficient to avoid the risk of incurring a loss on the event; covering the cost of the event would not be considered a money-earning activity.

Money-Earning for Individually Registered Girls (Juliettes):

Individually registered girls may **not** participate in additional money-earning activities, unless they are working on their Gold Award and have permission from the Director of Girl Experience or designee. In accordance with IRS regulations, all monies earned by individually registered girls belong to the council, not to any individual girl.

Money-Earning for Gold Award:

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 and Director of Girl Experience or designee before money-earning activities are implemented.

Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts seeking their Gold Award are permitted to solicit cash donations, with prior approval from the Gold Award Committee and Director of Girl Experience or designee. GSNEO does not permit crowdfunding (GoFundMe, etc.) to fund Gold Award projects or special service projects.

See Money-Earning Application at gsneo.org in the “forms” section.

POLICY: GSUSA SPONSORED PRODUCT PROGRAMS

The selling of Girl Scout Cookies or other Girl Scout-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 Girl Scout-sponsored product programs to the girls they lead, and make the information available to the parents/caregivers of the girls.

GSUSA Sponsored Product Programs are fully supported by the GSNEO Council and have quality control, promotion and public acceptance at the national level. Additionally, these programs help support services to girls and volunteers.

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

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of a parent or caregiver
- Council guidelines
- Girls should not be penalized for non-participation.
- Other policies regarding product programs will be distributed via the appropriate product program handbook before the appropriate product 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
- Adherence to guidelines for internet sales

Money-earning applications are **not** required for participation in Girl Scout sponsored product programs.

Troops must have at least 5 girls and an active bank account with 2 unrelated (i.e. not a sibling, spouse, domestic partner, parent, or child) signers in order to sell Girl Scout Cookies. Special permission may be granted to established troops at GSNEO discretion.

Product Programs for Individually Registered Girls (Juliettes):

Individually registered girls **may** participate in GSNEO product programs. All money received from their participation in these product programs will be held in a fund by GSNEO. Girls may request funding from this account to apply to any GSNEO programming, for membership registration, and/or for use in the council shop.

POLICY: GIFT ACCEPTANCE/FUNDRAISING

Fundraising, or direct solicitation of cash or cash equivalent (i.e. gift card), is an adult-only activity that should only be done when purposeful and for a specific goal. Adult members of GSNEO are permitted to fundraise for the purpose of Girl Scouting by soliciting cash donations, gift cards, or gifts in-kind (e.g. supplies).

Amounts under \$250

Notification and approval by GSNEO is not required when seeking monetary or in-kind donations. Adult members may submit a request to GSNEO if a Donation Request Letter is required by the company for an amount under \$250. 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, in which case GSNEO will issue an acknowledgement.

- The troop/group or service unit is responsible for thanking the donor.
- Documentation of tax deductibility of the donation cannot be provided by the troop/group or service unit.
- Documentation for a gift of any size can only be provided if the gift is processed through the council.
- All monetary gifts must be reported on the annual finance report to the council.

Amounts between \$250 and \$1000

Notification and approval by GSNEO is required when seeking monetary or in-kind donations. Solicitation must be approved by GSNEO through a Money-Earning/Fundraising Application. A Donation Request Letter will be provided upon approval. GSNEO approval is also required prior to contacting corporate headquarters or grant-making organizations.

A monetary gift of \$250 or above specifically earmarked for a troop/group or service unit must be sent and processed through the Council. If the monetary gift is in the form of a gift card, the troop/group or service unit needs to notify GSNEO in writing in order for acknowledgment to be sent to the donor. The funds must benefit the entire troop/group or service unit, not a specific individual. Funds should be mailed to the attention of the GSNEO Fund Development Department, clearly labeled with the donor's intention and the troop/group or service unit number. The funds will be processed and disbursed from GSNEO to the troop/group or service unit.

Amounts over \$1000

Monetary gifts donated directly to troop/groups or service units or given through the Council and restricted for troop/groups or service unit are limited to a combined total of \$1000 per membership year (October 1 through September 30). Troops/groups or service units with special circumstances may request pre-approval for donations exceeding \$1000 from Chief Executive Officer or designee.

Gifts-in-Kind; Employer Matching Grant Programs

Gifts-in-kind are donations made to a troop/group or service unit of goods or services (i.e. food for event, supplies for project, etc.) and do not need to be reported on the annual finance report. Notify the Fund Development Department if an acknowledgement is desired; gift-in-kind donors are recognized in the Annual Report.

Employer matching grant programs are permitted and must be processed through GSNEO.

POLICY: DUES

Troop dues are an optional way to fund troops and can be used to help offset the cost of site rental fees, badges and patches, activity supplies, and program admission fees throughout the year. Dues must be purposeful, and families should be engaged in a discussion to set the amount. Money should never be a barrier for girls to participate and troop leaders should make accommodations when necessary.

Service units cannot require but may request a reasonable suggested donation from troops annually to offset the cost of Service unit programs and resources made available to troops (e.g. meeting space fee, printing materials, storage unit fee). Service units cannot penalize or exclude in any way troops who choose not to make a donation. Service units may charge a nominal administrative fee for events; see "Money Earning for Service Units" section for additional information.

POLICY: SCOUTSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID

The council will designate funds for Scoutship and Financial Aid based on need and without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ability, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Financial Aid is used to pay for girl membership when there is a need as deemed by the parent/caregiver. Financial Aid may be applied to girl membership registration during the registration process only by the parent/caregiver. Adults unable to pay for membership who want to select a Direct Primary role (Leader, Admin, or Program Guide) should contact their Community Membership Executive or Service Unit Director for assistance, if needed.

Scoutship awards are based on household income and size, previous product program participation, and may be requested when personal circumstances are an obstacle to fully engaging in Girl Scout events, activities or programs. Scoutship may be used for girls towards uniforms, books, and participation in council-sponsored events. The amount awarded is dependent on whether the girl is in a bridging year (Daisy to Brownie, etc.) to reflect the additional cost of a full new uniform.

POLICY: DISBANDING TROOPS

When a troop disbands, troop volunteers are responsible for notifying GSNEO by completing a Troop Disbandment Form and final finance report (note: disbanding troops are not exempt from completing the annual finance report by the set deadline- the final finance report is in addition to the regular report).

Girls may elect how to spend remaining funds for the purpose of Girl Scouting if no girls are continuing. Funds should be divided proportionately to troops receiving girls from the disbanded troop and/or to GSNEO.

Funds cannot be dispersed to individual girls or adults. Funds will be returned to GSNEO if no election has been made by girls as to the disposition of the funds.

GSNEO will begin closing troop bank accounts annually starting in mid-December after making reasonable attempts to contact the troop leadership for troops which appear to be abandoned (i.e. girls and adults have not renewed their membership). Remaining funds will be transferred to council.

Funds from a disbanding troop/group will be held by GSNEO for a period of one year after date of the disbandment notification for the purpose of sending funds to troops on behalf of girls transferring into those troops. After one year, funds are used to support GSNEO Girl Scouts through financial aid, Scoutship, etc.

As stated in Fund Ownership policy, equipment purchased with Girl Scout funds are the property of GSNEO and not the personal property of any individual. Equipment belonging to a disbanding troop may be donated to another troop or the service unit.

Disbanding troops must still comply with Records Retention policy.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Direct Primary Volunteers- volunteers in troop leadership roles of either Admin, Leader, or Program Guide.

Fundraising- the act or process of soliciting funds. Fundraising is an ADULT activity.

Money Earning Activities- activities for the purpose of earning money to accomplish a financial goal for a troop/group activity. Money-earning is a GIRL activity.

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

Subordinate Unit- a unit serving as an extension of GSNEO, including but not limited to troops, groups, service units and day camps.

Troops- a group of at least five girl members and two direct primary adult volunteers.

Juliettes- an individually registered girl member.

Service Units- a community of troops, usually aligned with a school-district.