

# Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Approved January 12, 2023  
Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta Board of Directors Executive  
Committee

*Last updated 8/21/2023*

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## **Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Inc. Policies and Procedures**

The following Volunteer Management Policies, Procedures and Standards set out the requirements and guidelines for the volunteers of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta (GSGATL). This document does not, and does not intend to, create a contract between GSGATL and any actual or potential volunteer, nor does it give rise to any legal obligation on the part of GSGATL to any actual or potential volunteer or third person.

### **1. Inclusiveness Policy Statement**

GSGATL, in recognition of its responsibility to its volunteers, its staff, and the girls it serves, and in keeping with the Girl Scouts of the USA's (GSUSA) emphasis on pluralism, reaffirms its policy to ensure fair and equitable treatment in all its practices to all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin.

Our efforts include combating discrimination, promoting respect, and creating a sense of belonging as exemplified through the values of our Girl Scout Promise and Law.

#### **1A. Policy:**

There shall be no discrimination in the recruitment, selection, placement, training, retention, and recognition of volunteers regardless of race, color, religion, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin.

#### **1A. Procedure:**

All volunteers will be informed of the existence of GSUSA and GSGATL policies and procedures.

GSGATL policies will be made available to all volunteers on the Council Website. Each operational volunteer (i.e., serving in a leadership capacity) will receive notice of these policies and procedures to help them understand what is expected of a Girl Scout volunteer. Every volunteer must agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and GSGATL or be subject to sanctions as set forth in these policies, up to and including dismissal.

#### **1B. Procedure:**

Placement of transgender or gender nonconforming youth is handled on a case-by-case basis. The welfare and best interests of the child and the members of the troop/group in question are our top priority. In general, if a child is recognized by her family and school/community as a

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girl and lives culturally as a girl, then GSGATL will use its best efforts to serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe.

### **1C. Procedure:**

Every member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronoun that corresponds to their gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the member need not change their official records. We strongly recommend that volunteers privately ask transgender or gender nonconforming youth and volunteers at the beginning of the troop year how they want to be addressed.

## **2. Membership Conditions**

### **2A. Policy:**

All volunteers, except those volunteers serving as temporary advisors or consultants, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and must pay the applicable membership dues on an annual basis and meet GSUSA membership requirements. (Volunteers who are lifetime members are exempt from the annual membership dues requirements.)

### **2A. Procedure 1:**

Volunteers for short-term or one-time events sponsored by GSGATL are considered temporary assistants and annual membership dues are optional.

Short term volunteers may not serve as part of the girl to adult ratio, as a driver, chaperone girls other than their own, without membership or background check.

### **2A. Procedure 2:**

Service unit and troop volunteers are responsible for ensuring that volunteers working with the troop (including, but not limited to, parent helpers, drivers, chaperones, and non-lead volunteers) are registered members of the Girl Scout movement. Membership can be verified by Troop CoLeader volunteers through MyGS. The troop treasury may be used to support volunteer membership if needed.

## **3. Selection**

### **3A. Policy:**

Appointment to a volunteer position with GSGATL is contingent upon completion and review of a criminal background check. Parent helpers must become registered members and are required to complete the criminal background check. In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our members, GSGATL reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any

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person who has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty to, pled no contest to, or received a deferred adjudication on certain crimes, or who GSGATL, in its sole discretion, based upon the information before it, otherwise deems as not qualified or fit to hold a volunteer position.

The criminal background check/search is one component of the volunteer selection process, the goal of which is to screen prospective volunteers and place capable and qualified volunteers in all operational positions. GSGATL reserves the right to conduct a multi-state search, Georgia statewide search, county search, sex offender registry search, as well as an OFAC\* search and any other necessary search. All volunteers who interact with girls must have a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. If the background check is older than three years those volunteers must authorize the Council or its agents to conduct a criminal background search. GSGATL reserves the right to require updated criminal background checks for any volunteer at its sole discretion. Without a completed background check on file that dates back no further than three years, a person cannot serve in or be appointed to a volunteer position with the Council. Volunteers who will not be interacting with girls may be required to consent to a background check depending on the position. The Council has sole discretion in requesting criminal background checks for any volunteer position.

\*OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) For more information:

[www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/offices/Pages/Office-of-Foreign-Assets-Control.aspx](http://www.treasury.gov/about/organizational-structure/offices/Pages/Office-of-Foreign-Assets-Control.aspx)

### **3A. Procedure:**

If a person fills out a criminal background check, this does not guarantee that they will be placed in a troop. All volunteers of GSGATL may be subject to additional review by a staff member. The staff person may use many tools to determine the suitability of a volunteer to be placed, including, but not limited to, the criminal background check, reference checks, personal knowledge of the applicant, and an interview. Volunteers must complete a criminal background form which authorizes GSGATL and its agents to conduct a criminal background check. Providing false information on the application is grounds for automatic dismissal from participation as a GSGATL volunteer, regardless of the result of the criminal background search. It is the applicant's responsibility to challenge the information received in the background check report and to arrange for any corrections if necessary. GSGATL has no control over the information maintained by the Georgia Criminal Information Center (GCIC)\*\* or any other reporting agency. The Council cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided, or other reporting agencies, or to the Council or its agents, for any action taken by the Council in reliance on such information. The Council is entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the criminal history report until such time a corrected

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criminal history transcript has been provided. Even if an applicant submits corrected criminal background information, the Council retains exclusive discretion to exclude or limit an applicant's participation. The following rules generally will apply if GSGATL learns (via criminal background check or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty, received a deferred adjudication, or pled no contest to certain crimes in the past seven years of one of the following crimes (Policy 5, below) under the laws of the state of Georgia, another state in the United States, or another country, unless GSGATL learns or is advised that the Georgia First Offenders Act\*\*\* applies to a particular situation. At all times, GSGATL has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other pre-dating or non-criminal information. Failure to keep an updated background check on file with GSGATL that dates back no further than three years may be a basis for release, suspension or cause for not being reappointed to a position.

For more info:

\*\*Georgia Criminal Information Center (GCIC) <http://gbi.georgia.gov/georgia-crime-informationcenter>

\*\*\*Georgia First Offenders Act <http://gbi.georgia.gov/obtaining-criminal-history-record-information>

## 4. Disqualification

### 4A. Policy:

The criminal offenses that will generally disqualify a person from volunteer participation and the corresponding process used to determine disqualification are discussed below. The decision whether to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation remains at all times within the discretion of GSGATL. Factors that may be considered in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and the tasks associated with the desired volunteer position. GSGATL's primary concern is always to safeguard the best interests of its members.

### 4A. Procedure:

The following rules generally will apply if GSGATL learns (via criminal background check or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been charged in the past seven years with one of the following crimes under the laws of the state of Georgia, another state in the United States, or another country. At all times, GSGATL has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other pre-dating or non-criminal information. Grounds for disqualification or limitations:



- Any felony offense, regardless of type
- Misdemeanor crime against a child
- Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
- Misdemeanor crime involving violence
- Misdemeanor crime involving arson
- Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
- Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
- Other misdemeanors, as GSGATL may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty or traffic violations.

When a volunteer in any volunteer position with GSGATL has an outstanding debt to, or has caused a financial loss to, the Council or its entities, GSGATL has the right to remove the volunteer from her or his position.

» Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, that application cannot be approved and the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the criminal background check report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.

» Other Circumstances and General Principles: For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, GSGATL shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references.

#### **4B. Policy:**

When using information obtained from an outside agency to deny a volunteer, a copy of the report and summary of rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act accompanies the denial letter to the applicant. Applicants may dispute incorrect information in their report directly with the verification agency, and GSGATL may reconsider the application if the background information is sufficiently corrected.



#### **4C. Policy:**

GSGATL reserves the right to permanently deny anyone a volunteer position if GSGATL officials believe the person is inappropriate for that position or the volunteer is not fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the position.

### **5. Appointment**

#### **5A. Policy:**

Girl Scout volunteers must be appointed to their position, using the procedures below. It is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to complete all the required steps. GSGATL reserves the right to limit volunteer involvement until all steps have been completed.

#### **5A. Procedures:**

A position description will be provided on the GSGATL Web site or via GSGATL Learning and Resource Center (LARC) and accessible for potential volunteers to review. The position descriptions will give an overview outlining the purpose, accountability, principal duties, and term of service of the position.

1. Prospective volunteers will complete a criminal background check after purchasing the required annual membership.
2. References may be checked if additional information is necessary.
3. Prospective volunteer receives notification that her/his volunteer application and background check has been approved or approved with restrictions.
4. In some cases, a volunteer's role may require a review with a GSGATL representative at which time the position description and duties are agreed upon and the new volunteer accepts the position.
5. The new volunteer takes the training suggested for her/his position, as described in the position description.

#### **5B. Policy:**

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of GSGATL.

#### **5B. Procedure:**

Approved volunteers not placed in positions for which they applied may discuss other positions that may be available with a GSGATL representative or designee.

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### **5C. Policy:**

If two people in the leadership team of a troop or other membership pathway are related (e.g., spouses, mother and daughter, brother and sister) or share the same household (e.g., roommates), they must have a third unrelated person, who does not live in the same household as the other leaders, on the leadership team and present at all troop meetings and activities. At least one member of the leadership team of a troop or other membership pathway must be female.

### **5D. Policy:**

For events, travel, and camping trips, two unrelated female volunteers who do not live in the same household must be present at all times. When transporting girls to or from an activity, approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household. At no time may an approved male volunteer be alone with girls. An exception to this policy includes a limited number of GSGATL sponsored or approved events (with prior written consent).

## **6.Reappointment**

### **6A. Policy:**

Troop and other Pathway\* volunteers, other volunteers who work directly with girls, service unit volunteers, training facilitators, camp and other Council volunteers, must demonstrate inclusiveness, willingness to complete assigned duties and responsibilities as described in the position description, adherence to policies and procedures set forth in this document, knowledge of and commitment to safety issues, in addition to financial responsibility, in order to continue in a volunteer role. Volunteers with financial responsibility to local troops/groups or to the Council will not be reappointed to a position if required financial responsibilities have not been met.

\* Series, event, camp, travel and virtual pathways.

### **6A. Procedure:**

1. Each appointed operational volunteer's performance will be reviewed periodically.
2. Continuing operational volunteers agree to complete and/or update training as required for the position.
3. Service unit volunteers, training facilitators, camp and other Council volunteers' performance will be reviewed as needed or on an annual basis.



4. At all times, GSGATL has the discretion to remove a volunteer or limit a volunteer's participation in a specific position as a result of their performance or adherence to policies and procedures.

## **7. Dismissal**

In any organization, situations may arise which make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from their volunteer assignment. An action to release a volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and GSGATL.

As part of this procedure, a designated GSGATL representative should ascertain facts and consult with others as necessary. That representative will inform the Internal Review Committee (IRC) when a release is being considered.

### **7A. Policy:**

It is always within the discretion of GSGATL to take immediate action, in the appropriate circumstances, to release a volunteer, and grounds for dismissing or restricting the responsibilities of a current volunteer appear below. The decision to release a person from a current volunteer position or from the volunteer ranks of GSGATL could be the result of an evaluation and feedback process or the result of one problematic incident. Reasons for release may include, but are not limited to, elimination of the position in which the volunteer serves, failure to abide by policies and standards of GSUSA or GSGATL, refusal to accept and foster the Girl Scout mission and values, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA.

### **7B. Policy:**

GSGATL may release any volunteer who, in conducting the Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes a personal lifestyle so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to being a proper role model for girl members.

### **7B. Procedure 1: Releasing an Operational Volunteer**

1. If release of the volunteer is appropriate, the Regional Executive and/or the Risk and Business Operations Manager may arrange a conference with the volunteer as soon as possible and advise him or her of the specific complaint and notification of dismissal. It is recommended that at least one other person be present during the discussion to help avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or misquoting. Release does not cancel membership in the Girl Scout Movement.

2. If a current Girl Scout volunteer is charged with or convicted of, pled guilty to, received deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes in the Grounds for Dismissal list (see below), unless GSGATL learns or is advised that the Georgia First Offenders Act applies to a particular situation. GSGATL may ask the volunteer to resign from a position working with girls. It is at the discretion of GSGATL whether to allow the volunteer to continue in any capacity.

### 3. Grounds for Dismissal

- Any felony offense, regardless of type
- Misdemeanor crime against a child
- Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
- Misdemeanor crime involving violence
- Misdemeanor crime involving arson
- Misdemeanor crime of public indecency or other moral turpitude
- Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
- Other misdemeanors, as GSGATL may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty or traffic violations.
- Failure to act in a manner consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, including harassment
- Failure to comply with the policies and procedures set forth in Volunteer Essentials, GSUSA'S Blue Book of Basic Documents or other GSUSA or GSGATL policies governing the conduct of volunteers
- Failure to meet financial obligations to the Council

4. The service unit co-director responsible for overseeing the volunteer is responsible for notifying their Area Executive at GSGATL if they become aware of a situation involving one of the above bulleted items. The Area Executive should then notify the Regional Executive. The Regional Executive should consult the Senior Director of Membership. After reviewing the facts and consulting with Risk Management Department, the Senior Director of Membership may ask the volunteer to step down from the position.

5. Criminal background checks include a time frame of at least seven years; therefore, it is appropriate that the volunteer must be dismissed or put in a position restricted from working with girls for a minimum of seven years from the disposition of the offense. The length of this time frame and all other considerations related to the volunteer's position are at the sole discretion of GSGATL.

6. In instances where the infraction is egregious or sensitive in nature, the dismissal procedure may bypass the above steps and be brought to the direct attention of the Chief Operating



Officer (COO) and/or the IRC. The IRC reviews all issues seriously and does not take lightly the impact dismissal of volunteers has on girls, community or individuals.

7. Conflict resolution is different from the dismissal process and occurs between two or more parties where no obvious policy, procedure violation or serious infraction has occurred. For Conflict Resolution see Policy 9.

#### **7B. Procedure 2: Restriction of Leadership Activities**

1. If a current Girl Scout Troop Co-Leader charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes, she or he may have restrictions placed on her or his volunteer activities or responsibilities, including, but not limited to, restrictions prohibiting direct contact with girl members.

2. In keeping with the denial guidelines for incoming volunteers, an ongoing volunteer who has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, or received a deferred adjudication for or pled no contest to, certain crimes, judgment or probation may be asked to step down from their volunteer position and not allowed to become a Troop Co-Leader if the incident or knowledge of the incident is within seven years. At the end of this time frame, it is within the sole discretion of GSGATL to determine whether the volunteer can be placed in a leadership position working with the girls.

#### **7B. Procedure 3: Restriction of Fiduciary Responsibilities**

If a volunteer has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to misdemeanor crimes involving theft, fraud, or forgery, or other crimes of dishonesty in the event that the person is allowed to continue as a volunteer, that person will be restricted from management of Girl Scout money.

#### **7B. Procedure 4: Arrests**

Arrests of current volunteers, and current volunteers who have pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes, or who have been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for crimes that are brought to GSGATL's attention, will be handled in a similar manner to open warrants and pending charges for prospective volunteers. The activities of the volunteer will be restricted while GSGATL researches the matter. It is at the discretion of GSGATL to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or be allowed to continue.

### **8. Resignation**

In order to maintain professionalism in our volunteer organization, a person having reason(s) to resign is provided with appropriate channels to follow.



### **8A. Policy:**

A volunteer may resign from her or his position at any time. Written notification to a GSGATL staff member or designee is encouraged. Membership dues are non-refundable.

### **8A. Procedures:**

10. Reason(s) for desiring to resign should be discussed immediately with the person to whom the volunteer is accountable, prior to making a final decision.

11. Any resignation submitted will be acknowledged by a GSGATL representative's immediate supervisor.

12. If notice of resignation has not been submitted but GSGATL staff have attempted to reach out to the volunteer on several documented occasions without success, the volunteer may be deemed to have resigned.

## **9. Conflict Resolution**

### **9A Policy:**

The Council's conflict resolution policies and procedures are different from the dismissal process and will be employed between two or more parties where no obvious policy violation has occurred. As in all organizations, there are times when individuals cannot agree. Only when issues cannot be resolved through open communication does the IRC intervene.

A conflict may arise when:

- an individual believes that policies, standards or procedures related to her/his position in Girl Scouting are not being properly administered;
- there is a disagreement of any kind between two or more volunteers, or between volunteers and parents, or volunteers and community members that cannot be resolved through open communication;
- there is a dispute over the interpretation of one or more Council policies by Council staff and/or volunteers.

In order to present the best possible Girl Scout experience to all members, non-Girl Scout conflicts or issues should not be addressed, discussed or brought forth within a Girl Scout setting, to include meetings, events, trips, social media or electronic communication, etc.

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email, texting, instant messaging, social media or any other exchange that does not promote person-to-person resolution is not

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



recommended by the Council. If, for any reason, a conflict arises between individuals and cannot be resolved through discussion with each other, the following steps (9A, below), will be followed until the conflict is resolved.

#### **9A. Procedures:**

13. The most effective way to resolve conflict is by calm and open discussion between the persons involved. An open-minded, problem-solving tone should be adopted during these discussions.

14. If a solution is not resolved privately between the parties involved, the next step is for one or both or all individuals to submit written documentation of the issue with her/his next level of support. The correct protocol for seeking assistance with conflict management is in the following order:

- a) Affected parties and the troop co-leader, if the troop co-leader is not a party to the conflict;
- b) Service unit co-director, if the service unit co-director is not a party to the conflict;
- c) Area Executive and/or Regional Executive; and
- d) Senior Director of Membership

If there is any reason why a volunteer cannot communicate her/his issue to the next immediate person in this chain of command, the person holding the next position in this hierarchy should be contacted and a Volunteer Relations report filed

15. A Volunteer Relations Report must include the results of the first attempt(s) at resolution, including dates, times, individuals involved, proposed resolution, and explanation why the proposed resolution did not/will not resolve the grievance.

16. Upon request, a copy of the Volunteer Relations Referral may be sent by the Council to the other parties to the conflict. The Council reserves the right to deny requests for copies of the Situation Report based on the need to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive or confidential information.

17. Additional documentation may be requested and may include emails, written records of phone calls, screen captures from social media, or any other media which contains information relevant to the situation.

18. Within 10 days after receiving the Volunteer Relations Report the appropriate support person will investigate the situation. If mediation is deemed appropriate, the support person will call a conference of the parties involved with the purpose of mediating and resolving the conflict. Should an individual refuse mediation, they could potentially be putting their volunteer status at risk, up to and including dismissal. A written summary of the mediation,



including the agreements reached, will be distributed to all parties involved. A copy of the mediation summary will be forwarded to the next level support person.

19. If a successful resolution involves the release or restriction of volunteer(s) or volunteer activities, the issue will be brought to the Council Internal Review Committee (IRC). The IRC, which may consist of operational volunteers and Council staff, thoroughly investigates the situation and makes a recommendation regarding volunteer status.

20. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reviews the recommendation of the IRC and determines any necessary action. The COO's decision regarding volunteer service is final.

21. Written notification of the COO's decision is distributed to the appropriate parties. Further action steps which may be necessary to resolve the situation are the responsibility of the staff and volunteers involved.

22. In some instances when the infraction is egregious or sensitive in nature it may bypass the above steps and be brought to the direct attention of the COO and/or the IRC.

## **10. Reinstatement of Volunteers**

### **10.A Policy**

Girl Scout volunteers who have been dismissed or released may be re-instated to their position using the procedures below. It is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to complete all the required steps. GSGATL reserves the right to limit volunteer involvement as they deem appropriate.

### **10.A Procedures**

1. Volunteers who were removed due to the results of the Criminal Background Check must wait the appointed seven years from the time of the infraction as outlined in Policy 3.

Fulfillment of the waiting period does not guarantee that an applicant will be appointed as a volunteer.

2. An individual who wishes to be reinstated as a volunteer with Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta (GSGATL) may submit a request in writing after a period of 18 months from the date of the IRC's decision to restrict or remove the individual from her or his position.

3. Volunteer requests for reinstatement will not be considered without the following documentation:

a. Letter of appeal, stating why they wish to be reinstated as a GSGATL volunteer.



- b. Three personal references; one of which must be an endorsement by the individual's assigned Service Unit Director.
  - c. An updated criminal background check on file with GSGATL no older than 90 days from the date of request.
  - d. If dismissal was due to unpaid debt to troops, Service Units or Council, all debts must be repaid in full.
4. Within 30 days of receiving a reinstatement request, the Sr. Director of Membership will review the request and prior IRC documentation regarding the individual and convene a meeting of the IRC.
  5. The request will be brought to the IRC. The IRC, which may consist of operational volunteers and Council staff, will thoroughly investigate the case and make a recommendation regarding the individual.
  6. A decision to reinstate, along with any criteria needing to be completed (i.e. in-person meeting, updated and completed training, etc.) is at the discretion of the IRC.
  7. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reviews the recommendation of the IRC and determines any necessary action. The COO's decision regarding volunteer service is final.
  8. Written notification of the COO's decision along with any requirements of the volunteer will be distributed to the appropriate parties.
  9. It is the responsibility of the staff and volunteers involved to ensure all criteria are met before reinstating the individual in a volunteer capacity.

## **11. Benefits and Services**

Benefits and services to volunteers may include training and other learning opportunities, support from GSGATL staff and other Council volunteers, GSUSA and GSGATL publications and Website, tools for recording volunteer experiences, awards and recognitions, and performance evaluations. Volunteers who are registered members of GSUSA are covered by supplemental accident insurance.

### **11A. Policy:**

Volunteers recognize their Girl Scout position(s) as a voluntary service and do not expect, receive, or solicit any monetary reimbursement for service. An exception to this policy includes a limited number of GSGATL sponsored or approved events (with prior written consent).

#### **11A. Procedures:**

23. Volunteers are encouraged to keep a record of expenses incurred while doing Girl Scout activities (e.g., cost of uniforms, mileage, etc.). Many of these expenses may be applied as income tax deductions. Volunteers are advised to check with the Internal Revenue Service or a tax consultant regarding volunteer expense tax deductions.

24. All currently registered members of GSUSA are automatically covered by a supplemental activity accident insurance policy. The plan provides limited coverage for medical expenses due to accidents that occur while participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities, including traveling directly to and from the activity. GSGATL cannot guarantee that all claims will be paid. (Paid staff are not eligible for coverage even when acting in a volunteer capacity.)

25. According to the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, the federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 protects volunteers acting in the scope of their responsibilities as defined in the position description.

26. Under Georgia law, directors and officers of nonprofits enjoy limited protection from liability, as do an organization's volunteers. A member, director, trustee or officer who serves without compensation for a non-profit hospital or association or a charitable organization is immune from civil liability for an act or omission done in service if they were acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties, with the exception being damage or injury caused by willful or wanton misconduct.

27. A charitable institution is not liable for the negligence of its officers and employees, unless the institution fails to exercise ordinary care in the selection or retention of competent officers and employees.

#### **12. Financial Assistance for Travel and Training**

Scholarship and travel assistance may be available to help volunteers defray the cost of attending Girl Scout training courses or special events held outside GSGATL's jurisdiction, including the National Council Meeting (Girl Scouts of the USA Conference.).

#### **12A. Policy:**

A volunteer receiving financial assistance for training from GSGATL must have been a registered member for at least one year, must have a working knowledge of Girl Scout program and policies, and must be an approved volunteer with a current criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. The recipient must submit a written report upon return from the event and share their learning with Girl Scout troops, Council staff, or



volunteer groups. Individuals may be asked to make presentations, provide summaries, action items, and materials to GSGATL constituents both formally and informally.

### 13. Training

#### 13A. Policy:

All appointed volunteers must participate in an orientation to Girl Scouting and any training as stated on the volunteer position description. All volunteers must complete training within the timeframes established on the position description. Failure to complete training may be a basis for release, suspension, or cause for not being reappointed to a position.

#### 13A. Procedures:

1. Certain activities require specific training which must be completed prior to participating in the activity, as required by the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
2. Additional training may be required as GSGATL or GSUSA updates their programs, policies, or offerings. Volunteers not completing the additional training required for their position within a reasonable amount of time may be asked to step down.
3. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to keep their training up-to-date in accordance with their position description.
4. GSGATL may offer additional training for enrichment purposes. Such training is optional and available to all approved volunteers provided the necessary pre-requisites are met.

### 14. Recognitions

GSGATL's volunteer recognition program is designed to be a valuable component of the volunteer support system. It offers formal and informal recognition on a year-round basis. Formal recognition is for significant service and for completing established requirements. Recognition success is defined by doing it well, doing it often, and making it meaningful.

#### 14A. Policy:

Outstanding service to Girl Scouting will be recognized by GSGATL as outlined on the GSGATL Web site on the Recognitions page.

#### 14B. Policy:

Volunteers with 30 or more years of Girl Scout membership will be recognized by the presentation of the appropriate Membership Numeral Guard by GSGATL.



#### **14B. Procedure:**

Refer to the Volunteer Awards and Recognitions on the GSGATL Web site for criteria, guidelines and applications.

### **15. Uniforms**

#### **15A. Policy:**

The official Girl Scout uniform for girls is a white shirt (either their own or the official Girl Scout polo shirt for their program level), their own khaki pants or skirt, and the official program level tunic, vest, or sash. Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies may wear the khaki and white uniform, or they may wear official Girl Scout uniform components for their program level, such as the Daisy or Brownie beanie, shirt, skirt, leggings or other official components. As a link with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from other WAGGGS member countries, Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors have an official, neckerchief-style scarf to wear with their uniform.

#### **15A. Procedure**

Girl Scouts are expected to wear their uniform at ceremonies and when they are representing the Girl Scout Movement – while marching in a parade, for example. Having a uniform is not required for Girl Scout membership, but wearing the uniform may be a requirement for participating in certain events.

#### **15B. Policy:**

The official uniform for Girl Scout volunteers is their own navy business attire, worn with an official Girl Scout scarf for women or official Girl Scout tie for men, and the Girl Scout Membership Pin and World Trefoil Pin.

#### **15B. Procedure**

Girl Scout Volunteers are expected to wear the official uniform at ceremonies and when they are representing the Girl Scout Movement (meeting with community leaders, for example.) Having a uniform is not required for Girl Scout membership, but wearing the uniform may be a requirement for participating in certain events.

### **16. Accident/Incident Management**

#### **16A. Policy:**

All accidents/incidents requiring treatment beyond basic first aid must be reported to GSGATL's Risk Management at 770-702-9212.



**16A. Procedure:**

The volunteer in charge of the activity where the accident/incident took place must complete and submit the Accident/Incident Report Form to [riskmanagement@gsgatl.org](mailto:riskmanagement@gsgatl.org) (1-888-644-0511) within 72 hours.

**16B. Procedure:**

An administrative volunteer who is notified of an accident/incident should report it to her or his immediate Council staff contact person (e.g., service unit co-director notifies Area Executive, Council trainer notifies the training manager).

**16C. Procedures:**

1. Give injured person(s) first aid and simultaneously have someone call a hospital, ambulance service or doctor. Call 911 if available; if not, call the police. If there has been an automobile accident, a death or a suspected crime, call 911 or the police.
2. Contact the Camp Ranger if you are on camp property.
3. Put a responsible volunteer in charge of accounting for all individuals; organize a search for anyone who is missing.
4. See that a responsible volunteer remains with the injured person. Do not move the person unless her/his life is endangered by being left at the scene of the accident. If there has been a death, do not move the victim or change the surrounding area until the police have arrived.
5. After immediate emergency needs have been met, call the Mableton Service Center to report the emergency situation. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone: 770-702-9100 or 800-771-4046. After hours, please call: 888-644-0511. Your call will be handled by a call center; you will receive a return phone call from a staff person within 30 minutes or less. The staff emergency contact person will arrange for additional help and will call the families of uninjured persons, upon your request.
6. After giving the injured person(s) first aid, call the family and report the nature of the emergency and the person's condition. Give only the facts; do not blame anyone. Ask their wishes concerning medical treatment and hospitalization. Refer to the injured party's Minor & Adult Health History Form(s) if they are unable to respond.
7. For your protection, do NOT discuss the incident or give out information to anyone except the police or GSGATL leadership. If the media contacts you, please do NOT make a statement and immediately direct them to Marketing & Communications at 770-702-9100. After hours, please call: 888-644-0511.

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



8. Make a record of the following, indicating the time and what procedures were followed:

- a. How the accident or emergency happened
- b. First aid given and by whom
- c. Statements made to ambulance attendants, doctors, police, etc.
- d. Telephone calls (who made them, who they called, what they said)

9. Names and addresses of all witnesses

As soon as possible, submit a written report to the Council for insurance purposes.

### **17. Being an Appropriate Role Model**

Part of being an effective and responsible Girl Scout volunteer includes being an appropriate role model. Girls learn about leadership and appropriate health and safety standards directly and indirectly from the volunteers around them, and especially from their leaders.

#### **17A. Procedure:**

Volunteers should model the behavior that shows respect for local, state and federal laws and ordinances. They should also follow the policies and standards of GSUSA and GSGATL found in Volunteer Essentials and in GS USA's Blue Book of Basic Documents when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity, volunteers should model behavior that shows respect for the well-being of the girls and other volunteers.

### **18. Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Environment**

#### **18A. Policy:**

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), and the use of other tobacco products at all GSGATL facilities and properties is prohibited.

#### **18A. Procedure:**

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and the use of other tobacco products is not allowed in the presence of girls when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity.

### **19. Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

#### **19A. Policy:**

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not possess, sell, or use illegal drugs.



#### **19B. Policy:**

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not misuse prescribed or over-the-counter drugs at any Girl Scout activity.

#### **19C. Policy:**

Girl Scout volunteers shall not drink or be under the influence of alcohol during Girl Scout activities when girls are present. An exception to this policy includes a limited number of GSGATL sponsored or approved events (with prior written consent), such as “Beyond the Troop Events” where alcohol is served or events for volunteers where girls may be participating as speakers, greeters, flag ceremony color guard, etc. and whose parents will be notified that alcohol is being served to volunteers.

#### **19C. Procedure:**

Drinking alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol by volunteers and chaperones in the presence of girls is not allowed when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity except under limited circumstances described. Violation of these policies regarding alcohol and substance abuse will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **20. Zero Tolerance Policy**

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta has **Zero Tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, and sexual misconduct of any kind, among members, employees, or affiliates associated with our Council. This Council is committed to providing all Girl Scout members, affiliates, and associates with a safe environment and will not tolerate misconduct or abuse. Conduct by members that rises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual misconduct will result in intervention or disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal from the program.

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta complies with Georgia’s Mandated Reporter Law. Any Council Volunteer or Staff in our organization having direct contact with children is considered a Mandated Reporter. As Mandated Reporters, you are responsible for reporting any suspicion of child abuse directly to the local police department or the Department of Family & Children Services (DFCS) without retaliation from GSGATL. In all such reporting, Volunteers and Staff are required to complete and submit a detailed incident report to Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta’s Risk Management Department for follow-up.

#### **Important links**

- Georgia Mandated Reporter Form (Link)
- Mandated Reporter Training: <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/store/cart/>

## 21. Harassment

### 21A. Policy:

GSGATL is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and conduct that is in alignment with the principles of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. GSGATL strictly prohibits and does not tolerate unlawful harassment of its members or employees based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, and physical or mental disability or any other protected class under applicable federal, state or local law. All members of GSGATL together with staff are responsible for preventing, identifying and eliminating harassment. Any act of harassment by any member of the Girl Scout movement or staff member against another member of the Girl Scout movement or staff member shall not be tolerated and shall be grounds for dismissal.

### 21A. Procedure:

1. Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type should report the conduct to her or his Area Executive, who will follow the steps outlined in Procedure 7.B.1. to determine the appropriate course of action, which may include dismissal of the harasser. In the event of harassment that is egregious or sensitive in nature, the conduct may be reported directly to the COO. Reported incidents of harassments involving Girl Scout employees shall be governed by the Council's Anti Harassment Policy found in the Employee Handbook, and in the event of a conflict between the Employee Handbook and Volunteer Essentials, the Handbook shall control.
2. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for an individual because of their sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or other protected classification. Harassment may include, but is not limited to, epithets, slurs, jokes, or other verbal or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability or other protected classification.

## 22. Child Abuse

What is Child Abuse?

Although there are many formal and acceptable definitions of child abuse, the following is offered as a guide on child abuse and neglect: "Child Abuse and Neglect" means, at a minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

*Last updated 8/21/2023*

**22A. Policy:**

Any act of child abuse or neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse or neglect by any volunteer, male or female, against any girl member, shall not be tolerated. Girl Scout volunteers are also responsible for protecting the well-being of girl members by reporting any witnessed or suspected abuse or neglect. Georgia law requires that actual or suspected child abuse or neglect be reported within 24 hours of the event giving rise to the reporting obligation. Volunteers are required to promptly report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to both law enforcement and to GSGATL, pursuant to the procedures set out below.

**22A. Procedure:**

When a Girl Scout volunteer suspects that a child may be a victim of child abuse or receives information that a child is or may be a victim of abuse, the volunteer is mandated by state law to make a report to Department of Family and Child Services (DFACS) using the following guidelines.

***Forms of Child Abuse:***

Physical abuse or death Inflicted upon a child by a parent or caretaker by other than accidental means

Any non-accidental injury to a child. This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping, and paddling. Physical means of discipline may be used as long as there is no physical injury

Sexual abuse or Sexual Exploitation of a child Any sexual act between a volunteer and child. This includes fondling, penetration, intercourse, exploitation, pornography, exhibitionism, child prostitution, group sex, oral sex, or forced observation of sexual acts. This includes “consensual” sex acts when such acts are between minors if either is less than 14 years old (effective July 1, 2016).

Neglect Or Exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker Failure to provide for a child’s physical needs. This includes lack of supervision, inappropriate housing or shelter, inadequate provision of food and water, inappropriate clothing for season or weather, abandonment, denial of medical care and inadequate hygiene.

Emotional abuse Any attitude or behavior which interferes with a child’s mental health or social development. This includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, and shaming, negative comparisons to others, telling them they are “bad, no good, worthless or a mistake.”

***Endangering a Child*** (effective July 1, 2016)



Child endangerment occurs when a person engages in conduct that places a child in imminent danger of death, bodily injury, or physical or mental impairment. This can be through an act or Omission.

### ***Reporting Abuse or Neglect***

As of July 1, 2012, Georgia revised the reporting law to include child serving organizations (employees and volunteers) as mandated reporters. The law requires that mandated reporters, "having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused, shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made." If a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police. Keep the child in your care until appropriate assistance arrives. When a Girl Scout volunteer observes physical injuries of a suspicious nature, receives a report or accusation of sexual abuse, learns that a child is fearful of returning home, and/or has been abandoned by the parents or guardians, the volunteer must call 911 or DFACS within 24 hours. In reporting to law enforcement or DFACS you may remain anonymous. DFACS Centralized Intake Call Center: 1-855-GA CHILD (422-4453)

### ***Reporting Abuse to GSGATL***

Once a report has been made to law enforcement, notify GSGATL (within 72 hours) by contacting Council Risk Management using the Accident Incident Report Form. The form can also be found on the GSGATL Web site in the Volunteer Section on the Forms and Documents page. This information is considered confidential. Therefore, after it is reported to law enforcement and the appropriate person at GSGATL, it should be discussed on a need-to-know basis only, to protect the privacy of the child.

### ***What If I'm Not Sure?***

When a child reports what could be child abuse or when a situation exists where the child may be subjected to abuse, negligence, or other harm, volunteers must contact 911 (if child is in immediate danger) or DFACS. Volunteers can call the Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) for advice if desired.

### ***Child-to-Child Abuse***

Volunteers are expected to establish a no-tolerance policy for abuse or bullying at troop meetings, events, or any Girl Scout activity. In instances where one child abuses another, the parents or guardians of each child should be notified immediately. The child responsible for the abuse will be removed from the program or environment in which she is participating. In such situations, the parent or guardian of the abused child can determine whether to submit a report to local authorities about the behavior of the other child or take other appropriate action. The Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) currently does not handle abusive

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



situations between unrelated children. Volunteers can call the Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-ACHILD (1-800-422-4453) for advice and referrals.

### ***Training Requirements***

All volunteers who interact with girls recognize that they are mandated reporters. Training for recognizing and reporting child abuse is required for certain positions as indicated on the volunteer position description.

### ***Child Abuse Charges***

GSGATL will release a volunteer who has been convicted of or pleads guilty or no contest to a charge of child abuse or neglect when GSGATL is aware of such conviction or charges.

GSGATL may release a volunteer who has been charged with child abuse or neglect pending resolution of the charge. It is within the discretion of GSGATL to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or will be allowed to continue. If and when such charges are cleared, a volunteer may be considered for reinstatement, at the discretion of GSGATL.

## **23. Sex Offenders**

### **23A. Policy**

A Registered Sex Offender (those persons subject to registration under O.C.G.A. §42-1-12, et seq.,) may not serve as a troop co-leader, troop helper, chaperone or in any other troop volunteer position. A Registered Sex Offender may not participate in any way, either in troop activities of any kind or in GSGATL activities where girl members may be present. Troop meetings and activities may not be held or conducted at any residence where a member of the household is a Registered Sex Offender. Troop co-leaders, other troop volunteers, and parents or guardians of girl members are required to immediately notify GSGATL if they learn or become aware that any troop co-leader or other troop volunteer, or troop family member is a Registered Sex Offender or has pending charges, or has pled guilty or no contest, or has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication, regarding sexual offenses. In addition, troop co-leaders or other troop volunteers, and parents or guardians of girl members, are required to immediately notify GSGATL if he or she is, or has an immediate family or household member who has pending charges, pled guilty or no contest, or who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication regarding sexual offenses.

### **23A.Procedure**

When GSGATL in its discretion determines that it is reasonably necessary to safeguard girl members, GSGATL may notify the parents or guardians of all girl members of a troop



regarding: (a) the status of a troop co-leader or volunteer or family member as a Registered Sex Offender; (b) the requirements of this Policy; and (c) the steps taken by GSGATL to comply with the policy (for instance, the dismissal of, or written notice as described above to, the Registered Sex Offender.)

For instance, if a family member Registered Sex Offender withdraws his or her girl member from the troop, or if a troop co-leader or other troop volunteer has been dismissed, GSGATL may determine it is not necessary to give notice to the parents or guardians of the other girl members of his or her status as a Registered Sex Offender.

This policy addresses Registered Sex Offenders only. It is not intended to, and does not limit GSGATL's right to dismiss troop co-leaders, volunteers, or girl members or to deny the applications of potential troop co-leaders, volunteers or girl members, for other reasons than those addressed in this Registered Sex Offender policy.

## **24. Weapons**

No weapons are allowed on any GSGATL property. The possession of firearms at any Girl Scout event on Council property will be grounds for dismissal. A pocketknife is acceptable when used for training or as a camping tool.

### **24A. Policy:**

All persons who enter GSGATL property or are performing their volunteer role are prohibited from carrying a handgun, firearm, or prohibited weapon of any kind covered by the law. Pocketknives may be carried and used by volunteers in connection with camping or relevant program activities. Bows and arrows used in camp archery activities are not considered to be weapons for the purposes of this policy.

### **24A. Procedure1:**

Exceptions to the policy include law enforcement officers, security guards, or other persons who have been given (prior) written consent by GSGATL to carry a weapon on the property. Written consent may be requested by contacting [riskmanagement@gsgatl.org](mailto:riskmanagement@gsgatl.org)

### **24A. Procedure 2:**

GSGATL reserves the right to conduct searches on its property or authorize searches by law enforcement on its property.

### **24B. Policy:**

All persons who normally maintain weapons in their home or their vehicle will secure or remove them before girls enter the premises. This includes troops who meet in a home.

*Last updated 8/21/2023*

## 25. Contracts and Agreements

### 25A. Policy:

Volunteers may not enter into any contract or agreement that involves an expenditure of more than \$500, services that involve the transportation of girls, or the involvement of girls in high risk activities as defined by the GSGATL Safety Activity Handbook, without GSGATL approval. No volunteer may enter into any contract or waive liability on behalf of GSGATL. A volunteer may enter into an agreement on behalf of or between a troop and/or a service unit only within GSGATL Troop and Service Unit Money Management Guidelines found in Volunteer Essentials.

### 25A. Procedure:

The following contracts or agreements must be submitted to the Risk Management department for approval no less than 30 days prior to the date of the planned event or activity:

- expenditures of more than \$500,
- language that waives liability or contains hold harmless stipulations,
- services that involve the transportation of girls, or
- girls' participation in high risk activities as defined in Safety Activity Handbook checkpoints

## 26. Debt Collection

### 26A. Policy:

When a volunteer in any volunteer position with GSGATL has a personal outstanding debt to GSGATL, GSGATL has the right, at its discretion, to remove the volunteer from her or his position and not reinstate the volunteer. Misappropriation of funds could result in legal action.

## 27. Legal Action Against GSGATL

### 27A. Policy:

When an volunteer has brought legal action against GSGATL or has caused GSGATL to initiate legal action, GSGATL has the right, at its discretion, to decline to appoint that person to a volunteer position within GSGATL or to remove that volunteer from his or her position if currently in place.

Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims or magistrate court.



## 28. Troop and Service Unit Treasury

### 28A. Policy:

Troop treasuries may consist of funds from troop money-earning projects, dues, and donations.

Troops are accountable for troop income and expenses and must submit finance reports to the troop parents, service unit and to the Council. Troops should be self-supporting. Troop funds should not be money simply collected from parents. Troops are strongly encouraged to use troop funds toward membership dues of girls and volunteers before seeking financial assistance with membership from the Council or third parties. Service unit treasuries may consist of funds from money-earning projects, dues, donations and Council-sponsored grant programs. Service units are accountable for service unit income and expenses and must submit finance reports to the troop co-leaders and to the Council.

### 28A. Procedure 1:

Troops must submit finance reports to troop parents at least twice yearly, to the service unit annually by June 15th, and to the Council as requested. Records should be maintained for as long as the troop is in existence.

Service units must submit finance reports to troop co-leaders at least twice yearly, and to the Council annually on June 15th. Records should be maintained for as long as the service unit is in existence. Failure of Service Units to keep updated financial records on file with GSGATL as requested and/or mismanagement of funds may be a basis for release, suspension or cause for not being reappointed to a position.

### 28A Procedure 2:

When a troop splits or disbands, the girls (with volunteer guidance) agree about what to do with the troop funds. In no instance does the money become the property of an individual member or troop volunteer. The final Troop Finance Report must indicate how the funds were distributed. The signed report is turned into the service unit co-director. When a service unit splits or disbands, the funds in the service unit treasury will be prorated between the new service units or go to the absorbing service unit.

### 28A. Procedure 3:

Troop and service unit treasuries may be used to pay for activities and projects for specific girls.

However, the allocation of funds from the troop or service unit treasury cannot be directly linked to a dollar-for-dollar calculation of the contributions to the treasury by the girl. There should be no tracking of the portion of the treasury contributed or earned by a specific girl.



Disbursement of allocations of funds can be tied to a range or band. There should never be a disbursement to a girl when she leaves a troop.

Troop and service unit treasuries that are used for activities and projects must always further the mission of Girl Scouting and may not be co-mingled with or used to fund participation in events sponsored by competing youth-serving organizations, including, but not limited to, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girls on the Run, Girls Inc., or American Heritage Girls. Troop and service unit treasuries must be spent on Girl Scout and troop experiences only.

## **29. Fees and Dues**

### **29A. Policy:**

Troops may collect dues from troop members. Membership will not be denied based on an inability to pay troop or group dues.

### **29A. Procedure:**

Girls and parents together decide upon the amount and frequency of dues. Dues typically range from \$2 to \$5 per meeting, but generally do not exceed \$5 per month.

### **29B. Policy:**

New troops or groups may ask, but not require, parents to donate to a one-time startup fee when the troop begins meeting. Troops may also request periodic contributions toward specific troop activities/trips. While troop membership will not be denied based on an inability to pay these fees, participation in troop activities may depend on ability to contribute.

### **29B. Procedure:**

The Troop start-up fee may not exceed \$25 per girl and may only be requested at the beginning of the troop's first year of existence. This fee is only charged the first year the troop is formed. If girls join a troop after the initial year, a start-up fee should not be charged.

### **29C. Policy:**

Service units may collect dues from girl members. Membership will not be denied based on an inability to pay service unit dues.

### **29C. Procedure:**

Service unit dues may not exceed \$5 per girl annually. Volunteer members do not pay service unit dues.

### 30. Money-Earning for Troops and Service Units

#### 30A. Policy:

Money-earning refers to activities troops and service units engage in to earn revenue that directly supports the troop or service unit. Money-earning activities and events are girl-led. Troops and service units are accountable for income and expenses and must submit Finance Reports as indicated in the procedures below. Any money given directly to the troop or service unit is not tax deductible. Money-earning activities may not raise funds on behalf of another non-profit organization. Money-earning activities must not coincide with either GSGATL product program and must be in keeping with the principles for which the organization stands, as defined in this manual.

#### 30A. Procedures:

1. Troops must participate annually in both GSGATL product programs (the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Treats & Keeps Program) and should ask families to support the Annual Fund before conducting money-earning activities. New troops that form after one or both product programs may conduct limited money-earning activities if needed to fund planned troop activities.
2. Restaurant fundraisers are not allowed for troop or service unit money-earning, with the exception of the Annual reFund Program to support the Annual Fund. See [GirlScoutsATL.org](http://GirlScoutsATL.org) for additional details.
3. Troops and service units may, without further notice to Council, participate in the following money-earning activities:
  - a. Sales of baked goods (not sponsored by commercial businesses)
  - b. car wash
  - c. garage/yard sale
  - d. sale of girl-made craft items.
4. Other money-earning activities require prior approval from the Council. Troops and service units should consult the Volunteer Essentials section on the GSGATL website for a list of appropriate money-earning activities.
  - a. For troop money-earning activities: Troop co-leaders must submit a Money-Earning Application, along with the latest copy of the troop's bank statement to the appropriate service unit team member for approval of the activity at least two weeks prior to the activity. The troop



co-leader must also submit a report on the results of the activity to the service unit co-director within two weeks of the completion of the activity.

b. For service unit money-earning activities: Service unit team members must submit a Beyond the Troop Event (BTTE) form for all Money Earning Activities.

c. Any money given directly to a troop or service unit is not tax-deductible. Troops and service units may NOT use or provide Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta's tax ID number for money-earning activities and/or donations that are given directly to troops or service units. Please contact the Annual Giving Manager at [annualfund@gsgatl.org](mailto:annualfund@gsgatl.org) for more information or questions.

5. Girl-led, Beyond the Troop Events are considered money-earning activities for the sponsoring troop or service unit when the event budget allows for a profit. These events require prior Council approval by submitting Beyond the Troop Event (BTTE) Form.

a. The volunteer event director must take the training specified in gsLearn, in the online training icon: Planning Events Beyond the Troop with Emergency Preparedness, prior to forming a volunteer-mentored, girl-led planning committee.

b. The volunteer event director submits a Beyond the Troop Event (BTTE) Application, and other supporting documents, to the Council Risk Management department ([riskmanagement@gsgatl.org](mailto:riskmanagement@gsgatl.org)) for pre-approval of the event.

c. Once all paperwork is received and training is verified, approval may be granted for the event. Refer to "GSGATL's Guidelines for Event Approval"

d. The final Event Finance Report must be submitted to your Service Unit Director within 45 days of the close of the event.

e. Any event that lasts more than three consecutive days requires contacting Council Risk Management for further direction prior to any planning or incurring any expense, by submitting the Beyond the Troop Event (BTTE) Form

### **31. Funding for Take Action Projects**

Take Action projects are projects conducted to complete a Girl Scout Journey or one of Girl Scouts' Highest Awards (Gold, Silver and Bronze). Take Action projects are girl-led and focus on addressing the root cause of a community issue in a sustainable way. Take Action projects are larger in scope and greater in impact than Community Service projects because they should continue to address the issue even after Girl Scout members are no longer directly involved. The project should focus on addressing the root cause of the issue, not merely supporting another organization with material donations or funds.

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



### **31A. Policy**

Take Action projects are funded primarily through girl-led money-earning activities. In-kind donations may be solicited by volunteers on behalf of the Take Action project team. Cash donations or youth service grants may be accepted toward a take action and high awards project only under certain circumstances.

### **31A. Procedure**

Girl Scouts seeking additional funding (including youth service grants) for Take Action projects must consult the Do Not Solicit List available by emailing [helpline@gsgatl.org](mailto:helpline@gsgatl.org). Any money given directly toward a Take Action Project is not tax-deductible. Troops and service units may NOT use or provide Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta's tax ID number for money-earning activities and/or donations that are given directly to troops or service units. Please contact the Annual Giving Manager at [annualfund@gsgatl.org](mailto:annualfund@gsgatl.org) for more information or questions.

### **31B. Policy**

Funds for Take Action projects must be managed through Council-authorized troop or service unit bank accounts. Girl Scouts not affiliated with a troop may seek assistance from the Council only if they are unable to obtain cooperation from a troop or service unit. Project funds and personal funds must not be comingled.

### **31B. Procedure**

Individually Registered Girls/ Juliette Girl Scouts working on Take Action projects & High Awards that require financial support or money earning should contact the Juliette Coordinator [juliettes@gsgatl.org](mailto:juliettes@gsgatl.org).

### **31C. Policy**

Take Action projects may not generate a profit.

### **31C. Procedure**

Any funds raised in excess of the project's needs by any means must be used as follows:

- to extend the Take Action project through additional direct or in-kind donations,
- returned to the original donors,
- or donated to the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta Annual Fund at [Donate.GirlScoutsATL.org](https://Donate.GirlScoutsATL.org) or mailing a Check to 5061 North Allen Road Mableton, GA 30126

### **31D. Policy**

If the Take Action project involves affiliation or partnership with any organization, including non-profits, members must structure the project and communications, whether verbally or in print, to uphold policy 29A and 37A and B (Money Earning and Marketplace Competition). Girl Scouts may not raise funds on behalf of another organization.

### **31D. Procedure**

Contact the GSGATL [helpline@gsgatl.org](mailto:helpline@gsgatl.org) for guidance.

## **32. Fundraising for GSGATL's Annual Fund**

### **32A. Policy:**

Fundraising refers to activities that raise funds for Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta. Fundraising activities should be planned and driven by volunteers, and may be used to meet a service unit Annual Fund goal. Fundraising activities should be planned as a means to close the gap in the Annual Fund goal, not to replace a parent ask. Each parent should still receive an annual solicitation. IRS regulations require that contributions of \$250 or more have documentation from the legal nonprofit entity receiving the gift. As the legal entity, GSGATL must provide the donor with a tax acknowledgement letter. Troops and service units cannot provide this type of acknowledgement for gifts because they are not the legal entity. Girl Scouts and volunteers may not solicit money on behalf of another organization.

### **32A. Procedures:**

1. GSGATL may offer fundraising opportunities to troops and service units to help them meet their Annual Fund goal.
2. Service units may support GSGATL's Annual Fund through approved local fundraising activities. Review all sections of Volunteer Essentials related to fundraising prior to soliciting funds or planning a fundraising event. Contact the Fund Development Department at [annualfund@gsgatl.org](mailto:annualfund@gsgatl.org) or 770-702-9227 with questions or for assistance.
3. Service units cannot solicit gifts over \$250. Any money given directly to the troop or service unit is not tax deductible.
4. Troops and service units are not a non-profit and therefore may NOT use or provide Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta's tax ID number to solicit gifts, grants or donations.
5. Troops should not solicit companies, individuals or organizations on the GSGATL "do not solicit" list without prior approval from GSGATL. Contact Member Care at [helpline@gsgatl.org](mailto:helpline@gsgatl.org) for the most up-to-date list.

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



6. Volunteer Service Grants (donations from companies based on employees' volunteer hours to Girl Scouts) should be made to GSGATL. Fifty percent (up to \$250 maximum) of a gift can be returned to the troop or service unit at the request of the employee. The check should be mailed directly to GSGATL and the employee should make a written request or email: [annualfund@gsgatl.org](mailto:annualfund@gsgatl.org) to make their designation request known.

### 33. Social Media

#### 33A. Policy:

Girl Scout troops/groups and service units may create a Web site or use social media to promote, or communicate with members regarding, Girl Scout activities. When forming a troop/service unit Facebook, Twitter account, Web site or other form of social media you must have a GSGATL approved volunteer member as part of your group and the group must follow the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoint. Visit <https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/en/forvolunteers/online-support-for-volunteers/safety-activity-handbook.html> Girl Scout troops/groups and service units using social media must meet the age requirement established by social media channels, and all minor Girl Scouts must have a photo release form on file at their troop and/or service unit. We also recommend all troops/service units obtain parental permission for girls to participate.

#### 33A. Procedure:

Notify your Area Executive and Risk and Business Operations Manager of this social media page with the location of the page and the GSGATL volunteer member associated with this page.

For Service Unit social media pages, the assigned Area Executive must be a member of the community. If contacted by a member of the media through social media and asked to comment on a Girl Scout related issue please refer them to our Council's Marketing and Communications Department at 770-702-9100 (toll-free at 1-800-771-4046). When representing Girl Scouts on social media channels make safety a priority. Make sure the privacy standards settings ensure the safety of girls. Practice diligence to ensure that groups you are joining or linking to have standards consistent with Girl Scouts and make sure that the messages you post do not conflict with Girl Scouts positions; contact your Council representative if you need clarity. Use good judgment and common sense- do not write or post anything that would embarrass or upset Girl Scout members and volunteers, or reflect badly on the organization. No solicitation of any sort, at any time, is to be permitted on social media. Treat others as you want to be treated; do not use the internet to harass, attack or abuse any individual, group, race, gender, religion, political group, etc. Profane language or derogatory remarks against any individual or group used in any of the context posted will not be tolerated and could result in automatic dismissal. Careful

*Last updated 8/21/2023*



monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouting. Remember that what you post online will be around for a long time, and realize that when you release something online, that it can be released for the world to see. Use discretion and think twice before you post something. Respect other's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when posting photos, comments, etc.

### ***Graphic Guidelines / Social Media and Photography***

Registered troop co-leaders may use Girl Scout graphic images provided by GSGATL in the annual Volunteer Marketing Toolkit for production print materials. In the production of print or online materials, Girl Scout graphics must maintain their original design, may not be altered in any way (color, shape, etc.) and must be presented in adherence to usage guidelines provided. GSGATL prohibits events co-sponsored or co-branded with other youth-serving organizations including, but not limited to, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girls on the Run, Girls Inc., or American Heritage Girls. When appropriate, have a parent's or guardian's written permission before using pictures of girls on any print or electronic materials—including social media. Do not tag or attach personal identifying information—girls' full names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, school locations, etc. Follow the guidelines for Computer/Online Use Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Questions related to the Graphic Guidelines / Social Media and Photography Policy should be addressed to the GSGATL Marketing Department at 770-702-9100 (toll-free at 1-800-771-4046.)GSGATL reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer from any volunteer position if she/he is found to be in clear violation of this policy.

## **34. Confidentiality**

All information concerning staff, volunteers, financial data, and business records of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta is confidential. Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared. Information that is sensitive in nature should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without written authorization from the Council. The Council relies on volunteers to conform to this rule of confidentiality. Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff, volunteers and of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta itself is a basic value of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta

### **34A. Policy**

Volunteers of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the policy of the Council that such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service. Volunteers are



expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the expiration of service. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this policy and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal/dismissal.

**34A. Procedure:**

Volunteers are asked to comply with all confidentiality procedures. During the course of volunteerism, and after retirement of a volunteer position, sensitive or confidential information shall not be divulged, disclosed, or communicated for any reason. Membership information, including but not limited to, name, phone number, email addresses, program level and membership status is considered confidential information.

**34B. Policy**

Although volunteers should keep girls' health histories handy at all times, this information is deemed confidential and should be stored in a secure manner; girls' health histories shall be disclosed to Council staff, volunteers, medical professionals or others only to the extent required by medical necessity. The health documentation of co-volunteers should never be privy to other volunteers and is deemed confidential. All volunteer health histories must be kept confidential. Violation of this policy either intentionally or unintentionally is grounds for immediate dismissal from a volunteer position.

**34B. Procedure:**

Information about a girl's birth or adoption status, transgender status, or gender assigned at birth constitutes confidential medical information covered by this Policy. Girls have the right to discuss and express their birth status, gender identity, and gender expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share this information. The fact that a girl chooses to disclose her transgender status or other confidential medical information about herself to volunteers, staff or other girls does not constitute permission for a volunteer to disclose these details or other confidential medical information about such girl.

**35. Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family, or any party, group or organization in which said volunteer is actively involved, may be seen as adverse to, or in competition with the interests or concerns of the Council. A volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family shall not engage in conduct or activities which constitute a conflict of interest. The following transactions constitute examples of conflicts of interest prohibited by this policy:



- Financial gain of \$150.00 or greater from a troop, service unit, or Council decision or transaction;
- Utilizing her/his position as a volunteer for personal, professional, political or monetary gain (acting individually on behalf of any group, organization, or business to which she/he has allegiance).
- Using for personal advantage or for the advantage of any other person or organization the confidential information or material of the Council (such as rosters, mailing lists, donor lists, etc.)

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta's constituents when volunteers are contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a volunteer or family member holding a leadership position over Girl Scout members or other volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from soliciting directly or indirectly any Girl Scout member or their families for any business relationship, charitable organization, or vendor relationship that may be perceived as a conflict of interest. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

### **35A. Policy**

**Duty to Disclose:** Volunteers shall disclose in writing a full description of any activity, interest or relationship that might create or appear to create a conflict of interest as soon as practicable, prior to the inception of the activity, interest, or relationship. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest where a volunteer or family is expected to gain financially the volunteer must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all facts to their service unit leadership and Regional Executives to consider the proposed transaction or arrangement.

### **35A. Procedures:**

The service unit leadership should contact the Regional Executive, who shall determine if a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist, the Regional Executive, in consultation with Council leadership, shall take the following steps in determining a course of action:

1. Determine whether the transaction proposed to be entered into with the person with the conflict is necessary and/or useful for the troop, service unit, or other group. If a positive determination is not made, the transaction should not be entered into with any person.



2. Determine whether the same or a similar transaction proposed to be entered into with the person with the conflict can be entered into with a person who does not have a conflict on the same or better terms.
3. If the same or a similar transaction on the same or better terms can be entered into with a person who does not have a conflict, the troop, service unit, or other group may not enter into the transaction with the person having a conflict.
4. Only if the same or a similar transaction cannot be entered into on the same or better terms with an unrelated party may the troop, service unit, or other group enter into the transaction with the person having a conflict.
5. The steps taken to determine the course of action in the event of a conflict covered by this procedure shall be documented in writing by the Regional Executive.

### **36. Private Inurement/Private Benefit**

#### **36A. Policy**

To ensure Council compliance with IRS regulations and to protect the Council's 501(c) (3) tax exempt status with the IRS, GSGATL does not allow troops or other pathways to create reserve funds or earmark funds or financial disbursement for individual girls.

Per the IRS, "a section 501(c) (3) organization must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests. No part of the net earnings of a section 501(c) (3) organization may inure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual." Using raised funds to further the Girl Scout program is in accordance with GSGATL's exempt purpose. However, creating or maintaining reserve funds or tracking money earned by girl within troop or service unit treasuries is not compatible with this guidance and is therefore not allowed. Funding should never follow a girl outside of the Council.

#### **36B. Policy**

GSGATL does not accept tax deductible donations where the gift appears to be primarily for the benefit of a single named individual. Funds will be accepted to fund girl scholarships and prizes where the donor does not control the selection of the recipient.

#### **36B. Procedure**

All benefits to girls from troop or other pathway accounts must support the Girl Scout Mission. Funds from troop or other pathway accounts remain with the group and do not follow girls when they leave the group.



## 37. Restrooms and Changing Facilities

### 37A. Policy

With respect to all Council restrooms, locker rooms, or changing facilities, members shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Any member who is uncomfortable using a shared facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon their request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include, for example, the addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule.

Members are not required to use segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

## 38. Other Scouting Organizations

### 38A. Policy

To ensure the integrity of our brand and safety of our members, all volunteers are charged with ensuring that girl members participate in activities that are safe, girl led and conducted under the supervision of registered and trained adult Girl Scout volunteers. Activities may not be conducted jointly with other scouting organizations including, but not limited to, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts or American Heritage Girls.

### 38B. Policy

Any volunteer who belongs to multiple youth serving organizations is expected to protect the confidential information, brand, program pieces and reputation of Girl Scouts. Using or sharing our information with competing scouting organizations is strictly prohibited may be a basis for release, suspension, or cause for not being reappointed to a position.

### 38A. Procedures

Girl Scouts will continue doing what is best for girls and Girl Scouts – that means strong girl-led, all girl, girl focused program.

1. Use the full name of Girl Scouts whenever possible. Do not refer to Girl Scouts as “Scouts” or “Scouting.”
2. GSGATL prohibits events co-sponsored or co-branded with other scouting organizations including, but not limited to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts or American Heritage Girls.
3. Wear uniforms proudly and publicly whenever you are representing Girl Scouts. Do not mix uniform pieces with those of other youth-serving organizations.



4. Use of Girl Scouts' name, logos, and likenesses may be used for Girl Scout events only.
5. When participating in community events such as parades, flag ceremonies, or festivals request a distinct Girl Scout booth or marching space if possible.
6. If girls are members of multiple youth-serving organizations, ensure that funds earned by Girl Scouts are spent on Girl Scout expenses and Girl Scout Troop experiences only.
7. Sharing of membership information, including but not limited to, name, phone number, email addresses, program level and membership status is strictly prohibited under *Policy 33, Confidentiality*.