Volunteer Essentials 2018/2019
Emergency Procedures/Contacts

770-702-9100 during normal business hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am-5 pm)

1-888-644-0511 after hours

Volunteer Service Centers

Mableton

5601 North Allen Road, Mableton, GA 30126

Badge and Sash Stores

Mableton

5601 North Allen Road Mableton, GA 30126

800- 771-1139

Sandy Springs

7878 Roswell Road, Suite K
Sandy Springs, GA 30350

770-702-9699

Tucker

Inside the Tucker Recreation Center, Room 5
4898 LaVista Road
Tucker, GA 30084

770-702-9799
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Welcome to the great adventure that is Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers and mentors like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

We know you’re busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick Reference Guide to Volunteer Essentials is designed to give you just what you need to know now as you plan your first troop meeting.

The rest of Volunteer Essentials is a reference for you to use as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you’ll find your answer. Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering: it’s here when you need it, but there’s no need to read it all today.

Ready to get started? Let’s go!

My Personal Support Team

Along your adventure in Girl Scouting, you will come into contact with many people who can lend a hand. When you have questions or concerns about training, policies and procedures or event planning, your Service Unit Team is there to help and point you in the right direction. Your Service Unit Co-Director conducts your monthly service unit meetings and is your link to the other troops in your area. She can give you information on getting your troop started, fundraising, events and other important information. Please fill out the following and keep it updated.

My Service Unit Name is ____________________________________________
Service Unit (SU)

My Troop Number is ________________________________________________

My Service Unit Co-Director (SUD) is ________________________________

E-mail ____________________________ phone #

__________________________________________
# My Service Unit Meeting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**My Service Unit Product Program Chair**

________________________________________

E-mail____________________________________phone #

____________________________________________

**My Service Unit Product Program Chair**

________________________________________

E-mail____________________________________phone #

____________________________________________

**My Service Unit Annual Fund Chair**

________________________________________

E-mail____________________________________phone #

____________________________________________

**My Troop Consultant**

________________________________________

E-mail____________________________________phone #

____________________________________________
Troop Trainer and Leader Coach

E-mail

My Area Executive

E-mail
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>SUPPORT</th>
<th>OTHER INFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Care - Call Center</strong></td>
<td>Providing support and answers for all general questions that arrive at GSGATL by phone or email.</td>
<td><strong>Hours of Operation</strong>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Note that these are longer in peak months (Jan-Apr and Aug-Oct 9-8 pm) and are subject to change.</td>
<td>Monday – Friday ------------ 9am – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Saturday-------------------- 10am-4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong><a href="mailto:helpline@gsgatl.org">helpline@gsgatl.org</a></strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>770-702-9100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area Executive</strong></td>
<td>Providing in-person support for adults who work directly with other adult leaders so that each Service Unit provides quality experiences</td>
<td><strong>Specific Responsibilities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing support to Service Unit Teams in recruiting more girls, volunteers and community partners to Girl Scouts!</td>
<td>‣ Girl &amp; Adult Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting and working with <strong>Troop Development Coordinators</strong> <strong>School Service Unit Directors</strong></td>
<td>‣ Support the team in carrying out the Service Unit annual plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Provide quality Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Assist in developing a strong Service Unit Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Experience (Girl Program Specialist, STEM Specialist, Juliette Coordinator)</strong></td>
<td>Providing programmatic support to adults who work directly with girls and to girls through council events so that they experience the benefits of the GSLE.</td>
<td><strong>Specific Responsibilities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Host council-wide girl program events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Provide program and girl resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Provide support to girls earning high awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Create community Program Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There’s A Department For That!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Development Specialist (MDS)</th>
<th>Specific Responsibilities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Register@gsgatl.org">Register@gsgatl.org</a></td>
<td>✤ Assist with the completion of membership (new/renewal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Help volunteers and girls find the right role and troop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Oversee volunteer background checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Troop Bank Accounts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Specific Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:jverderose@gsgatl.org">jverderose@gsgatl.org</a></td>
<td>✤ Assure Training is accessible, current, using different modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Oversee and provide the council training program for First Aid, Program Aid, Safe Sitter, Globe Trotting, and Outdoor Training as well as enrichment classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Service Unit training programs, particularly that training provided by the Troop Trainer and Leader Coach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Development</th>
<th>Specific Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:AnnualFund@gsgatl.org">AnnualFund@gsgatl.org</a></td>
<td>✤ Ensuring all donations are correctly credited and acknowledged to families, troops, and Service Units.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✤ Providing information to troops and service units planning on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting and working with:

- Annual Fund Chairs
- Service Unit Directors

approved events to support Annual Fund

- Support for annual fund programs; Man Enough to be a Girl Scout, Adopt a Horse, Pave the Way, Matching Gifts & Volunteer Service Grants
Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low, the original G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ powerhouse. We are the largest leadership development organization for girls in the world and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 150 countries.

Our Mission and Vision

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We are the premier leadership development organization for girls, and experts on their growth and development.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” Note: This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be considerate and caring, courageous and strong and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
More than 2 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 92 countries around the world.

- 1.8 million girls 5 to 18 years of age
- 14,400 Girl Scouts overseas
- 800,000 adult volunteers
- Over 50 million alumnae
- 112 councils throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 7 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it’s interesting to know that:

- 50 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 73 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 57 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scouts are all about practicing everyday leadership, preparing girls to empower themselves, and promoting G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ experiences. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to take on leadership roles and learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.
The Girl Scout Difference: Girl Scouts offers the best leadership development experience for girls in the world—one that is designed with, by, and for girls. Girl Scouts unleashes the **G.I.R.L.** (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ potential in every girl, preparing her for a lifetime of leadership—from taking a nighttime hike under the stars to accepting a mission on the International Space Station; from lobbying the city council with her troop, to holding a seat in Congress; from running her own cookie business today to tackling cybersecurity tomorrow.

Our Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a **one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls**, with proven results. It is based on **time-tested methods and research-backed programming** that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

**Girl Scouts is proven to help girls thrive in five key ways as they:**

- Develop a strong sense of self
- Display positive values
- Seek challenges and learn from setbacks
- Form and maintain healthy relationships
- Identify and solve problems in the community.

The **inclusive, all-female environment** of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space where girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and just be themselves.

**Girl Scouts takes the potential of girls, combines it with robust skill-building programming, and adds caring adult mentors and strong female role models.**

**Our Program**
Everything a Girl Scout does centers around STEM, the outdoors, development of life skills, and entrepreneurship, and is designed to meet her where she is now and to grow along with her.

Whether she's building a robotic arm, coding her first app, building a shelter in the backcountry, or packing for her first hike, a Girl Scout has an exciting array of choices to suit her interests at every age.

**STEM**
Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more

**OUTDOORS**
Adventure and skill building, through camping experiences for all age levels, from the backyard to the backcountry

**LIFE SKILLS**
Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP** The Girl Scout Cookie Program—the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world—teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the most prestigious award in the world for girls—and the most difficult to earn—and it's only available to Girl Scouts.

It's a one-of-a-kind opportunity for girls to engage in a rigorous process that calls for leadership at the highest level, as they tackle issues they feel passionately about.

Gold Award Girl Scouts: Earn college Scholarships Demonstrate high educational and career outcomes
Connect Online


Get the inside scoop for everything Girl Scouts. Dive into the national and Council Web site to learn about exciting events and activities. Also, get active on the Council social media pages to collaborate with other volunteers, brag about what your troop is doing, and get tips and tricks.

◆ Council Web site: www.GirlScoutsATL.org
◆ Facebook: Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta
◆ Instagram: Girl Scouts ATL
DNA of a G.I.R.L.:
She's a go-getter, innovator, risk-taker, leader!

- Sets goals and sticks to them
- Works hard to bring positive change to the world
- Sees new solutions to old problems
- Speaks up for herself and others
- Takes pride in her abilities and successes
- Builds team spirit and brings people together
- Runs for leadership positions
- Handles conflict with compassion and clear communication
- Takes action on issues dear to her heart
- Listens to opinions and feelings different from her own
- Seeks new adventures and experiences
- Has an imagination that knows no limits
- Falls down and gets back up

POWERED BY GIRL SCOUTS
Who Can Join Girl Scouts- and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl— from kindergarten through 12th grade—can [join Girl Scouts](https://www.girlscouts.org). Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter’s group, or any responsible volunteer (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prime girls for the day when they'll lead—however and wherever they choose. What all members share, both girls and volunteers, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of $25. (Volunteers have the option to purchase a lifetime membership for $385.)

**Girls at Every Grade Level**

After girls join, they team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1)
- Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3)
- Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5)
- Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10)
- Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12)

In an effort to make the Troop Pathway to Girl Scouts fun for girls, easier for leaders, and still meet the goals set by Girl Scouts of the USA, Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta has established a minimum troop size for new troops by program level. Troops may begin to meet with 2 non-related volunteers and 10 girls. To organize a troop, you will need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Level</th>
<th>Recommended girls per troop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisy, grades K–1</td>
<td>10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownie, grades 2–3</td>
<td>10-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Junior, grades 4–5</td>
<td>10-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadette, grades 6–8</td>
<td>5-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Senior, grades 9–10</td>
<td>5-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Ambassador, grades 11–12</td>
<td>5-30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, every troop must have a minimum of two volunteers, at least one of whom is female, and who are neither related to each other nor live in the same household.

**Adding New Girls to your Troop**

Congratulations on your new troop! We’re excited you’re here. As you’ll find out, Girl Scouts is always more fun with friends!

Here are some quick tips on how you can recruit girls for your new troop:

- Hang posters at your girl’s school.
- Send home invitations or flyers with girls from school inviting them to join.
- Ask parents you may know in your girl’s classes, if they would be interested in joining.

Don’t forget to ensure your troop is listed on the opportunity catalog. This is the listing of all the available troops within a certain zip code. Interested new girls will only be able to find your troop and register for it unless it’s listed. For information on obtaining materials to recruit girls and volunteers please use this link. [Recruitment Materials Request](#)

Juliettes

*Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta uses the title Juliettes for a girl who joins in Girl Scouts individually, rather than as part of a specific pathway. As Juliettes, girl members:*

- Join without being part of a troop, camp, series, or other pathway (but may participate in any of them other than the troop pathway)
- Are full members of Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta and may participate in Council and national events
- Are part of a Service Unit (Council geographic area) and may participate in Service Unit events with a volunteer partner. Some events may require an additional service unit fee
- May earn badges, Journey leadership awards, and other official Girl Scout awards for their grade level, including the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Award
- May earn religious recognitions sponsored by their faith community
- May take part in the Council Girl Scout Cookie and Treats and Keeps programs
- May attend Council and Service Unit summer day camps and sleep away camps
For more information about being a Juliette member of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, contact juliettes@gsgatl.org.
Girl Scouts is the world’s largest nonprofit leadership development for girls, currently encompassing 1.8 million girl members and 800,000 volunteers! Three core structures support all our members: the national headquarters, your council, and your service unit support team.

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 300 employees. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). You’ll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers on the GSUSA website.

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the five WAGGGS world centers (see the “For Travel Volunteers” appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

Our Council - GSGATL

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to attract and retain members in a geographic area, provide ways for girls to participate in Girl Scouting, create an environment that reflects Girl Scout values and ideals, manage volunteers’ experience with Girl Scouting, and keep girls and volunteers as safe as possible. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent. You are part of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta.
(GSGATL), one of 112 Girl Scout Councils (geographic areas) That make up our national organization, Girl Scouts of the USA. **GSGATL serves over 36,000 girls and 17,000 Volunteer members in 34 counties, in the greater metropolitan Atlanta area, northwest Georgia and a portion of Polk County, Tennessee.** These counties are:

Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Lamar, Meriwether, Murray, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Polk (GA), Polk (TN), Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Upson, and Whitfield

**Our administrative headquarters, volunteer service center and the largest Badge & Sash Girl Scout Store** is located at 5601 North Allen Road in Mableton, Georgia; and Badge & Sash Stores are located in Sandy Springs, and Tucker. In addition, **Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta operates three unique camp properties in the Greater Atlanta area, which host a variety of day and overnight camping opportunities throughout the year.**

**Girl Scout Badge & Sash Stores**

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta operates three Council-owned and operated Girl Scout stores, located in Mableton, Sandy Springs and Tucker. Professional Girl Scout staff operate stores and are able to assist girls, parents and volunteers with almost all of your Girl Scout needs/questions. These stores stock all of the Girl Scout basics needed by girls and volunteers for the Girl Scout Program as well as some gift and fun items. All profits from store sales are directly applied to GSGATL’s girl program.

The following credit cards are accepted in our stores: American Express, MasterCard, Visa and Discover. Cash, checks, and money orders are also accepted.

- **Phone Orders** - Telephone orders are welcome and can be placed with the Mableton (770-702-9600) store using a credit card, during store hours.
- **Online Shopping** - GSGATL is excited to offer online shopping through our Web site. Parents and volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of this 24-hours 7-days a week opportunity to order. Please call Girl Scouts of USA at 800-221-6707 with any questions about your online order.
- **Store locations** - visit our web site for locations and hours of the store nearest you.

Please support our local stores and online shopping channel. Our stores strive to provide you with one-stop shopping for most of your Girl Scout needs! Remember, when you shop GSGATL whether in store or online, all proceeds return to local girl programs. We thank you in advance for supporting GSGATL Badge & Sash stores.
Refund Policy for Badge & Sash Girl Scout Stores. All GSGATL stores use the same refund policy: all merchandise that is in the current Girl Scout catalog can be exchanged or refunded within 60 days of purchase with the receipt, if tags and/or packing materials are still attached, and if the merchandise has not been used. No returns or exchanges on sale and clearance merchandise. Defective merchandise can be exchanged for the same merchandise within 60 days. Please call the store for more specific details regarding the refund policy.

Need Large Quantities?

When needing large quantities (more than 48 badges, fun patches, more than six of anything else such as gift items and clothing items except sashes and vests), please call and place your order at least three weeks in advance in order to ensure that we will have sufficient stock to meet your needs.

Licensing/Vendors

To protect the Girl Scout brand, volunteers should consult with the Girl Scout Badge & Sash Store manager for any merchandise with the Girl Scout name, logo or trademark. If you need customized Girl Scout merchandise for any event or activity (e.g. Day Camp, service unit event), the store manager will assist you with your needs. Girl Scouts of the USA requires that only licensed vendors use the Girl Scout name and logo for events with fees.

Girl Scout Trademark

Protecting the Girl Scout trademark is important to all of us and ultimately benefits everyone in Girl Scouting. As Councils work with vendors, your support and vigilance will help ensure that all of our Girl Scout communications—visual, print, flat or three dimensional—speak with one voice. The marks and insignia of the Girl Scouts are our cherished birthright to be displayed with pride and used to identify local Girl Scout Councils and their activities to the general public. Thus the responsibility for protection of the Girl Scouts of the USA trademark and service marks are twofold; it lies with both the national organization and local Councils.

To prevent the Girl Scout name and trademarks from being lost—that is, becoming a generic nonproprietary name—the National Board approved a clear trademark policy. Implementing this policy requires cooperation between GSUSA and Girl Scout Councils:

- To carefully monitor the correct use of the trademark and
- To keep using the names and marks as widely and as often as possible.

GSUSA’S Trademark Policy

Every product sold in connection with a Girl Scout GSGATL-sponsored product program shall bear the Girl Scout name and service mark, either on the product or on its packaging. Every item bearing any of the registered Girl Scouts names, logos, or marks purchased or developed for
resale, including items to be sold in GSGA0TL-sponsored product program, shall be purchased (1) from a GSUSA-licensed vendor, (2) from GSUSA, or (3) produced with prior approval from GSUSA when items are not readily available from a licensed supplier. Every item bearing the Girl Scout name and service mark, including items for resale or non-resale by Councils, shall conform to the Girl Scout Graphic Guidelines, published by GSUSA. (Items used for both resale and non-resale.)
**Annual Fund**

*When girls succeed – so does society. Together we can get her there!*

The Annual Fund is essential to carrying out the mission of Girl Scouts. Unlike the $25 annual membership fee which supports Girl Scouts on a national level, Annual Fund dollars stay local. These local funds make it possible to provide and expand leadership development experiences to girls in the Greater Atlanta area.

Your tax-deductible gift to Girl Scouts supports essential services like:

- Volunteer Background Checks to keep her safe
- Council Led Program Delivery to keep her competitive
- Maintenance for Camp Facilities and Equestrian Programs to keep her having fun
- Regional Meeting and Training Facilities to enhance her experience
- Scholarships for Gold Awardees to reward her hard work
- Financial Assistance for girls and volunteers so everyone can participate in Girl Scouts.

Parents, volunteers, and friends are asked to make a tax-deductible contribution of $35 each year. As a thank you for your gift, your daughter will receive a patch to wear proudly on her vest or sash. Your support of the Annual Fund is essential to our ability to deliver a life-changing program for our girls. It not only changes their world—but the whole world.

**DONATE TODAY to support your Girl Scout’s life-changing experience!**

**Giving Options**

- Online Donations can be made through our secure web site at donate.girlscoutsatl.org.
- Other Annual Fund programs include Adopt-a-Horse, Pave the Way/Engraved Brick, and the Amazon Wish List. These are fun ways to participate in the Annual Fund!
- Many employers offer Matching Gifts and Volunteer Service Grant opportunities which could double or even triple your support. Go to [www.doublethedonation.com/gsgatl](http://www.doublethedonation.com/gsgatl) or check with your Human Resources Department for details. Volunteer Service Grants (donations from companies based on employees’ volunteer hours to Girl Scouts) should be made to GSGATL. Fifty percent (up to $250) 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 email annualfund@gsgatl.org to make their designation request known.
- Ask a local small business owner in your community to make a donation to the Annual Fund. These donations count towards your Annual Fund goal.
Join the On My Honor Society or Second Century Circle to have a more sustainable role in helping Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta make girls a philanthropic priority. As always, you can make your donation with cash, check, credit card, or make a monthly pledge.

Inviting Families to Support the Annual Fund

The key to meeting your troop and service unit’s Annual Fund goal is to ask every parent for a $35 gift during registration. The most effective way to do this is to make one “ask” that includes the membership dues, Annual Fund, and any service unit or troop dues. For example, you might ask parents for $65, which includes the $25 membership dues, $35 Annual Fund gift, and $5 service unit dues. You can then deposit these funds into your troop checking account and allocate them as necessary when registering the girls, mail a check directly to Council, or donate online via our Web site. In MyGS, the Troops tab allows volunteers to renew troop memberships and make a troop Annual Fund donation with a single payment. When leaders make a troop donation to the Annual Fund through MyGS, please follow that with an email to annualfund@gsgatl.org to provide instructions on crediting individual families with their appropriate donation amounts, for tax purposes.

If you’re not re-registering the girls in your troop, ask each parent to make a $35 gift using the parent donation form available from your service unit’s Annual Fund Chair. Remember: in-person asks are much more effective than email!

Strive for 100 percent family participation! Every gift – no matter how big – makes a difference in the lives of our girls. If a family says they are unable to afford a $35 contribution, share that you are striving for 100 percent participation and ask for an alternative amount, such as $10.

Questions? Visit our website at donate.girlscoutsatl.org or contact the Annual Fund Manager by emailing annualfund@gsgatl.org.

Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, called a service unit. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team will guide and assist you in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the National Program Portfolio (National Leadership Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting), or selling Girl Scout cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.

The goal of the service unit is to provide additional program opportunities for the girls it serves as well as enrichment and meeting opportunities for its leaders and volunteers. Most service units are led by a group of trained volunteers, known as the service unit team, which
oversees activities within the geographical area. The service unit team works together to recruit, retain, and support girls and volunteers within the service unit. The team is prepared to provide you with assistance in managing the activities of girls as well as the opportunity to attend monthly meetings with other troop co-leaders and volunteers. These volunteers should always be the first people you contact when you are in need of assistance. While your service unit is one of the first places to go, volunteers and staff can be found everywhere to help you find your way.

**LARC, the Customer Care Center, and Other Resources**

Whether you are looking for online courses to help you in your volunteer role, or tips and tricks for meetings and outings, our online Learning and Resource Center (LARC) has plenty of information to help you work with girls. Online resources are available 24/7, any place or time you have internet access. Login today on your laptop, phone, or tablet at [https://training.gsgatl.org](https://training.gsgatl.org).

When you need some one-on-one Girl Scout support or advice and aren’t sure who to call – call Customer Care! A Customer Care Specialist will either answer your questions directly, or refer you to a resource or the staff member who can provide the assistance you need. Our team can’t replace training, service unit meetings, your service unit team or the Web site, but we are available for tips, guidance, and those times when you aren’t sure who to call first.

- **Hours:** August through April: Monday through Friday, 9 am to 8pm; Saturday 10am to 4pm
  - **May:** Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm; Saturday 10am to 4pm
  - **June and July:** Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm
- **Call** 1-800-771-1139 toll-free or 770-702-9100), or email Helpline@gsgatl.org. After hours, leave a message and you will be contacted the next business day.

**Girl Scout Program Evaluations**

To help measure the quality and impact of our programs and discover areas for improvement, you and your girls may be asked periodically to respond to surveys, participate in discussion groups, or serve on special committees. Our members are our greatest resource and your honest opinions help us grow stronger year by year. GSGATL conducts research and evaluation in many areas including:

- Annual Outcomes Survey of a random sample of girls, parents and troop co-leaders to measure the ways we are helping girls Discover, Connect and Take Action
  - Customer-Service Evaluations and Evaluations of programs and events including
troop camping,
summer day camp sleep away camp, and day events or workshops
Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

The Girl Scout experience is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls Discover themselves and what they’re passionate about, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively.

At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. To guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these three simple tips:

1. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it’s important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one. You can find summaries of all of the Journeys in the Volunteer Tool Kit.

2. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls’ book and an adult guide. Read the girls’ book, just to get an overview of the Journey’s theme and content.

3. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don’t have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sessions. Flexibility is an important part of the program!

**Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun as they grow their confidence and leadership skills. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

*Throughout your own Journey – and even before – volunteers and staff members of GSGATL are here to offer support, learning opportunities and advice. Never hesitate to contact them.*

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit your council’s website home page [https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/](https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/)
Planning a Journey in a Girl-Led Environment

Planning your time with the girls is key to a successful Girl Scout experience. You should consider the following questions and begin to map out your Girl Scout year:

- How many times each month will you meet? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? Field trips? Other activities? For specific ideas on how to incorporate badges, trips, and other Girl Scout traditions into a Journey, check out the online Journey maps for the grade level of the girls you're partnering with. Our Journey maps for each grade level can help you with specific ideas to incorporate badges, trips, and other Girl Scout traditions into a Journey. The Badge explorer will also help you see the broad range of topics for badge work.

If your group will be meeting for less than a year (such as at a resident camp), you’ll be able to adjust the calendar to suit your needs. In the same way, if you’re planning a multi-year event (such as a travel excursion), add one or two more years to the framework.

After you’ve drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or create the online calendar together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, and older girls will require much less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you’ve done, let them take the reins. (Journeys for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their Journey.) Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your calendar and just fill in a few ideas here and there, which will clue you in to their interests.

As your group starts its Journey/badge, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the Journey’s theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they’re most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their Journey/badge.

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a comprehensive digital tool accessible via the web on your home computers, smartphones, and tablets to help you have a fun and successful year with your Troop!

The VTK Features:
● The option for Troop leaders to create a custom year plan or select from three pre-populated year plan options for all program levels and multi-level troops. The ability to set meeting dates, times, locations and activities for the entire Troop year.
● Customize your meeting plans with girls’ input to keep it girl-led!
● Meeting aids and handouts to make it easy for you to help girls earn badges and awards.
● Share the Troop’s calendar, keep attendance, track badges earned by each girl, and communicate directly with parents/caregivers.

Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you’ll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another. The VTK has an introduction session for each level that can help you plan this first meeting.

Icebreaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you’re digging into a Journey right away, you’ll be all set. You can also search the Internet for “icebreakers for kids” to find more ideas. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta offers a number of resources for all program levels in our Learning and Resource Center (LARC).

If you already know which Journey or badge the girls want to do, you’ll find it useful to accomplish some of the following during this meeting. (Note that all these points are detailed in the adult guide for each Journey or the instructions for the badge on the VTK). If your girls haven’t chosen a Journey or badge yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the Journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the group would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting if you run out of time.

1. **Introduce the Journey/badge, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey’s adult guide offers ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey’s theme and the Three Keys to Leadership.

2. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey/badge.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the Journey/badge? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they’re passionate about, what they’ve always wanted to do, and how they would
spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Remind the girls they can do activities inside or outside. Build off the ideas shared but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.

3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:

- Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
- Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
- Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
- Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
- Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
- If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
- Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

**Using Safety Activity Checkpoints**

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity under volunteer training and resources. You can find these on your council’s website and on LARC, located on the GSGATL website.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished. In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:
All activities are girl-led. Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.

Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively. Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.

Girls learn by doing. If research or special equipment is needed, they’ll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with Council by e-mailing riskmanagement@gsgatl.org before making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written GSGATL pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely. For age restrictions, check the Safety Activity Checkpoint for the activity. You can request written approval from the Council by completing and submitting the Travel Approval Form. Warning: When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include, but are not limited to: bungee jumping, flying in small private planes, parasailing, riding all-terrain vehicles, riding motorized personal watercraft, such as jet skis and wave runners, skydiving, stunt skiing, outdoor trampolining, paint ball tagging and zorbing. GSGATL does not approve participation in any of the above listed activities.

An additional note: Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls’ parents/guardians; see Chapter 4: Engaging Girls at all Grade Levels for more information.

What may seem benign to one person could be a sensitive issue for another, so when you or the girls wish to participate in discussion or activities that could be considered sensitive or controversial (health or education in human sexuality, advocacy projects, work with religious groups, or anything that could yield a political/social debate), put the topic on hold until you’ve spoken with parents, received guidance from GSGATL, and obtained written parental permission on forms and document available from GSGATL. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls are to do when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl and keep them on hand in case a problem arises.
For non-Girl Scout sponsored activities, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow GSGATL’s guidelines for obtaining written permission written parental permission (See Chapter 4: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels, for more information).

### Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout troops are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. The following group sizes are recommended:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 10–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors: 10–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5–30 girls

Girl Scouts’ volunteer-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils 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 volunteer has to respond to an emergency, a second volunteer is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two</strong> unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Girl Scout Seniors
(grades 9–10)  
| 30 | 15 | 16 | 8 |

Girl Scout Ambassadors
(grades 11–12)  
| 30 | 15 | 20 | 10 |

Note: If you have a mixed-grade of girls the ratio is based on the youngest member of the troop.

Here are some examples: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three volunteers, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. As indicated on the chart, two volunteers are required for 12 Daisies and one more volunteer for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three volunteers. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated volunteers, at least one of whom is female (because, on the chart, two volunteers can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the volunteer-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

**Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines**

Every volunteer in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your Council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

2. **Arrange for proper volunteer supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Volunteers must be at
least 18 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. One lead volunteer in every group must be female. For events, travel, and camping trips, two approved, unrelated female volunteers who do not live in the same household must be present at all times.

3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, or a topic is discussed that could be considered sensitive, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow GSGATL guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting in Procedure 21A pages 51-54.

5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/volunteers, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls’ families. Refer to Approaching Activities on page 120 for more information.

6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved volunteer over the age of 21 and a registered member, have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and always wears her seat belt and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats. Approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household.

7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your Council for group marksmanship activities.

9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socio-economic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs
of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group Web sites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other Council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product programs, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product programs and efforts.
Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. With your help, girls will be able to identify issues they care about and work with one another to resolve them. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can work together, and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. Have no doubt: You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to help girls succeed, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you’ll be embarking on with the girls—whether you’re volunteering at a camp, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You’ll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two volunteers must always be present when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and not related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the volunteer-to-girl ratios in the Quick-Reference Guide and the “Safety-Wise” chapter of this handbook.

In More than ‘Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

“Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.” (2014, p.27)
Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Following the Girl Scout Safety Guidelines beginning on page 27.
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover Girl Scout Leadership, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you’ll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls’ interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls’ parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Ensuring all participants become registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA by paying annual membership dues using MyGS, a web-based online registration system hosted by GSUSA
- Processing and completing registration forms and documents and other paperwork, such as Membership Registration Forms, permission slips, event applications, and troop financial reports to be shared with parents/guardians
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

"Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” Note: This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be honest and fair,
friendy and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,

and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
Your Volunteer Support Team

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, GSGATL council staff, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide of each Journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating volunteers with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Building girls outdoor skills and experiences
- Managing group records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills, and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, if necessary
- Whether, when, where, and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers. Volunteers who interact directly with girls or who handle troop/group funds must be at least 18 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be an approved volunteer with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years.
Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information to successfully manage your group of girls and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more. GSGATL offers a variety of options, from online learning modules to face-to-face learning opportunities that allow for immediate feedback on the skills learned and knowledge gained. You also have resources—like this Volunteer Essentials handbook and the Journey volunteer guides—to use as reference materials. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time.

Learn about Girl Scouts Online

There’s a good chance you’ve already logged on to watch Girl Scouting 101 or Volunteering for Girl Scout Series and Events, our self-paced, online orientations to Girl Scouting. Those online sessions and Volunteer Essentials are designed to give you all of the information you need to start working with girls. They’re always available; think of them as references you can use whenever you need them.

You can find these resources and much more in Girl Scouts ATL’s online Learning and Resource Center (LARC). Our Training department and team of volunteer facilitators work together to provide opportunities that are convenient and practical, whether you prefer to learn online or in a group setting. Online courses are available on the go wherever you have an internet connection, and in-person classes are a great way to share ideas with volunteers in your area. The wide variety of in-person and online learning we provide not only helps you work more effectively with Girl Scouts, but can also introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life, relationships, and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous, and character-driven young women. And that’s the greatest reward of all! New courses and resources are added year-round. Log in to LARC to see what’s new!

Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We’re calling on all members of society to help girls
reach their full potential, and you’ve answered that call. So, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Just as you’ll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you’ll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council support team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? Take a trip? Work with girls at camp? Work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? Share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Great volunteer leadership makes Girl Scouting possible. GSGATL believes every volunteer should be recognized for his or her contributions to building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. GSGATL’s volunteer recognition program is designed to offer formal and informal recognition. Formal recognition is for significant service and for completing the relevant requirements which can be found in Volunteer Recognition At A Glance on the GSGATL Web site.

GSGATL’s Council Recognition Committee (CRC) review and submits nominations for board confirmation from the Board of Directors for awards that include criteria specified by GSUSA Volunteers receiving Board-approved awards and recognition for 30 or more years of membership are recognized annually at a GSGATL-sponsored event.

GSGATL encourages Service Unit CO-Directors and service unit teams to recognize volunteer accomplishments at each service unit meeting and within the community. Each service unit is encouraged to appoint a Service Unit Recognitions Chair to promote and support the volunteer recognition process.
**Volunteer Appreciation Week**

Volunteer Appreciation Week is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leader’s Day (April 22).

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrate Volunteers Make a Difference Week in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.
Chapter 2: 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 Girl Scouts of the USA's (GSUSA) emphasis on pluralism, reaffirms its policy to ensure fair and equal 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.

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 Web site. Each operational volunteer (i.e., serving in a leadership capacity) will receive notice of these policies and procedures to help her or him 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 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 her or his gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the member need not change his or her official records. We strongly recommend that volunteers privately ask transgender or gender nonconforming girls 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 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.

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 Co-Leader 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 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 (Office of Foreign Assets Control)* 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

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 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-information-center**

**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.

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 Volunteer Support Manager and/or the Director of Risk Management 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 Volunteer Support Specialist at GSGATL if they become aware of a situation involving one of the above bulleted items. The Volunteer Support Specialist should then notify the Volunteer Support Manager. The Volunteer Support Manager should consult the Senior Director of Volunteer Support. After reviewing the facts and consulting with Risk Management Department, the Senior Director of Volunteer Support 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

8. 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.

9. 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 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) Volunteer Support Specialist and/or Volunteer Support Manager; and
   d) Senior Director of Volunteer Support

   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 situation report filed

15. A situation 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 Situation Report 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 Situation 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 Volunteer Support 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 Web site, 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 time-frames 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 770-702-9167.
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 (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 Volunteer Support Specialist, 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 & Volunteer 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.
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.

hen 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. Harassment

20A. 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, 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.

20A. 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 Volunteer Support Specialist, 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.

21. 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.

21A. 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.

21A. 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 DFCS 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 under Forms. 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 situations between unrelated children. Volunteers can call the Child Help National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (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.
22. Sex Offenders

22A. 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.

22A. 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.

23. 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.
23A. 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.

23A. Procedure
1:________________________________________________________________________

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

23A. Procedure 2:

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

23B. 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.

24. Contracts and Agreements

24A. 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 in this document, 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.

24A. 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 Checkpoints.

25. Debt Collection

25A. 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.

26. Legal Action Against GSGATL

26A. 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.

27. Troop and Service Unit Treasury

27A. 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.

27A. Procedure 1:

Troops must submit finance reports to troop parents at least twice yearly, to the service unit
annually, 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. 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.

27A 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.

27A. 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.

28. Fees and Dues

28A. Policy:

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

28A. Procedure:

Girls and parents together decide upon the amount and frequency of dues. Dues typically range
from $.50 to $2 per meeting.

28B. 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.

28B. Procedure:

The 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.

28C. Policy:

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

28C. Procedure:

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

29. Money-Earning for Troops and Service Units

29A. 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 sale and must be in keeping with the principles for which the organization stands, as defined in this manual.

29A. Procedures:

1. Troops must participate annually in both GSGATL product programs and 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.

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 section 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 Money-Earning Application, along with the latest copy of the service unit's bank statement to their Volunteer Support Specialist at least two weeks prior to the activity for approval of the activity. The service unit must also submit a report on the results of the activity to their Volunteer Support Specialist within two weeks of the completion of the activity.
   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 Fund Manager at 770.702.9227 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 as follows.
   a. The volunteer event director must take the training specified in LARC, 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 Application, and other supporting documents, to the Council Risk Management department (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” beginning on page 161 of this handbook, for more information.
   d. The final Event Finance Report must be submitted to the Council 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.
30. 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.

30A. 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.

30A. Procedure

Girl Scouts seeking additional funding (including youth service grants) for Take Action projects must contact the GSGATL Girl Experience Department for guidance.

30B. 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.

30B. Procedure

Contact the GSGATL Girl Experience department for more information.

30C. Policy

Take Action projects may not generate a profit.

30C. 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.

Contact the GSGATL Volunteer Support department for more information.

30D. 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.

30D. Procedure

Contact the GSGATL Girl Experience Department for guidance.

31. Fundraising for GSGATL’s Annual Fund

31A. 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.

31A. 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 with questions or for assistance.

3. Service units cannot solicit gifts or grants over $250 without prior approval from GSGATL. Contact the Fund Development Department to discuss desired approvals.
4. Gifts of $250 or more to troops or service units must be sent to GSGATL to provide an IRS-required acknowledgement/receipt letter. GSGATL will send the acknowledgement letter to the donor. Upon written request or email notification to Annual Fund (annualfund@gsgatl.org), fifty percent (up to $250 maximum) of an awarded gift may be directed back to the troop or service unit.

5. Troops should not solicit companies, individuals or organizations on the GSGATL “do not solicit” list without prior approval from GSGATL. Contact the Fund Development Department for the most up-to-date list.

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 to make their designation request known.

32. Social Media

32A. 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/for-volunteers/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.

32A. Procedure:

Notify your Volunteer Support Specialist and Director of Risk Management 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 Volunteer Support Specialist 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.
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 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.

33. 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.
33A. 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.

33A. 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.

33B. 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.

33B. 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.

34. 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.

34A. 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 Volunteer Support Managers to consider the proposed transaction or arrangement.

34A. Procedures:

The service unit leadership should contact the Volunteer Support Manager, who shall determine if a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest is deemed to exist, the Volunteer Support Manager, 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 Volunteer Support Manager.

35. Private Inurement/Private Benefit

35A. 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.

35B. 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.

35B. 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.

36. Restrooms and Changing Facilities

36A. 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.

37 Other Scouting Organizations

37A. 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.

37B. 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.

37A. 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.
Chapter 3: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

Through our national curriculum, girls learn about themselves and their values, and stretch to seek and meet challenges beyond what they might in other settings. They also learn to connect with friends, family, and community to create positive relationships and band together on issues of importance to them. Girls are challenged to look and think critically at the world around them and consider how they can best address significant problems they are passionate about solving. When girls participate in the GSLE, they experience 5 measurable leadership benefits or “outcomes” – ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities, and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. When girls—as the Girl Scout Law states—are “honest and fair,” when they “use resources
wisely,” and know how to be “courageous and strong,” they can be more successful in everything they do. It may start in school and on sports teams, but research shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives.

Girl Scouting has a practical approach to helping girls become leaders:

- When girls lead in their own lives, they **Discover** their values, skills, and the world around them. This helps them grow more confident and use their abilities to help themselves and others.
- When girls lead in their communities, they **Connect** with other people in a multicultural world. This helps them care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- When girls lead in the world, they **Take Action** to make the world a better place. They learn how to identify problems in their community and create solutions to fix them.

**Girl Scouts Take Action to Change the World**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls of all ages can make the world a better place. Watch the videos below to see Girl Scouts in action!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Troop Inspires a School to Save Water</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where the Sidewalk Ends</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juniors Help Historic Building Save Energy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words: **Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership.** And everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these three “keys” to Leadership.

**Fun with Purpose**

Girl Scouting isn’t just about what we do; it’s also about how we do it. Girls will give almost any activity a try, as long as the volunteers guiding them take the right approach. Girl Scout activities ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:
◆ **Girl led:** Girls of every grade level shape their experience by asking questions, sharing ideas, and using their imaginations. As a leader, allow girls to take an active role in making decisions and choosing activities. Of course, you’ll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. But when girls play a critical role as decision makers in the planning and implementation of their activities, they are more engaged and active learners. Engagement is one of the most powerful determinants of success and well-being for people of any age.

◆ **Learning by doing:** This means hands-on learning that engages girls in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection. When girls actively participate in meaningful activities and later reflect on them, they obtain a deeper understanding of concepts and are more likely to master the skills the activities require. So, make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn’t have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.

◆ **Cooperative learning:** Girls learn to share knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as they work together on a common goal. Great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents and ideas to projects, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team, and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.

We call these three methods “processes.” You might be wondering how to put these processes into action with the girls in your group. These steps should help you get started:

1. After you help girls choose a National Leadership Journey (there’s more information about those [later in this chapter](#)), make sure you get the adult guide that accompanies the Journey. The 3 Girl Scout Processes are already built into the activities. When you do the activities as written, you are already using the processes. As you read through that guide, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you’ll probably find that they become second nature when you’re with girls.

2. If you haven’t already, watch [Girl Scouting 101](#), our online introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts. (Contact your council for the password.) If you’ve already watched Girl Scouting 101, you may want to review its “What Girl Scouts Do” section to brush up on the processes.

3. Want more detail about the processes? Watch “Having Fun with Purpose: The 3 Processes of Girl Scouting” to see the processes in action.
One last tip about using the processes: Girls’ time in Girl Scouting isn’t a to-do list, so please don’t ever feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests and excites girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don’t have to come out perfectly, and girls don’t have to fill their vests and sashes with badges: what matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own.

**Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations**

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Boy Scout program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. Local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past will now expose our membership enrollment and brand to risks. This may mean that the relationship between a council and its BSA counterpart should fundamentally change.

**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 we take care that the activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and girl led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scouts. Participation of Girl Scouts in activities with other scouting organizations create risks to Girl Scouts. Confusion is in the marketplace regarding the relationship between Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts by the expansion of Boy Scouts to include girls in their programs. Girl Scout participation in Boy Scout activities will increase that confusion and will contribute to the misperception that Girl Scouts has merged, or is somehow interchangeable, with Boy Scouts.

**Brand:**

Associating with organizations who do not have a similar brand history, program portfolio, and track record for safety dilutes and tarnishes our brand and allows Boy Scouts to leverage the reputation of Girl Scouts for their own purposes.
5 Ways Girl Scouts Builds Girl Leaders

Girl Scouts’ mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Since 1912, girls have explored new fields of knowledge, learned valuable skills, and developed strong core values through Girl Scouts. Today Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to help girls develop important leadership skills they need to become successful adults.

At Girl Scouts, guided by supportive adults and peers, girls develop their leadership potential through age-appropriate activities that enable them to discover their values, skills, and the world around them; connect with others in a multicultural environment; and take action to make a difference in their world. These activities are designed to be girl led, cooperative, and hands-on—processes that create high-quality experiences conducive to learning.

When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:

**STRONG SENSE OF SELF**
Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.

**POSITIVE VALUES**
Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.

**CHALLENGE SEEKING**
Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**
Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.

**COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING**
Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.
Why do these five outcomes matter?

When girls exhibit these attitudes and skills, they become responsible, productive, caring, and engaged citizens. But don’t take our word for it! Studies show that the development of attitudes, behaviors, and skills like confidence, conflict resolution, and problem solving are critical to well-being and rival academic and technical skills in their capacity to predict long-term positive life outcomes.¹

Youth who develop these five outcomes...

Are happier, healthier, and less likely to engage in problem behaviors or be victimized. Youth who develop competencies such as perseverance, positive self-esteem, and sociability have lower rates of obesity, depression, and aggression, and show greater life satisfaction and well-being than those who do not develop such attributes/skills.²

Achieve more academically and feel more engaged in school. Youth who participate in programs that promote the attributes and skills linked with our five outcomes show stronger academic performance and school engagement compared to those who do not.³ When students are more self-aware and confident about their learning capabilities, they try harder and persist in the face of challenges.

Become strong job applicants. While employers want new hires to have technical knowledge related to a given job, those skills are not nearly as important as good teamwork, decision-making, and communication skills.⁴ Yet many employers around the world report that job candidates lack these attributes.⁵

Become successful, well-adjusted adults. Kindergarteners who learn how to share, cooperate with others, and be helpful are more likely to have a college degree and a job 20 years later than youth who lack these social skills.⁶ They are also less likely to have substance-abuse problems and run-ins with the law.

Join Girl Scouts today! girlscouts.org

Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors

Findings from the 2014 More than S'mores Report

1. Girls really enjoy outdoor activities in Girl Scouts.
3. Girl Scouts who get outdoors are twice as likely to connect with and care for the environment than non-Girl Scouts.
4. Girls of color and girls in lower socioeconomic backgrounds report even stronger benefits from outdoor experiences.

“It was my first time on the water, in a lake. I was scared at first but when I started to paddle I got the hang of it. I really loved it.”

10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts...

71% of girls tried an outdoor activity for the first time.
71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.
48% of girls helped other girls do an outdoor activity.
29% of girls overcame a fear of an outdoor activity.

More than S'mores

girlscouts.org/join

*More Than S'mores, a 2014 study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, talked to nearly 3,000 Girl Scouts in fourth through eighth grade.
The National Program Portfolio

You’ll use several books, awards, and online resources to bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life with girls. We strongly recommend that each girl has her own books from the National Program Portfolio. These books—the Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting—and national program awards—like badges and pins—are an important part of how Girl Scouting helps girls experience the power of millions of girls changing the world together.

As you use the National Program Portfolio with girls, keep in mind that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) creates materials to serve our vast and diverse community of girls. To help bring topics off the page and into life, we sometimes provide girls and volunteers with suggestions about what people across the country and around the world are doing. We also sometimes make suggestions about movies, books, music, websites, and more that might spark girls’ interests.

At GSUSA, we know that not every example or suggestion we provide will work for every girl, family, volunteer, or community. In partnership with those who assist you with your Girl Scout group—including parents, faith groups, schools, and community organizations—we trust you to choose real-life topic experts from your community as well as movies, books, music, websites, and other opportunities that are most appropriate for the girls in your area to enrich their Girl Scout activities.

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls’ lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information. Your council can recommend local organizations or resources that are best suited to do so.

Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn’t include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will bring to your council’s attention any content that concerns you.

National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting’s Ladder of Leadership as they do so.
In July 2018, we’re rolling out more new Journeys in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). These new Journeys are adding on to the choices that girls and volunteers already have. **Every Journey (whether new or old) is topic-specific, includes hands-on activities, and incorporates Discover, Connect and a Take Action project.** Depending upon the content, some Journeys are shorter, and some are longer, but they have been made simpler to use and easier to deliver.

**As of July 2018, the following Journeys are available for girls to choose from. They are:**

- It’s Your Planet—Love It!
- It’s Your Story—Tell It!
- It’s Your World—Change It!
- Outdoor
- Think Like an Engineer
- Think Like a Programmer
- Think Like a Citizen Scientist

**It’s Your World—Change It!**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie and Junior

**It’s Your Planet—Love It:**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior **It’s Your Story—Tell It!**

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior
Outdoor:

- Available on the VTK for Brownie and Junior as nine sessions in total, which includes three outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available on VTK for Daisies as seven sessions in total, which includes two outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available for Multi-level for Daisies-Juniors on the VTK.
- Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-level will be available for Back to Troop as PDFs on the VTK.

Think Like an Engineer:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Think Like a Programmer:

Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Think Like a Citizen Scientist:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit on your council's website home page [https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/](https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/).
The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they’ve chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she’s learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don’t expect you to be an expert in the badge topics; just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

**While you’re having fun, keep in mind:** Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl’s experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns. If you are working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they also earn Petals and Leaves. There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls’ time as Girl Scouts and have fun while you are doing it! A few are outlined below.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program

In addition to giving girls an opportunity to earn money to fund their Girl Scouting goals, taking part in the *Girl Scout Cookie Program* teaches girls five important skills that serve them throughout their lives: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. For more on everything involved in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, flip to “Chapter 6: Managing Group Finances on page 132.” of this handbook. At each program level, from Daisy through Ambassador, girls may earn a Cookie Activity Pin each year; each level also has Cookie Business and Financial Literacy badges (Leaves, for Girl Scout Daisies.)
Outdoor adventures

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in whole new environment. For more information, visit www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping. To learn more about camping and other outdoor adventures in the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta Council, visit the Outdoor page on www.girlscoutsatl.org.

And More!

*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* also has the requirements for the Safety Award at each program level, the Bridging Award at each level, and requirements for the Girl Scout Bronze (Junior), Silver (Cadette), and Gold (Senior, Ambassador) awards.

Emblems and Patches

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the National Proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed).
- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they've attended. Since these patches and pins aren't tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl's sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at your council’s Girl Scout shop or by visiting the GSGATL Badge and Sash. There, you’ll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly where girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.
Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the GSLE. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (two Journeys for the Gold Award or a Silver Award and one Journey). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Girl Scouts has just introduced a web application that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements. Visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in your council are doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting's highest awards—information on the awards and guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available online.

A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the
requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First-Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First-Class Award, for a girl who was an "all-around" person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.

Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your Council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/basics and clicking on "Program Basics" on the left side of the screen. Councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area. At Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, explore:

- **Robotics** – If you are interested in finding out more about being on one of our Council-sponsored robotics teams, attend the Robotics Open House or contact gsprogram@gsgatl.org.
- **destinations** – destinations means travel! These are national and international trips for Girl Scouts ages 11-18. Girls learn about destinations online, then apply through GSUSA in November and find out if they were accepted for travel after the first of the year. For more information contact gsprogram@gsgatl.org.
- **Lime Green Giraffe** – this creative girl committee writes and produces our exciting Lime Green Giraffe online e-zine. For more information contact gsprogram@gsgatl.org.
- **Events** – places to go and things to learn and do! Checkout our online calendar of events and activities. Highlights include: STEM Expo, Cookie Rally, and Gold Award Ceremony.

Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and Leadership Journeys for more information on songs, outdoor activities, historical anecdotes, traditions, and ceremonies.
Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you’re encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day (celebrating Girl Scouts’ worldwide sisterhood as part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts).
- **Last weekend in February** – National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **October 31:** Founder’s Day (Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday).

### World Thinking Day: February 22

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the [World Thinking Day award](#), which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the [Juliette Low World Friendship Fund](#), which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.

### Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the, Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.
Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons. Here’s a brief list, in alphabetical order, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

Bridging ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that Fly-Up is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)

Closing ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.

Court of Awards is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.

Flag ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.

Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award) and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.

Girl Scouts’ Own is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.

Investiture welcomes new members, girls or volunteers, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.

Opening ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.

Pinning ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.

Rededication ceremonies are opportunities for girls and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. You’ll find tips for helping girls plan their ceremonies, ceremony ideas and sample ceremonies, online at:


Hosting a Girl-Led Event

If you’re working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

What sort of event do we have in mind?
Who is our intended audience?
Will it be outdoors?
Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
What’s our main topic or focus?
What’s our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
Where will the event take place?
Is there a charge for this venue?
Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
What sort of entertainment will we provide?
Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
How will we advertise the event?
What decorations will we use?
Will we give away any keepsakes?
Will we charge for the event?
Who will set up the event?
Who will clean up after the event?
How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the Leadership Journey adult guides!

When you are ready to start planning your event, be sure to review GSGATL guidelines in Hosting a Girl-Led Beyond the Troop Event. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta requires volunteer event planners/advisors to complete the online training in LARC for Planning Events Beyond the Troop, for events involving more than one troop. You should also fill out an application for a Beyond the Troop Event

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

**Girl Scout Sign**

The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign, raise the three middle fingers of the right-hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise).
Girls give the sign when they:

Say the Promise or Law.
Are welcomed into Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

**Girl Scout Handshake**

The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. Shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

**Quiet Sign**

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

**Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

**Songs**

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music. In fact, the first Girl Scout Song Book, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to [http://gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops/](http://gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops/). A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit the [GSUSA online shop](http://www.girlscouts.org).

**Uniforms**

Uniforms have been a Girl Scout tradition since 1912, where the first uniforms offered girls and volunteers freedom of movement and helped cover social and economic class differences. Today, uniforms are a symbol of membership, one that links Girl Scouts across the country and around the world. The official uniform for girls is a white shirt, khaki pants (or skirt) and the official grade level tunic, vest, or sash. Girls are expected to wear their uniform at ceremonies and whenever they are representing the Girl Scout Movement – at a parade,
for example. Occasionally, wearing the uniform will be a requirement for participating in a special event.

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; this includes items such as the official Daisy or Brownie beanie, shirt, skirt, leggings and so forth. Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors have an official neckerchief-style scarf to wear with their uniform, especially when they are at World Centers, Jamborees, or other events with Guides from other countries, who typically wear a neckerchief, scarf, or tie.
Girl Scout Daisy Tunic & Vest

- American Flag Patch
- Girl Scout Council Identification Set
- Troop Numerals
- Membership Stars and Discs
- Cookie Sale Activity Pin
- My Promise, My Faith Pins
- Safety Award Pin
- Petal and Promise Center Set
- Financial Literacy Leaves
- Daisy Insignia Tab
- World Trefoil Pin
- Girl Scout Daisy Membership Pin
- Journey Summit Award Pin
- Cookie Business Leaves
- Journey Award Badges
Girl Scout Brownie Uniform

- American Flag Patch
- Girl Scout Council Identification Set
- Troop Crest
- Troop Numerals
- Membership Stars and Discs
- Bridge to Girl Scout Brownie Award
- My Promise, My Faith Pins
- Cookie Sale Activity Pin
- Safety Award Pin
- Girl Scout Brownie Badges
- Brownie Insignia Tab
- World Trefoil Pin
- Girl Scout Brownie Membership Pin
- Journey Summit Award Pins
- Journey Award Badges

Place your first Journey awards at the bottom of your vest. As you earn additional Journey awards, work your way up.

If your Journey awards and badges don’t fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.
Girl Scout Junior Uniform

- American Flag Patch
- Girl Scout Council Identification Set
- Troop Crest
- Troop Numerals
- Membership Stars and Discs
- Bridge to Girl Scout Junior Award
- Junior Aide Award
- Brownie Wings
- My Promise, My Faith Pins
- Cookie Sale Activity Pin
- Safety Award Pin
- Girl Scout Junior Badges

- Junior Insignia Tab
- World Trefoil Pin
- Girl Scout Bronze Award Pin
- Girl Scout Membership Pin
- Membership Numeral Guard
- Journey Summit Award Pins
- Journey Award Badges

Place your first Journey awards at the bottom of your vest. As you earn additional Journey awards, work your way up.

If your Journey awards and badges don’t fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.

Place your Journey awards above your badges.
Girl Scout Cadette Uniform

American Flag Patch
Girl Scout Identification Set
Troop Crest
Troop Numerals
Membership Stars and Discs

Bridge to Girl Scout Cadette Award
Brownie Wings
Silver Torch Award Pin
My Promise, My Faith Pins
Cadette Program Aide Pin
Cadette Community Service Bar
Cadette Service to Girl Scouting Bar
Girl Scout Cadette Badges

Cadette Insignia Tab
World Trefoil Pin
Girl Scout Silver Award and Bronze Award Pins
Girl Scout Membership Pin
Membership Numeral Guard
Journey Summit Award Pins

Journey Award Badges
Cookie Sale Activity Pin
Safety Award Pin
Cadette Leadership in Action (LiA) Award Badges

If your awards and badges don’t fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.

Place your Journey awards above your badges.
Girl Scout Senior Uniform

- American Flag Patch
- Girl Scout Council Identification Set
- Troop Crest
- Troop Numerals
- Membership Stars and Discs
- 10 Year Award Pin
- Bridge to Girl Scout Senior Award
- Bridge to Girl Scout Cadette Award
- Brownie Wings
- Torch Awards
- Counselor in Training (CIT) and Volunteer in Training (VIT) Award Pins
- My Promise, My Faith Pins
- Senior Community Service Bar
- Senior Service to Girl Scouting Bar
- Girl Scout Senior Badges
- Girl Scout Cadette Badges
- Senior Insignia Tab
- World Trefoil Pin
- Girl Scout Gold Award, Silver Award and Bronze Award Pins
- Girl Scout Membership Pin
- Membership Numeral Guard
- Journey Summit Award Pins
- Senior Journey Award Pins and Badges
- Cadette Journey Award Badges
- Cookie Sale Activity Pin
- Safety Award Pin
- Cadette Leadership in Action (LiA) Award Badges

If your awards and badges don’t fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.
Girl Scout Ambassador Uniform

American Flag Patch
Girl Scout Council Identification Set
Troop Crest
Troop Numerals
Membership Stars and Discs
10 Year Award Pin
Bridge to Girl Scout Ambassador Award
Bridge to Girl Scout Senior Award
Bridge to Girl Scout Cadette Award
Brownie Wings
Torch Awards
Counselor in Training (CIT) I Award Pin
Counselor in Training (CIT) II Award Pin
Volunteer in Training (VIT) Award Pin
My Promise, My Faith Pins
Ambassador Community Service Bar
Ambassador Service to Girl Scouting Bar
Girl Scout Ambassador Badges
Girl Scout Senior Badges
Girl Scout Cadette Badges
Ambassador Insignia Tab
World Trefolli Pin
Girl Scout Gold Award, Silver Award and Bronze Award Pins
Girl Scout Traditional Membership Pin
Membership Numeral Guard
Journey Summit Award Pins
Ambassador Journey Award Pins and Badges
Senior Journey Award Pins and Badges
Cadette Journey Award Badges
Cookie Sale Activity Pin
Safety Award Pin
Cadette Leadership in Action (LIA) Award Badges

If your awards and badges don't fit on the front of your vest or sash, you can wear them on the back.
Volunteer Uniform

- Volunteer of Excellence Award Pin
- Adult Appreciation Pin
- Thanks Badge
- Thanks Badge II
- Honor Pin
- Lifetime Membership Pin
- Personalized ID Pin
- Girl Scout Gold Award
- Years of Service Pin
- Bridge to Adult Girl Scout Award
- Volunteer Service Award Pin
- Alumna Pin

- Volunteer Pin
- Adult Insignia Tab
- World Trefoil Pin
- Adult Position Pin
- Adult Position Pin Contemporary or Traditional
- Membership Numeral Guard
Chapter 4-Engaging Girls at all Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. You’ll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents, and girls: it may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier: a meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses or 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.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost:** The space should be free to use.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough to accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Agreements:** Be sure to submit any agreements or contracts to riskmanagement@gsgatl.org for review and signature.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also, be sure a first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
**Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won’t bother susceptible girls during meetings.

**Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started:

“I’m a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of ______ girls. We’re doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and ______. We’re all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We’d love to hold our meetings here because ______.”

**Girl Scout Group Size**

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow for development of individual girls. It is recommended that group sizes, when possible, are as follows:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 10-12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10-20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors 10-25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5-25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5-30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5-30 girls

A Girl Scout troop/group must have at minimum, four girls and two approved adult volunteers. Adults and girls registering in groups of less than four girls and /or two approved, unrelated adult volunteers at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to more accurately reflect their status and experience. Individual girls are still welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

**Understanding Healthy Development in Girls**

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So, take some time to understand the likes, needs, and abilities of girls at different ages.
As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You’ll also find these listed in the adult guide of each Leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind! Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

GSRI reports in *More than ‘Smores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking, or taking field trips in the outdoors made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological, and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges “require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate, and solve problems.” (2014, page. 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Daisies</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .</strong></td>
<td><strong>They’ll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.</td>
<td>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to move and dance.</td>
<td>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>You’ll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.</td>
<td>That having girls draw a picture of something they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are just beginning to write and spell, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they don’t always have the words for what they’re thinking or feeling.  

trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.  

Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.  

Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.  

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**Girl Scout Brownies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .</strong></th>
<th><strong>This means . . .</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy working in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.</td>
<td>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf’s adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.</td>
<td>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.</td>
<td>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.

Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!

## Girl Scout Juniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want to make decisions and express their opinions.</td>
<td>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.</td>
<td>Although it's okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concerned about equity and fairness.</td>
<td>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place, and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to think abstractly and critically and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.</td>
<td>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others' perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.</td>
<td>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Girl Scout Cadettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They’re also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Girl Scout Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.</td>
<td>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.</td>
<td>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and so on.</td>
<td>Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Girl Scout Ambassadors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.</td>
<td>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.</td>
<td>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.

Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.

Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.

Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.

Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.

Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure.” Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment, where confidentiality is respected, and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it’s the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

Girl-Adult Partnership

Girl Scouting is for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, so meetings are built around girls’ ideas. When you put the girls first, you’re helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of caring volunteers.

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group’s experiences. (See the “Girl Scouting as a
Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know that you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

You might try:

- Regular “circle times” (sharing circles) at your meetings to give girls a chance to talk about and role-play ways of showing acceptance and support
- Team-building games and activities, including the processing or reflection (very important!)
- Turn self-esteem activities around so they focus on the other person.
- Activities from the “Its’ Your Story-Tell It!” Journey series.

Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to see that the responsibilities, as well as the chances for feeling important, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves.
and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, do not spread your complaint around to others—that won’t help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. 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 and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about important things, including things that might not seem important to volunteers. Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:
Listen: Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.

Be honest: If you’re not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)

Be open to real issues: For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You’ll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don’t know, listen. Also seek help from your council if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.

Show respect: Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.

Offer options: Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.

Stay current: Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you’re interested in their world.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate, and empathize. Here is a breakdown of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

L = Listen: Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”

U = Understand: Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”

T = Tolerate: You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”

E = Empathize: Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”


Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

Think of yourself as a partner, and as a coach or mentor, as needed (not a “leader”).
Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
Ask what they think and what they want to do.
Encourage girls to speak their minds.
Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
Give everyone a voice in the group.
Treat girls like partners.
Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl’s safety).

Girl Scout Research Institute

It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but all girls.

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girls’ face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

According to Feeling Safe: What Girls Say, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics should be covered with their daughters.
Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. GSGATL provides Sensitive Issues Permission Forms which can be found on our Website.

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

You should know, GSUSA does not take a position or develop materials on issues relating to human sexuality, birth control, or abortion. We feel our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. We believe parents and guardians, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

Parents/Guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally-planned program offering that may be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance, (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar wit the content), what will be presented. Please email gsprogram@gsgatl.org to obtain written permission at least three weeks before the activity will take place.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/guardian or the Council, so she can get the expert assistance she needs. Your concern about a girl’s well-being and safety is taken seriously, and your council will guide you in addressing these concerns.

◆ Refer to the National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD) if you have questions or need advice.
◆ Share your concern with the girl’s family, if this is feasible.

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

◆ Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
◆ Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate
Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships
Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
Sleep disturbances
Increased secretiveness
Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.

**Georgia State Law: Reporting Child Abuse**

Under Georgia State Law, Girl Scout volunteers are Mandated Reporter – a person required by law to report child abuse. The law mandates reporting by any employee or volunteer at any kind of agency, business, nonprofit or other group that works with children. Anyone who violates the reporting mandate can be charged with a misdemeanor and face up to a year in jail and a $1,000 fine. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta has always considered its staff and volunteers as mandated reporters, because we recognize ourselves as a “child service organization.” This new law merely confirms it. If a girl tells you she is being abused, or if you suspect abuse or neglect, you must report it. Refer to Policy 20, 21. Child Abuse for more information.

What is considered child abuse or neglect? **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.
- Revised now to include “consensual” sex acts when such acts are between minors if either is less than 14 years old (effective July 1, 2016)

- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of volunteers
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones.

**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.

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**Working with Parents and Guardians**

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. Don’t feel nervous asking parents to assist in any aspect of the troop. Just because you’re the troop leader does not mean you have to be the cookie mom, the treasurer, the person planning the campouts, etc. Look to see what unique gifts and talents the girls’ parents have. Maybe a mom is really crafty, or a dad works in the finance department of a Fortune 500 company. Those two individuals can defiantly step up as troop volunteers in some capacity. Learn more below in the appendix about forming a troop committee, and always keep your eyes open for those who can assist.

You all almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out www.girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters and for them to think about how they can also become involved in the troop.

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**Advocating for Girls**

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils, at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

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**Using “I” Statements**

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the *aMAZE Journey*
for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

“Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
“You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

“I’d like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”
“I’d really appreciate your help with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a Parent or Guardian . . .</th>
<th>You Can Say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,</td>
<td>“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,</td>
<td>“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop, and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”</td>
<td>“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,</td>
<td>“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership Journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).

Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences.

Determined when product program (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know.

Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.

Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the volunteer guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on).

Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, Permission for Girl Scout Activity for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by GSGATL), and GSUSA registration forms.

Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey’s Friends and Family pages will come in handy here).

Registering Girls and Adults in Girl Scouting

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently $25) are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the
dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and is not refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

You're free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in.
- If the girls’ parents/guardians haven’t already registered them online, you’ll want to email or hand out information, so they can do so. If your council uses paper registration forms, you can pass them out at this time.
- Check with your council for its specific registration guidelines. You may also want to email or hand out a brief information sheet before or at this meeting.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them.
- Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you’re new to Girl Scouting, don’t worry—just let everyone know you’ll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
  - All the fun girls are going to have!
  - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
  - That a parent/guardian permission is used for activities outside the group’s normal meeting time and the importance of completing and returning it.
  - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
- The **Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law**
- The Girl Scout program, especially what the **GSLE** is and what the program does for their daughters
- When **Girl Scout cookies** (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product program teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
- The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl's book for a Journey)
- The availability of **financial assistance** how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product programs generate funds for the group treasury

That families are encouraged to make a donation to Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta’s Annual Fund, for the benefit of their daughter and all the girls we serve in the greater Atlanta area!

- That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)

If your council doesn’t offer online registration and you’ve distributed paper registration forms, collect them.

Remind the group of the next meeting (if you’ll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you’re diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.

After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

**Online Registration with MyGS**

**MyGS** is a web-based system hosted by GSUSA that allows for members to purchase their GSUSA membership online. MyGS allows for fast, convenient, and real-time collection of member information and payment of registration dues. A member can log into the MyGS site at any time during the year to update their personal information, including lifetime members. New members will begin the registration process directly from the GSGATL Web site starting at the Girls Join button and volunteers from the Volunteer button. (Volunteers not seeking to volunteer, but join the organization, still use the Volunteer button for new membership purchases.)
MyGS Support

Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta has trained staff who are extremely knowledgeable when it comes to all things in the MyGS community. Feel free to contact them with your questions. Visit the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta Web site at www.girlscoutsatl.org and look for MyGS at the top of the page.

- Email: helpline@gsgatl.org
- Phone: 1-800-771-1139 or 770-702-9100
- Available Monday – Friday, 9 am – 8 pm EST, Saturdays 10 am – 4pm

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You’re accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community.
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition.
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls.
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families.
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer.
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person’s life.

A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Hispanic population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girls Scouts has translated many of its publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members’ needs and produce resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and formats.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. As
you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don't rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that's one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person’s abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

It’s important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement. In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say . . .</th>
<th>Instead of . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She has a learning disability.</td>
<td>She is learning disabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a developmental delay.</td>
<td>She is mentally retarded; she is slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair.</td>
<td>She is wheelchair-bound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips: When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent/guardian or friend. It’s okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.

- Leaning on a girl's wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to the interpreter.
• When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
• When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, “Hi, it’s Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left.”

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.
In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here’s what you need to know.

**Knowing Your Responsibilities - Responsibilities of the Volunteer**

You (the volunteer), the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections provide more details on everyone’s responsibilities.

Every volunteer in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your Council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

   Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

   - **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

   - **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. One lead volunteer in every group must be female. For events, travel, and camping trips, two approved, unrelated female adults who do not live in the same household must be present at all times.

   - **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, or a topic is discussed that could be considered sensitive, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
Ensure safe administration and storage of medications. Parents should inform leader/first aider of all medications, both prescription and over the counter, that it is necessary for their child to take while in their car during daytime activities and overnight adventures. All medications, both prescription and over-the-counter should be stored in a locked container except when in the controlled possession of the person responsible for administering them, and only administered according to instructions on the Health History Record or prescription packaging (all prescriptions must be listed on the Health History Record). Medications should never be shared and must be returned to the parent at the end of the activity or overnight. Some persons may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (Commonly called Epi-pen) or diabetes medication. This information must be listed in the Minor and adult Health History Record and reviewed periodically or as medications change.

Communicate with Council and parents. Follow Council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and Council guidelines about girls’ general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.

Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts. Work with girls and other adult volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls’ parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and Council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls’ families. Check activity-specific Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed. Refer to “Approaching Activities” on page 117 for more information.

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

Use the buddy system. Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy
with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

2. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your Council’s guidelines as well as state laws for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. In Georgia, volunteers who work with children are mandated reporters – they are required by law to report observed or suspected child abuse or neglect.

3. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved volunteer and a registered member, age 21 or over and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats. Approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household.

4. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

5. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your Council for group marksmanship activities.

6. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively, and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

7. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socio-economic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

8. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group Web sites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge and have them commit to it.

9. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other Council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product programs, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide
variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.

**CAUTION:** When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Paintball Tag (Target paintball is permitted)
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing

**Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians**

You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled
meeting place. This can include such activities as: product program, including Digital Cookie; overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.

- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their daughters, as determined by the Council and you. (If needed, behavior contracts are available in the Forms section of www.girlscoutsatl.org)
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.
- Respect the health of others by not allowing yourself or your daughter to attend meetings, activities and other outings when physically ill. Generally, a person should wait at least 24 hours before exposing others after unexplained vomiting or elevated body temperature.

**Responsibilities of Girls**

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when and where to get help when needed.

**Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need**

Whatever the activity, from camping to cookies program, adult supervision is required regardless of the grade level of the girls. The table below has been developed to show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls (councils may also establish **maximums** due to size or cost restrictions). These adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in
the activity. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:</td>
<td>Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: If you have a mixed-grade of girls the ratio is based on the youngest member of the troop.

Here are some examples on utilizing the chart: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three volunteers, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, you and someone who is not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. This is determined as follows: for up to 12 Daisies you need two volunteers, and one more volunteer for up to six additional girls. Since you have 17 girls, you need three volunteers (2+1). If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting you need only two unrelated volunteers, at least one of whom is female, since the chart shows that two volunteers can manage up to 25 Cadettes.
In addition to the volunteer-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, or the age of majority defined by your state if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints

- Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge

**Transporting Girls**

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities (outside the normal meeting time and place) in which a group will be transported in private vehicles keep in mind the following:

- Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- Share Ride companies such as Uber and Lyft are not approved modes of transportation for troop travel.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female. In addition, the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.
- Approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household.
 Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.

**Minimum Age for Drivers**

For Local Trips Lasting Six Hours or Less, With A Travel Time of Less Than One Hour (One Way): GSGATL requires that ALL drivers of Girl Scouts be at least 21 years old AND have a clear driving record. GSGATL strongly recommends that all drivers be at least 21 years old and have a clear driving record. *The troop leader should have a current Volunteer Driver Log listing every driver. When recruiting drivers, leaders should inform all prospective drivers of the conditions listed on this page.*

For more information on current Georgia law affecting teenage drivers, please contact the [Department of Driver Services](#).

Anyone who is driving a vehicle with 12 or more passengers must follow all state laws regarding driving these vehicles. Note, you must check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans are not permitted for use to transport girls.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract, except for rental car agreements, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by your council.
- Check with your council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
If your council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.

Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

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 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.
- 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.

Rented and Chartered Vehicles

If renting or chartering a vehicle for a trip, please allow at least two weeks for GSGATL approval. If GSGATL has given permission to use a rented vehicle, read all rental
agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Consult with your personal insurance carrier to be sure the vehicle is adequately insured, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail, with evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related. Keep in mind that the renter of the vehicle is responsible for insuring it. GSGATL strongly recommends that you purchase full coverage insurance from the rental company when arranging the rental. If you are renting a large capacity vehicle (seating capacity over 10 passengers) to use to transport Girl Scouts to and from an activity, the following guidelines must be met in order to be covered by GSGATL’s liability policy:

◆ Anyone who will be driving the vehicle must complete and sign a Driver Disclosure Form which can be requested by sending an email to riskmanagement@gsgatl.org.
◆ GSGATL forwards the Driver Information Sheet(s) to our insurance company.
◆ Any driver with an unacceptable driving record will be notified that they are not authorized to drive on behalf of Girl Scouts.
◆ For 15-passenger vans, only 10 passengers are allowed to be transported, and they should be seated as far forward as possible. It is recommended that the rear seat be removed to ensure that it is not used.
◆ Drivers must be 25 years or older and have driven this type of vehicle before.

Safety Seats & Booster Seats

We are frequently asked if troop leaders and parent drivers are required to have booster seats in cars when transporting Girl Scouts. The short answer is yes, drivers are expected to follow state and federal laws regarding booster seats. For more information and tips please visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Web site.

Emergency Equipment/Forms

Every vehicle used to transport campers and staff should be equipped with a first aid kit and emergency accessories such as fire extinguisher and reflectors. For trips over 10 miles from point of origin, the troop leader must carry health forms for all passengers, insurance forms, emergency numbers and a cell phone for emergency communication. A rental agreement or vehicle registration, insurance information, and the information on the following two pages should be in the vehicle at all times.
**Vehicle Type/Capacity**

- Girl Scouts should only be transported in vehicles designed to carry passengers.
- Passengers are not permitted to ride in the back of trucks except in an extreme emergency and when directed by appropriate staff (e.g., fire evacuation).
- If a 15-passenger van is used, only 10 passengers are allowed to be transported, and they should be seated as far forward as possible.
- There must be a seat belt for each passenger.
- Wear your seat belt at all times and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats.
- The driver must be a volunteer and must be an approved GSGATL volunteer and registered member. Approved male volunteers must be accompanied in the vehicle by an unrelated female volunteer who does not share the same household.
- If traveling by bus, appropriate ratios of volunteers to girls must be observed, without counting the driver.
- Extra volunteer or aides must be present for members with disabilities, based on ratios established for persons requiring additional assistance or supervision.

**Vehicle Safety Checks**

Prior to transporting passengers, and periodically on long trips, it is recommended that the following be checked by a competent volunteer:

- lights
- tires
- horn
- brakes
- mirrors
- fluid levels
- emergency warning systems
- windshield and wiper condition

**Passenger Orientation**

Passengers should be instructed in the following safety procedures prior to transporting:

- Passengers should remain seated at all times with hands and arms inside vehicle.
- Seatbelts should be fastened — one person per seatbelt — unless being transported prone for emergency care.
- Noise level should be such as to not distract the driver. There should be no throwing of objects or other disruptive behavior.
- Passengers should enter and leave the vehicle under the direction of a volunteer and/or driver. If the vehicle makes an emergency stop, passengers should follow directions of volunteer troop leader and/or driver and use the buddy system after leaving the vehicle.

**Travel Procedures**

- Vehicles should be kept a safe distance apart if traveling together. It is not recommended that vehicles travel by convoy. If it is necessary to travel by convoy due to limitations on volunteers in individual vehicles, practice extreme caution – it is more important to drive safely than to make sure you can always see the other vehicle. Have cell phones for communication in case you are separated.
- Drivers should pre-establish rest stops to check in with each other.
- All drivers should have maps, complete directions to destination, and appropriate telephone numbers. One driver should be appointed lead driver.
- On any trip, stops should be made only at acceptable rest stops.
- After three continuous hours, it is recommended that the vehicle stop to rotate drivers and rest the passengers.
- All traffic laws of the state are to be strictly obeyed when transporting girls and staff.
- When traveling to another state, be sure to check for specific traffic laws that may affect the trip.
- Have all drivers read this entire chapter so that they are familiar with GSGATL’s procedures.
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or when taking medication that makes you drowsy.

**Behind-the-Wheel Training**

If you are driving a vehicle that you normally do not drive, be sure to allow time to practice and become comfortable with backing up, turning, parking, and highway driving and stopping.

**Passenger Behavior**

In larger vehicles, behavior problems should always be the responsibility of volunteers other than the driver. If the driver is the only volunteer member available to handle disruptive behavior, she
should pull off the road in a safe area and follow established behavior agreements and guidelines with girls.

**Backing Up**

Because you cannot see everything behind your vehicle, backing up is always dangerous. Avoid backing up whenever you can. When you park, try to park so you will be able to pull forward when you leave. When you have to back up, here are a few simple safety rules:

- Look at your path.
- Back slowly using your mirrors.
- Back and turn toward the driver’s side whenever possible.
- Use a helper whenever possible.
- Always know where the girls are!

**Loading and Unloading Passengers**

Load and unload in areas that are free from vehicular traffic unless there is an emergency. The vehicle should be in park with the emergency brake on and the motor turned off. Loading and unloading will take place in an orderly fashion following directions from volunteers in charge.

Girls should be directed where to assemble after unloading and kept under supervision of a volunteer.

**Dealing with Passenger Illness**

- Administer first aid as needed and per your training. Keep the person comfortable.
- If you need to stop, try to do so in an authorized or designated area.
- Contact your emergency contact about the illness.
- Seek professional medical assistance if needed.

**Accident Procedures**

- Attend to any ill or injured passengers. If medical care is needed, see that they are taken to nearest medical facility.
- Place reflectors or emergency flashers as appropriate. If safe, take pictures of all vehicles involved and their location before moving them.
- Instruct passengers to exit vehicle, when appropriate, using the buddy system. Group uninjured passengers together in an area safe from oncoming traffic to await instructions and/or new pick-up. Minors must be supervised by a volunteer at all times.
◆ Contact designated emergency contacts.
◆ Obtain names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any witnesses and location where any police reports will be filed.

Dealing with Vehicular Breakdown

◆ Move off the road as far as possible. It’s better to drive on a flat tire than park in an unsafe place.
◆ Place the transmission in park. Turn off ignition and remove key.
◆ Set the emergency brake.
◆ Set four way turn (emergency) blinkers.
◆ If vehicle must stop in non-designated parking area (e.g., the side of the road), place reflective triangles between yourself and the oncoming traffic in the following places:

a. On the traffic side of the vehicle, within ten feet of the front or rear corners.
b. About 100 feet behind and ahead of the vehicle, upon the shoulder of the lane you are stopped in.
c. Back beyond any hill, curve, or other obstruction that prevents other drivers from seeing the vehicle within 500 feet.
d. If stopped on or by a one-way or divided highway, place warning devices 20 feet, 100 feet and 200 feet toward the approaching traffic.

◆ If safe to do so, unload passengers and move them well off the roadway away from the vehicle. Make sure minors are supervised at all times by a volunteer. If evacuation from a bus is necessary, follow established procedures and directions of the volunteer troop leader in charge.
◆ Contact your emergency contact with information about nature of the breakdown and your exact location. Additional help may be requested if needed. At least two volunteer members must stay with the vehicle and minors. If there are only two volunteers with the troop and one must go to find help, the other volunteer must stay with the minors at all times.

Checklist for Girls

Girls need to adhere to the following checklist when being transported. You may decide to create a contract listing the following items, which girls sign before leaving on any trip. Girls will:

◆ Follow all rules and instructions for this trip.
◆ Assist with reading signs and maps, when asked.
◆ Keep seat belts fastened at all times.
◆ Refrain from arguing, yelling, and throwing things.
◆ Play games or listen to music quietly with other passengers, being considerate of the driver and other passengers.
◆ Stay with the troop during stops.
◆ Alert the driver and a volunteer to a missing buddy, an obstacle, or an open door or trunk.

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What’s safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, contact riskmanagement@gsgatl.org with the details and to obtain advice and/or approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

We have customized the Safety Activity checkpoints to meet the needs of GSGATL. They will take precedence over any other safety checkpoints. Also, refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints in the Appendix.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with Council by emailing riskmanagement@gsgatl.org before making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written GSGATL pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely. For age restrictions check the Safety Activity Checkpoint for the activity. You can request written approval from the Council by completing and submitting the Travel Approval Request Form.

Warning: When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include, but are not limited to: bungee jumping; flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps; hang gliding; untethered hot air ballooning; hunting; motorbiking; parachuting; parasailing; riding all-terrain vehicles; riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis, wave runners, skydiving; stunt skiing; outdoor trampolining; and zorbing. **GSGATL does not approve participation in any of the above listed activities.** When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls’ individual skills—bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the Connect key in the GSLE. Review the Standing Emergency Procedures that can be found on the Council Web site under [Forms & Documents](#).
Health Histories (Including Immunizations and Examinations)

The staff at GSGATL take care in obtaining and storing girls’ health histories—which may include a physician’s examination and a list of immunizations—as needed for events and extended camping opportunities such as sleep away or day camp. You are asked to maintain these records for your troop. Keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, and a health practitioner).

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- **Ensure safe administration and storage of medications.** Parents should inform leader/first aider of all medications, both prescription and over the counter, that it is necessary for their child to take while in their car during daytime activities and overnight adventures. All medications, both prescription and over-the-counter should be stored in a locked container except when in the controlled possession of the person responsible for administering them, and only administered according to instructions on the Health History Record or prescription packaging (all prescriptions must be listed on the Health History Record). Medications should never be shared and must be returned to the parent at the end of the activity or overnight. Some persons may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an Epinephrine Auto-Injector (commonly called Epi-pen) or diabetes medication. This information must be listed in the Minor and adult Health History Record and reviewed periodically or as medications change.

- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies but, double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

- Volunteers participating in troop activities should consider whether any of their own health information should be shared with the troop First aider in case of emergencies. Adults with known allergies or other health concerns may want to provide a completed health history form in a sealed envelope, to be opened by the First aider only in case of an emergency. The Health History Form should be reviewed and
updated before each trip if any information has changed or new medications are being used and must be updated at least once a year.

**Girl Scout Activity Insurance**

A portion of the individual annual membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for the member only. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for covered medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual’s primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all volunteers and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tag-alongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage. This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. And it does not duplicate medical-expense benefits collected under other programs. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available. A plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities at approved events. These plans are secondary insurance that may be purchased to cover non-member individuals while participating in any approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. This insurance coverage is available for any approved Girl Scout event that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights. There is a nominal fee for this coverage which the troop is responsible for paying. GSGATL makes this mandatory, particularly for overseas travel.

**Extended Trip Insurance:**

Information about the plans for extended trips of three nights or more is automatically sent to troop leaders who have successfully begun the [trip approval process](#). Non-member insurance Information about the plan for non-members is automatically sent to event directors who have successfully completed the approval process related to [Beyond the Troop Events](#). Non-member insurance is not available for individual troop activities.

**Tag-Alongs**

A tag-along is any unregistered volunteer or sibling of girls in the troop who is accompanying the troop on a trip or activity. Tag-alongs are generally not covered by Girl Scout insurance, except in special circumstances. It should be noted that all volunteers who regularly participate in troop activities, assist with troop meetings or attend trips are required to be currently registered members and GSGATL approved volunteers.

**Experts**

The [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Please remember that all experts must be approved by Council. If the
Safety Activity Checkpoint for the activity you have chosen states that the venue or certified person must be approved by GSGATL, please contact Risk Management for further guidance. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Does the person have documented training and experience?** She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity, and letters of reference.

- **What does she or he need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision, and procedures for the activity. At the very least, he or she should be able to give clear instructions to girls and volunteers, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios, and respond appropriately in an emergency.

For additional information on what “documented experience” means at GSGATL, please contact Risk Management at 770.702.9185

A Detailed Handbook of Guidelines for Program Activities for Girl Scouts is included in the Appendix of this handbook.

**Providing Emergency Care**

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to volunteers any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. To this end, you can help girls:

- **Know what to report.** See Standing Emergency Procedures.

- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with GSGATL for the most relevant information for you to share with girls. Refer to Approaching Activities.

- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons, and building-security responses.** Every girl and volunteer must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.

- **Assemble a well-stocked first aid kit that is always accessible.** First aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.
First Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one volunteer be first aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in GSGATL-approved first aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by GSGATL. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and volunteer CPR when working with older girls and volunteers.

Caution First aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts’ requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you’re taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or GSGATL.

First aider

A first aider is an approved volunteer and member who has taken Girl Scout-approved first aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, MEDIC First aid, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity-planning go a little more smoothly. The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first aider needs to be present.

Activities can take place in a variety of locations, which is why first aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity—as noted in the Safety Activity Checkpoints for that activity. For example, it’s possible to do a two-mile hike that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical System) is, at maximum, 30 minutes away at all times. It is also possible to hike more remotely with no cell phone service at a place where EMS would take more than 30 minutes to arrive. It’s important that you or another volunteer with your group has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure group safety.

The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services. See below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to EMS</th>
<th>Minimum Level of First Aid Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>First aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 minutes</td>
<td>Wilderness First aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is important to understand the differences between a first aid course, and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as the emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

**Note:** The presence of a first aider is required at sleep away camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, and emergency medical technician.

### First aid Kit

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its *Anatomy of a First Aid Kit*. (Note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission.) You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites, and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your Council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your Council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

### Standing Emergency Procedures

Prior to any event or activity, review the emergency procedures and evacuation routes specific to activity site. Discuss with all volunteers attending these procedures and their role in an emergency situation.

### Persons Lost, Missing, or Runaway

- After determining that a person is missing, one volunteer needs to remain in area where the person was last seen. One or two volunteers should remain with other participants.
- A responsible volunteer should form a search party composed of teams of two volunteers. Starting from the spot where the person was last seen, volunteers will begin a thorough search of the area following a pattern of concentric circles. If the
Missing Person at Lake/Waterfront

- Check buddy system for identity of person. If absolutely positive that the missing person has left the waterfront area, locate the person and have her return to the area immediately.
- If there is any chance that the person is still in the water:
  - Volunteers take the participants out of the water and remove them from the area.
  - While lifeguards begin search, follow established search and rescue procedures.
  - If person is not located within 10 minutes, a responsible volunteer should elicit assistance from nearest designated Rescue Agency.
  - Notify the Council office. If at a Council campsite, notify the camp staff.

Unauthorized Person on Site (Intruder)

- For day events – after determining that the person is not with a troop/group or event staff member, a pair of responsible volunteers should ask person to leave the premises. If there is a staff person, sleep away caretaker, or security person, notify that person. (Send two volunteers if there is not a phone or radio.)
- For overnight events (lock-ins, sleepovers, troop camping, etc.) – gather participants into common area and account for the presence of all participants. Be calm and reassure participants. If it is determined that the person is not with a troop/group or event staff, call the police immediately. If there is a [staff person] sleep away caretaker, security person or camp ranger, notify that person by phone or radio. Do not leave the secure area.

Fire

- Be calm at all times and reassure participants.
- Determine the extent and location of the fire.
- Evacuate participants in vicinity.
If at a Council campsite, notify staff member on duty.
Ensure that you have an escape route (or exit) before fighting a small controllable fire.
If fire is small, use the following methods of control:

a) Grass or woods fire:
   1) Put out small fires before they grow; smother with dirt or sprinkle water directly on fire.
   2) Push a small spreading fire towards its origin with rake or shovel; take care that clothing does not catch fire.
   3) Use shovels to dig a trench around fire.
   4) Use brooms or some heavy material that can be soaked in water to beat out flames. Work with the wind at your face, not at your back. Beat toward the wind (beating with the wind at your back tends to fan the flames and may cause sparks or flames to jump ahead into unburned areas).

b) Electrical, chemical, grease, and gasoline fires:
   1) Do not use water.
   2) Use fire extinguishers.

» If fire spreads out of control:

a) Call 911 or local emergency services.

b) Evacuate participants. At Council campsites, the continuous blowing of a car horn is the alarm signifying the need to evacuate.

» Evacuation Procedures:

a) Volunteers in charge secure first aid kits and have girls in troop/group count off.

b) All participants proceed at a steady pace by the safest route to the closest large cleared area, field, or parking lot.

C) A responsible volunteer will serve as check-in person to account for the presence of all participants at the safe area. At Council camps, this person is the camp staff member on duty.

d) In the event of missing persons, notify emergency personnel.

e) All persons are to remain assembled at parking lot or clearing until area determined safe.

Storm and Tornado Procedures

Use a weather notification application, like WeatherBug, to monitor weather conditions while troops are camping.
Severe Storm

- Be calm and reassure the participants.
- At first sign of impending storm (towering thunderheads, darkening skies, lightning and thunder and increasing wind) seek nearest enclosed shelter. Do not stand in open-air shelters.
- If you are caught by a thunderstorm outside and a building is not available, seek shelter in a depression in the ground, deep valley, dense woods or a grove of trees.

**DO NOT** stand under isolated trees, **DO NOT** stand near wire fence or overhead wires, **DO NOT** lean against a tree even in a dense woods or grove of trees. **NEVER BE THE HIGHEST OBJECT IN THE AREA** – if caught in a broad open area, crouch on the ground...it’s better to get soaked than struck by lightning!

- If engaged in water sports, return to shore at the first sign of a storm. Do not stand in or near water.

Tornado

- Tornado Watch

  Darkened skies, thick storm clouds, and strong winds from the south combined with lightning and periods of rain and hail, often precede a tornado’s arrival. At these signs listen to a radio for reports of tornado watch or warning. If you feel that the weather is unsafe, don’t wait for instruction – take cover.

  - If engaged in water sports, return to shore at the first sign of storm. Do not stand in or near water.

- Tornado Warning

  a) Have participants head to a protected area immediately. Such areas include:
     1) storm shelters and basements
     2) caves
     3) tunnels and underground parking facilities
     4) interior corridors and hallways
     5) reinforced concrete buildings

  b) Dangerous areas to avoid include:
     1) cars, house trailers and parked vehicles
     2) tents
     3) structures with large, poorly supported roofs
     4) gymnasiums and auditoriums
     5) indoor areas that are near windows
c) If caught outside lie flat in a ditch, ravine or culvert and protect your head.

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe GSGATL procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established GSGATL procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of GSGATL staff, parents/guardians, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians. Keep your “Emergency Procedures” card with you when you are with the girls and check with GSGATL for emergency contact information. After receiving a report of an accident, Council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow Council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let Council-designated staff discuss the incident with these representatives. In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible volunteer must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your Council, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

All accidents/incidents requiring treatment beyond basic first aid must be reported to GSGATL’s office. The volunteer in charge of the activity where the accident/incident took place must complete and submit the Accident Incident Report within 72 hours. An administrative volunteer being notified of an accident/incident should report it to her immediate staff contact person. Examples are: Service Unit Director notifies Volunteer Support Specialist and Trainer notifies the Training Specialist.

Serious Accidents and Major Emergencies

Follow these procedures when emergency response or immediate action by authorities is required.

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 the police.
2. Contact the camp staff member on duty 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 in danger 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 Council office to report the emergency situation. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone: 770-702-9100 or 800-771-1139. 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.

6. The staff emergency contact person will arrange for additional help and will call the families of uninjured persons, upon your request.

7. 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.

8. 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 the Marketing & Communications Team at 770-702-9100.

9. 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).
   e. Names and addresses of all witnesses.

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

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone: 770-702-9100 or 1-800-771-1139. At other times call this number: 1-888-644-0511. Your call will be handled by a call center and you will receive a return phone call from a GSGATL staff member within 30 minutes or less.

You Witness or Experience Abuse

Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statues identifying persons who are required to report
suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, follow your council’s guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

For additional information please check the following resources:
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway: [https://www.childwelfare.gov/can/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/can/)

How to Report Suspected Child Maltreatment:
[https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/)

Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect:
[https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm](https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm)

**Product Sales Program Safety**

Girl Scout council-sponsored product programs, which include magazines and nuts, as well as cookies, give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities. These sales also contribute significantly to the girls’ local councils and communities through take-action projects. In order to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls, which is always a top priority in any activity, you need to read and understand the following guidelines. Prepare Early

**Communicate with Parents**

Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in product sales are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate
Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to the Council

Communicate with Your Local Police Department

Establish a relationship with your local Police Department to determine any support they may be able to provide during product program, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While Police Departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people
- Community Volunteers who may be able to assist by being present during booth times.

Police departments can also provide information on areas and addresses to avoid, as well as access to known sex offender registries.

Prepare for Emergencies

Regardless of the type of activity, you need to be prepared for emergencies involving girls or other volunteers. This should include having a first aid kit always available and making sure that if someone is injured and needs help, that one volunteer cares for the injured person while another volunteer seeks help.

Arrange for Volunteer Supervision

Volunteers provide supervision and guidance for all grade levels, and must accompany Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for or delivering products. Volunteers must be present at booth activities, regardless of the age of the girls (see also the section “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need”).
Volunteers who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:

- Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products
- Be on call when girls are participating in product program
- Be readily available to them should they need assistance.
- Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system

Volunteer supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.

Plan for Safeguarding Money
Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:

- Not walking around with large amounts of money
- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Not keeping money at home or school
- Giving cookie money to supervising volunteers, who will deposit the money as soon as possible

Use the Buddy System

Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts

In order to ensure the safety of girls while participating in product programs, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:
◆ Participate in door-to-door activity only during daylight hours
◆ Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts
◆ Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable
◆ Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of them
◆ Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals
◆ Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and avoid approaching people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys
◆ Should not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money”, above)

Cookie Booths

Cookie booths are a traditional and fun way of selling Girl Scout Cookies. Booth locations are approved by councils, facilitated within council jurisdiction and you must follow all council guidelines with regard to setting up, manning and taking down a booth.

. When setting up booth sales, it’s important that:

◆ Volunteers are present at all times
◆ There is adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
◆ Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location
◆ The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit
◆ Girls and volunteers do not confront or engage an irate customer, but call local authorities for assistance

While girls can receive cash from buyers and make change, they should hand the money to a volunteer for safekeeping. It is important that cash is kept safe and out of sight. This can be accomplished by:

◆ Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.

Reduce cash transactions by offering credit card payment options per your council guidelines.

If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, do not attempt to physically recover the stolen items and do not allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to your local council according to its guidelines.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult your council guidelines.

### Computer/Online Safety

#### Understand the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (the pledge is available at the end of this document and at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org)). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge. [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](http://www.girlscouts.org)

#### Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and volunteers not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls’ online safety:

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names. A Girl Scout’s last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted. For Digital Cookie a girl may post her unique Digital Cookie URL on her Facebook page and may email it to friends and family (for additional information please refer to Safety Activity
Checkpoint for Online Product Program, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers and Digital Cookie Pledge for Girls)

- Always have a parent’s or guardian’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, a volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families.
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have volunteer oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or volunteer’s e-mail.

Safety in Technology Based Product Programs

Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online activities:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and family about product programs and accept customer orders via email.
- Social media sites may be used to market product program to friends and family, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed.
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  - A blind return address account where the girls’ name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site.
  - A group account, monitored by a volunteer.
  - A volunteer’s e-mail account, which is supervised by that volunteer.
- Marketing on the internet for the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program should be to friends and family only.
For clarity purposes friends and family are people that the girl or her family knows personally.

Marketing on the Internet should always be girl led with supervision and oversight of parents or caretakers.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl led program, friends and family of the girl should not market or share girl contact information and sales links.

- Internet sales transactions are approved for friends and family only on the following platforms:
  - Fall Program Vendor Sites (QSP, M2, Trophy and Ashdon)
  - Digital Cookie Program (LBB and ABC)

For **Digital Cookie** there are additional, specific guidelines, some of which are:

Girls must read and accept the Girl Scout Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in Digital Cookie.

Volunteers must read and accept the Digital Cookie Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in Digital Cookie.

Girls may only post about their participation on Digital Cookie on social media that allows them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook).

Parents/guardians must approve the content of a girl's Digital Cookie web page before it goes live.

For girls under 13 years old, a parent/guardian must manage the girl's web site and be responsible for all content. In other words, girls under 13 are not allowed to post anything to their websites; it must be done by their parent/guardian.

Chapter 6: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls decide what they want to do and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Your Girl Scout group plans and finances its own activities, with your guidance. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout cookie activities), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course), and any your group may charge. (This is in addition to the $25 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account and helping girls manage their group’s finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

For information and guidance on safety related to product program see Chapter 4, Being Safety-Wise.

Conversations about whether Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors may solicit philanthropic donations for Gold Award Take Action Projects are in progress. Refer to GSGATL Policy 30. Funding for Take Action Projects on page 57* for more information.

Establishing an Account

If your group is earning and spending money, the group needs to set up a bank account. If you’re taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new group, you’ll want to open a new account. These links will help you get information about opening a new account.

Troop finance form

Troop Treasurer bank account process

Troop bank authorization form

This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as group dues or money from product program or group money-earning activities. Consider these tips when working with a group account:
Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip, paying for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.
Use debit cards during the activity or trip.
Make one person responsible for group funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
Have one or more back-up people who also have debit cards, in case the main card is lost.
Handle a lost group debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately

Follow GSGATL’s financial policies and procedures for setting up an account later in this chapter. Most council-sponsored product sale activities have specific banking and tracking procedures.

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband becomes the property of the council. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to their Service Unit, another troop or for girl activities. Girl activities can include purchasing materials to support another organization through take-action projects. When closing a troop account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member within 30 days.

**Be sure Girl Scout families understand these key points:**

- Girl Scout troops should be self-supporting; they should not rely on funding from the girls’ families.
- Girls, parents, and sponsors should know where troop funds come from and how they are spent.
- Girl Scout Daisies do participate in Council-sponsored product program activities!
- Troop funds do not belong to individual girls, only to the troop as a whole.
- **Girls earn money only for the troop, never for themselves.** Troops may not track individual girl balances within the troop account. Girls may not receive individual credit for the amount of funds or the portion of the troop account that resulted from their contributed troop dues or their money earned or product programs program troop proceeds. The IRS requires that 501(c)(3) organizations must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests. The IRS has issued rulings recently that organizations that earmark fundraising for particular members is a non-exempt activity and those organizations may be required to pay unrelated business income tax or lose their tax-exempt status. If you have any question on private benefit or troop account activities, please reach out to your Volunteer Support Manager.
Procedures for Managing Troop Accounts

Group Treasury/Funds

Parents may be asked to contribute to a troop or group treasury in the following ways:

◆ New troops or groups may ask parents to donate a one-time startup fee when the troop begins meeting (up to a maximum of $25). Membership MAY NOT BE DENIED based on the inability to pay the start-up fee.
◆ Group dues are the monies girls contribute to help fund their group’s activities or meeting needs. Dues typically range from $.50 to $2 per meeting. Girls and parents together decide upon the amount and frequency of dues. No girl is denied membership based on an inability to pay group dues.
◆ Families should know girls are expected to participate in troop money-earning activities to help fund troop activities.
◆ Parents may be asked (but not required) to contribute a maximum of $5 per girl per year in local service unit dues to provide for copying charges, mailing and other costs associated with providing local service to troop leaders.
◆ Each family is asked to donate $25 per girl toward the GSGATL Annual Fund. Troop leaders should collect donations for the Annual Fund, deposit them in the troop bank account, and either mail a check to Council, make a donation online via our Web site, or via MyGS. Troop leaders should indicate which families have contributed so that an acknowledgement letter can be issued to the parent, and the troop and service unit receive credit toward their Annual Fund goal. Contact annualfund@gsgatl.org to provide instructions on allocation of donations. Membership will not be denied based on an inability to contribute to the Annual Fund.

Troop/group and personal funds must not be comingled. Troop/group funds cannot be borrowed for personal use, even if repaid. Troops that do not meet during the summer are allowed to keep (carryover) $100 per girl in their checking account without submitting a detailed program plan to GSGATL. Troop leaders are required to submit a Troop Finance Report Form to the girls’ parents or guardians two times a year. Troop leaders are required to submit the following to their Service Unit Director by June 15 annually:

◆ A Troop Finance Report Form.
◆ A copy of the troop’s most recent bank statement.
◆ A detailed plan of how existing funds will be used.
For more information on troop finances, refer to the following GSGATL policies:

» 27. Troop and Service Unit Treasury on page 55

» 28. Fees and Dues on page 56

» 35. Private Inurement/Private Benefit on page 63.

Opening a Troop/Group Checking Account

Girl Scout troops and groups are encouraged to open a troop checking account when the amount of funds on hand reaches $100.00 or meets the minimum requirements of the chosen bank. If you’re taking over an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but must remove old signatures and add your own. With a new troop, you’ll need to open a new account (see below.) Many troops ask a parent to act as the volunteer “troop treasurer”.* This can be a great way to involve a parent who wants to be active with the troop but whose schedule is restricted because of work or other obligations. After selecting a bank, the troop leader should request a Troop Bank Authorization letter to take to the bank to open the account. Prior to opening a troop checking account all troops should:

1. Identify two or more volunteers who will be responsible for the funds.
   a) At least two signers must be unrelated adults not living in the same household.
   b) All signers must be at least 18 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years.

2. Request the Troop Bank Authorization Form.

3. Open the account under the name of Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Troop #____
   a) All bank account statements must be mailed to the Treasurer or other designated volunteer at the volunteer’s home address.
   b) Troops may secure a debit card to use for troop purposes.
   c) GSGATL is not responsible or liable for troop accounts.
   d) GSGATL does not issue Articles of Incorporation or corporate resolutions.
   e) Presently, the only documents GSGATL can provide to the bank are the authorization form and a copy of our 501(c)(3) status as a not-for-profit organization. This form is provided for the specific use of opening the bank account. All other requests or use of the form to solicit donations and in-kind gifts must be pre-approved by Council.
   f) Bank accounts should not be set up under the social security number of a parent or other volunteer since that action could create tax liabilities for the volunteer.

* This troop volunteer’s job depends on the girls’ program level: At the Daisy and Brownie level, girls may collect and record dues, but the troop volunteer handles money and keeps financial records; she or he does all troop budgeting
but explains the process to girls and gets their input on activities and purchases. At the Junior level, it is a shared girl-volunteer responsibility. At the Cadette level and above, a volunteer mentors the girls as they keep the troop’s financial records and give reports to parents and troop volunteers.

**Use of a PayPal account:**

*Troops should be aware that PayPal is not a bank and is not controlled by any banking laws.* GSGATL recommends that troop funds be held in a bank which is insured by the FDIC.

**Annual Troop/Group Finance Report**

The volunteer troop/group treasurer, in partnership with the girls in the group (Juniors and older), must prepare a Finance Report and distribute it to each family in the troop a minimum of two (2) times a year. Full disclosure of the troop finances two times per year insures transparency and that all family members of the troop are informed of the troop’s income and expenses; this should alleviate any concerns about troop finances from the parents. A copy should be given to the Service Unit Director. The final year-end financial report should include the most recent bank statement by June 15.

**Discrepancies/Mismanagement of Funds**

If there is a discrepancy with the troop/group funds:

- The troop leader, assistant leader and volunteer treasurer will meet to determine the problem and resolve it.
- If the problem is not resolved, a Service Unit Director will be contacted. A GSGATL staff person will meet with the troop volunteers and determine accountability.
- Girls, parents and troop volunteers must make the decision as to what action, if any, will be taken should there be mismanagement of funds.
- The troop volunteers will be responsible for pursuing any legal action if that is the decision of the troop.

**Addition of a Troop Member**

Since funds belong to the troop or group as a whole, and never to individual members, when a new member joins she benefits from those funds equally with the other members. If this is a recently-organized troop, where other families have been asked to contribute a start-up fee, the new member’s family should be asked as well. (Remember: membership cannot be denied a girl whose family cannot pay.) What if a group has been working for several years to earn money for an extended trip and a new member joins close to departure time? In this case, if it’s possible to accommodate another traveler (tickets, hotel rooms, etc. have to be considered) it’s acceptable to invite the new girl to join the trip by paying her own way. If travel arrangements can’t be changed
to include her, the girl could be given the option to join the troop after the trip, or join another troop if one exists.

**Troop Member Transfers**

When a girl leaves a troop, for whatever reason, she relinquishes any claim on money she helped earn for the troop. However, when a girl is bridging or transferring to another troop, the original troop may, as a gesture of good will and sisterhood, divide a pro rata share per girl and make a donation to the receiving troop on the transferring member’s behalf. This is solely at the troop’s discretion. In all cases, if a donation is made, a check should be written directly to the receiving troop. **At no time are funds to be paid to an individual girl or volunteer.**

**Closing a Bank Account**

When a troop disbands, by rights the funds revert to GSGATL. It is our practice, however, to allow girls to vote on what to do with troop funds, using the following guidelines. Monies may be:

- Given to the troop’s service unit to benefit its program activities or projects.
- Donated to GSGATL to support troops/members with financial hardships.
- Donated to GSGATL’s Annual Fund to fund our general operations. (GSGATL underwrites an average of $325 per member per year.)
- Donated to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund.
- Donated to a local charity whose mission is in keeping with Girl Scout principles.

The final **Troop Finance Report** must indicate how the funds were distributed. The group leader signs the final report and submits it to the Service Unit Director with a copy of the most recent bank statement.

As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person.

**Financial Assistance**

Financial aid is available to individual members who need assistance with annual membership dues, uniform components, Girl Scout program-level handbooks, and for some events or activities. Every effort is made to fulfill requests based on the needs of the family and the availability of GSGATL funds, as Financial Assistance is supported by the **Annual Fund** and product programs (i.e., The Cookie Program). Financial Assistance is awarded on a case-by-case basis and remains confidential. Financial assistance for volunteers is limited to volunteers registered as troop co-leaders, not to exceed three volunteer members per troop. Troops are strongly encouraged to use troop funds toward membership dues of girls and volunteers before seeking financial assistance with membership from the Council.
How to Apply:

A parent/guardian completes the appropriate form on the Council Web site. **Other types of assistance that may be available:** Summer Sleep Away or Day Camp – request assistance with summer sleep away or day camp fees by completing the form located in the camp brochure, destinations – request assistance for a destination travel adventure by using the destinations Scholarship Application Form that is sent to girls upon acceptance from the Council sponsoring the event or trip.

**Service Unit Funds**

**The service unit exists to support troop/group volunteers and programs.** In order to cover related administrative costs and create opportunities for inter-troop activities, service units develop an operating budget or financial plan, which should be proposed at a regular service unit meeting and accepted, with or without modification, by the service unit members (all registered volunteers in the service unit area). Service units may request a small annual fee – not to exceed $5 per girl per year - to cover their operating costs. A girl will not be denied membership because her family is unable to pay service unit dues. Many service units rely on planned service unit events and projects (T-shirts, patch sales, car washes, sock hops, etc.) to create revenue for service unit expenses. These and any other sources of revenue must tie into an overall financial plan (budget) approved by the Volunteer Support Specialist. A report from the Service Unit Treasurer should be a part of each service unit meeting, or, a quarterly report should be sent to each troop or posted on the service unit Web site. Girl Scout funds may not be used to purchase alcoholic beverages. A year-end financial report with current bank statement should be submitted to the Volunteer Support Specialist by June 15 of each year.

For more information, refer to Policy 26, 27. Troop and Service Unit Treasury and Policy 27, 28. Fees and Dues.

**Money-Earning Basics**

Troops flex their financial muscles in two distinct ways:

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Treats and Keeps program,** organized by GSGATL. All girl members are eligible to participate in these council-sponsored product sale activities each year with volunteer supervision. Please remember, volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don’t sell cookies and other products—girls do.
- Group money-earning activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

Girls’ participation in both Council-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:
◆ Voluntary participation.
◆ **Written permission** of each girl's parent or guardian.
◆ An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed.
◆ An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities.
◆ Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws.
◆ Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl.
◆ Arrangements for safeguarding the money.

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity.

◆ All rewards earned by girls through the product programs activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
◆ Rewards are based on sales ranges set by Councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
◆ Each participating girl should have her total number of boxes sold allocated to her in the troop ordering system (eBudde). GSGATL does not permit “stacking” boxes sold on a few girl records to maximize girl rewards for the troop. We strongly encourage volunteers to model “honest and fair” behavior in all program practices. GSGATL reserves the right to reject a troop’s allocation of cookies sold and reallocate them among active participants if found that “stacking” or other allocations not in the spirit of our promise and law have occurred.
◆ Groups are encouraged to participate in Council product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or the Treats and Keeps Program.
◆ Obtain **written approval** before a group money earning event; refer to Error! Reference source not found..
◆ Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved GSGATL, and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
◆ Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
◆ Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following Council procedures.
The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout Cookie and Treats and Keeps programs. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

**GSGATL Procedures for Additional Troop Money-Earning**

If a troop requires money-earning activities beyond GSGATL product programs for a specific purpose, then the following guidelines must be met:

**Troops must:**

- Participate in both product programs. New troops that form after one or both product programs may conduct limited money-earning activities if needed to fund planned troop activities.
- Support GSGATL’s [Annual Fund](#) campaign by asking each family to participate.
- Have a current [troop finance report](#) on file with GSGATL.
- Obtain [permission](#) from each participating girl’s parent or guardian before any money-earning activity occurs.

**Troops may, without further notice to GSGATL, participate in the following money-earning activities:**

- Sales of meals (spaghetti dinners or pancake breakfasts for example), that are prepared by girls and their families, not sponsored by commercial businesses
- Car wash
- Bake sale
- Garage/yard sale
- Sale of girl-made craft items

Other activities must be approved in advance by GSGATL, as outlined in Policy 29 [Money-Earning for Troops and Service Units](#):

1. Troops must submit a [Money-Earning Application](#) along with the latest copy of the troop’s bank statement to the appropriate service unit team member. The Service Unit Director or designee is charged with reviewing the application and submitting it to the Volunteer Support Specialist at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. (For money- earning events, the [Beyond the Troop Event Application](#) should be submitted. When using the Beyond the Troop Event Application it is not necessary to submit a Money Earning Application. Refer to GSGATL’s Guidelines for Event Approval.)
2. Troops must complete and submit to the Service Unit Director or designee a report on the results of the money-earning activity within two (2) weeks after the activity.

3. Money-earning activities must:
   a) Not coincide with either GSGATL product program
   b) Be in keeping with the principles for which the organization stands, as defined in this manual.

**Solicitation of funds and donations**

For more information, refer to 31. Fundraising for GSGATL’s Annual Fund.

- Girls may not solicit funds.
- Service units, troops, and volunteer individuals acting on behalf of any Girl Scout group, must have permission from GSGATL’s Fund Development Department before contacting any organization, business, corporation, or foundation for financial support or in-kind donations.
- Girl Scouts, in their capacity as Girl Scouts, MAY NOT solicit or raise funds for any other organization. This includes participating in walk-a-thons, telethons, selling coupon books, tickets or gift cards, products sales parties or other similar home party sales, the sale of commercial products or similar fundraising opportunities. Girl Scouts may elect to support another organization through Take Action or service projects that do not involve fund-raising, and by making a donation from the troop’s treasury.

The following examples of money-earning projects from Councils and USA Girl Scouts Overseas committees, give girls a way to build public speaking, financial literacy, marketing, and other skills. Please note that money-earning events involving multiple Girl Scout troops or non-members (such as a father/mother daughter dance, Badge work day, etc.), must also follow the procedures in Chapter 6. **Entertainment:**

- Talent show, fashion show, tea party
- Flock of flamingos traveling yard décor
- Famous mom, dad, or friend puts on a concert
- Spaghetti dinner
- Pancake breakfast
- Multicultural meals for younger girls
- Bake sales
- Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (depending on girls’ destination)
- Meals at volunteers’ meetings
Service(s):
- Babysitting for holiday (New Year’s Eve), special or GSGATL events
- Holiday activity/supervised crafts so parents can shop
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, sweeping walks
- Pet walking
- Gift-wrapping
- Cold or hot beverages at an event
- Taking photos and/or creating greeting cards or calendar
- GSGATL program event or badge workshop focused on a theme (e.g., culture); girls provide the program and benefit from program fees

Collections/Drives:
- Recycling/newspapers
- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Bottle and can recycling
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas-tree recycling

Specialty Products (creating a personalized note, ribbon, or creative packaging customized by girls adds value to a product):
- Christmas trees
- Crafts (crochet, needlepoint, jewelry, ornaments)
- Yard or garage sale
- Books for resale
- Roses for Valentine’s, Mother’s, Grandparent’s Day
- Soap and/or bath salts

Other:
- Donated frequent-flyer miles

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor’s contribution can then
be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult your council, which can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations or may know of some reasons not to collaborate with certain organizations.

In order to meet Annual Fund goals, volunteers are encouraged to solicit donations from parents. Service unit volunteers may solicit local businesses and individuals to make contributions to the Girl Scout Annual Fund. A local business is defined as a business whose primary customer base is confined to a local area or neighborhood (e.g., your physicians group, “mom and pop” bakery, and car dealership). As a courtesy to those with whom GSGATL maintains relationships, we ask local volunteers not to solicit certain donors. Contact the Fund Development Department to determine if an individual or business is a current donor by calling 770-702-9249.

When soliciting donations from a local source, you may be referred to a regional, district or corporate office. Should this occur, please stop and contact your GSGATL’s Fund Development Department for guidance and assistance. This is done to ensure that no business is being solicited multiple times in a year and that we remain in compliance with our 501(c)(3) status, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Due to the strict IRS and reporting standards, volunteers may not apply for grant funding of any kind. Generally, a grant requires a formal application to be submitted. If asked to complete more than a simple donation request form or to submit an IRS Tax Determination Letter, please contact the Fund Development Department. Volunteer Service Grants or Matching Gifts from your employer are considered grants to support Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta as a 501(c)(3).

Local restaurants may be approached at the service unit level to host a Girl Scout Night to promote membership, product programs and local community projects. Often, a restaurant will donate a percentage of the sales from the evening. If the restaurant wishes to receive a tax deduction or requests a tax ID number, the donation must be sent directly to Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta and will be credited to the service unit’s Annual Fund goal. Please note that it is not within Girl Scout standards for girls or volunteers to sell tickets, gift cards or coupons and that Girl Scouts cannot endorse a restaurant or product.
When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

- **Service units, troops and individuals acting on behalf of any Girl Scout troop** must have permission from GSGATL’s Fund Development Department before contacting any organization, business, corporation, or foundation for financial support or in-kind donations.

- **Do not raise funds for other businesses and organizations**: Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying ourselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your troop can, however, support another organization through behind-the-scenes Take Action or service projects. Individual girls, who are not acting as Girl Scouts or on behalf of Girl Scouts and are not wearing anything that would identify them as Girl Scouts, may participate in charity and other fund-raisers as they (or their families) see fit.

- **Steer clear of political fundraisers**: When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your troop may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Neither letter-writing campaigns nor participation in political rallies, petition circulation or carrying political banners is allowed.

- **Be respectful when collaborating with religious organizations**: Girl Scout troops must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring troop.

- **Do not sell or endorse commercial products**: “Commercial products” means any product sold at retail. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.

- **Girl Scout funds and sponsoring organization funds should never be comingled.**

**Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program**

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program powers amazing experiences for girls? That’s right. The Girl Scout Cookie Program, is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: no university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has.
If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout What Can a Cookie Do? video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Council-sponsored product programs are really the best way for girls to earn money to pursue their goals: the sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, and marketing materials and support that help girls run a great business. And they're an integral part of the GSLE. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learns five important skills:

- **Goal setting** – Girls who set goals are more likely to reach or exceed those goals – from selling cookies or magazines to completing their science project on time!
- **Decision making** – A Girl Scout who decides with her troop how to use troop proceeds grows her confidence to make decisions about spending baby-sitting money or being a leader to resist negative peer pressure.
- **Money management** – Girls who learn to handle orders, inventory, and customer’s money grow to manage their own allowance, income from a part-time job while still in school, a checking account or their own cell phone bill!
- **People skills** – Girls learn to listen and have confidence in speaking with others while asking for support of her and Girl Scouts with a purchase or cookies, chocolates, or magazines; she learns she can also work well with others for school projects or team sports; she asks for directions from teachers to achieve her best!
- **Business ethics** – A Girl Scout is honest and responsible at every step of the Program and learns that being trustworthy and honest is a good personal attribute that has benefits in earning the respect of others in school, in college, and in the workplace! And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It’s not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you’re doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

**A Sweet Tradition**

It has been decades since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/history.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/history.asp)

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given...
year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich, and Trefoils/Shortbread). For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Our Council’s Role

Each year, GSGATL provides learning opportunities on the procedures to follow during each product program. We also establish guidelines and procedures for conducting the product program and determines how the proceeds and girl reward system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

GSGATL will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles”. Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone’s clear on how revenue raised through product program makes it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls. Proceeds resulting from product program support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product program are a primary way in which your council raises funds to support Girl Scouting. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by your council and explained to girls and volunteers as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product program does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward Council sponsored camps, programs and programmatic materials.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, rewards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and Take Action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity.

One critical task for each troop/group, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group’s volunteer, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records.
“How the Cookie Crumbles”—Knowing Where Proceeds Go

On average, for each box of Girl Scout Cookies sold, 76% of the revenue goes to support girls and volunteers, and all the money stays in our local community!

- 5% is used to provide benefits to girls: girl rewards, Cookie Dough and service unit bonuses used to provide events/services to girls and their troop leaders.
- 17% is troop proceeds for use by the troop for activities and/or community service projects.
- 54% is returned to leaders and girls in program opportunities, maintenance of camp properties, insurance, program supplies, financial assistance, training, background checks, and Girl Scout Badge & Sash Stores, $52,000 in scholarships for higher education and the website for up-to-date events, information and training and other business operations.
- 24% is paid to the cookie baker.

Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone is clear on how revenue raised through product programs makes it possible for GSGATL to serve girls. Proceeds resulting from product programs support program activities—in fact, Council-sponsored product programs are a primary way in which GSGATL raises funds to support Girl Scouting. The income from product programs does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp, travel, Take Action projects, and Girl Scout membership dues for the next year. Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards and recognitions related to product program activities. GSGATL provides participation patches, girl rewards, and Cookie Dough, which may be used toward Council events, camp fees, destinations travel and other GSGATL programs. The Council plan for recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity. Whenever possible, Councils try to involve girls in the selection of awards and administration of money given to girls from product programs. One critical task for each group, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group’s volunteer, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records.

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

A few other considerations will help keep girls safe:
• Parents and guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and must be informed about the girls’ whereabouts when they are engaged in product program activities. Specific permission must be obtained when a girl intends to use the Internet for product marketing. A parent, guardian, or other volunteer must know each girl’s whereabouts when she is engaged in product programs, and if and when she is online.

• Girls should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a Membership Pin, official uniform, tunic, sash, vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.

• Volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of all girls at age levels. At least one of those volunteers must be registered with the Council and have a background check.

• Girl Scout Daisies (in kindergarten and first grade) may be involved in Council-sponsored product program activities, but they cannot collect money in any other way except through group dues or parental contributions.

• Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who participate in door-to-door sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls of all grade levels must always use the buddy system.

• Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer. Girls and parents are encouraged to not accept checks. If they accept personal checks, girls/parents should deposit into their own personal checking account and submit cash only to the troop.

• A girl’s physical address, social media page address, IM name, Skype name or number, email address, or cell number should never be revealed to anyone outside her immediate circle of family and friends. You’ve heard it before, but it bears repeating.

• Girls can market cookies and other products by posting on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter or sending emails to friends, family members, and former customers, as long as they use a group email address, the account or address of a parent/guardian or volunteer, a blind email address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender’s email address), or the online email tools provided by Council-sponsored vendors. Girls 13 and older can also use their social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest) to do the same to her immediate circle of family and friends. Be sure each girl’s account uses the tightest privacy settings and doesn’t reveal information about her or her location to anyone outside her circle.

• As of June 2014, girls (with their parent’s supervision and permission) will be allowed to use the M2 program site to create their own internet “storefront,” customized with the girl’s program, goal and personal message to customers. Girls and parents send emails inviting friends and family to visit their storefront, where customers can purchase chocolates, nuts, and magazines, make payments online, and have
everything delivered to their door. Girls will still be able to take orders for those products through traditional order cards and paper forms, and distribute the chocolate and nut products back to their customers. Customers can opt for girl delivery or choose to pay shipping charges for delivery right to their door!

- Beginning with the 2015 Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls (with their parent’s permission and supervision) will be allowed to use the Digital Cookie site to create their own internet “storefront,” customized with the girl’s program goal and personal message to customers. Girls and parents send emails to family and friends to support her in Girl Scouting with a purchase of Girl Scout Cookies, which can be paid for online by credit card. Customers can opt for girl delivery or choose to pay shipping charges for delivery right to their door! Girls will still be able to take orders on the traditional order card and hold public cookie booths with volunteers and/or parents present to allow the public an opportunity to support Girl Scouting and allow girls to learn valuable business skills.

- For both programs, girls and parents may use social media as approved by a parent to promote a link to their storefront. However, girls and parents are not to sell using PayPal or similar accounts or sites such as eBay to sell products online. All girls and parents who choose to participate in the online program are strongly encouraged to observe all precautions for internet safety and must only use the software programs associated with the GSUSA approved vendors to execute online activities. For both programs, customers will incur a convenience fee for credit card usage and/or shipping charges for delivery of products.

Please also keep in mind:

- Volunteers and Girl Scout Council staff do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them.
- Girls can participate in no more than two Council-sponsored product program activities each year, and only one of these may be a cookie sale.

Before beginning any cookies or other product programs with your group, refer to www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Selling at Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Many service units conduct a lottery for troops to obtain the more popular booth sale locations in their area, giving a fair and equitable opportunity to all. Be sure to check with your service unit cookie manager on the practice in your area. Also, GSGATL manages sites at some local businesses and malls. Announcements on how and when to sign up for those is sent out to troop cookie managers through eBuddle. Be sure to watch for Council-sponsored
booth sales to increase your troop’s opportunities for great booth sale locations! Troops must ask businesses to sign a Cookie Booth Permission Form, and submit this form to their service unit. All planned cookie booths must be submitted through eBudde for approval and inclusion in the Cookie Locator. Once you’ve gotten Council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the cookie booth. Talk to business owners in the area so they’ll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located. In addition, review the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoint to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible. On the day of the cookie booth, these tips will help keep everyone safe:

◆ Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
◆ Plan to have at least two volunteers and one girl at the booth at all times. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra volunteers on hand.
◆ Be especially careful with the money box; make sure it’s under volunteer supervision and out of public sight. Arrange for cash to be removed from the site periodically. When you do travel with money, have someone accompany you to your vehicle and/or the bank.
◆ Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, do not attempt to physically recover the stolen items and do not allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to GSGATL using the Accident Incident Report

Using Online Resources to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are texting, calling, emailing, Tweeting, and Facebooking—and those are all effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and other product programs. The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social media, and group Web sites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

◆ Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (available at www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of volunteers.
◆ Can market to all family, friends and other contacts made through social media, even if their address is located outside of the GSGATL’s jurisdiction.
Can have customers pay online (using GSUSA-approved software programs for magazines, photo keepsakes, chocolate or nut items, and cookies). Customers may incur a convenience fee for credit card usage and/or shipping charges for delivery of products.

Cannot expose their own or any other girl’s email address, physical address, or phone number to the public. When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and GSGATL. Girls may use Facebook, Twitter, text messages, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the program. Product-related email is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or emails), however, so remind girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver. When girls are marketing cookies online, remind them to always use a group email address (such as troop457@yahoo.com), a volunteer’s personal email address, or a blind address (one that does not reveal the address to the recipient). In addition, be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer e-mail addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts, Twitter handles, and mail addresses—with respect; they are private and must be kept so.

GSGATL strongly recommends that girls/parents use only the GSUSA-approved software programs, which offer protection of identity, to send emails to family and friends. All girl activity on the internet should be closely monitored by a volunteer.

Using Social Media

A girl (or group of girls) over the age of 13 may work in partnership with a volunteer to market cookies and other products online, using the social media account (such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or LinkedIn) of the volunteer. Social media is a fun, fast way to get out an urgent message, such as, “It’s Girl Scout Cookie Time!” Posting, tweeting, or pinning such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

Before girls use social media as a marketing tool, keep the following in mind:

- Girls must have parental permission to use social media.
- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- Any use of photos requires a Photo Release Form signed by parents/guardians of the girls pictured and the signature of any volunteers pictured.
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube), where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products, must follow specific requirements for
that site, as well as GSGATL guidelines. Girl Scout Photo Release Forms must also be signed by parents/guardians and any volunteers pictured. (In other words, this is not an easy venture, but if you and the girls are willing, it’s worth the investment.)

**Setting Up a Troop/Group Website**

- Troops whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group Facebook page or website. This site must be approved by the council, yes, but it can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market Girl Scout products, and talk about their Take Action projects.
- Don’t violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check with your council’s website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.
- It is important to remember the twofold purpose of the Girl Scout Cookie Program when selling cookies or other products. The primary purposes of these programs are to help girls grow and develop and to generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in any that are made, whether in person or over the Internet.

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**Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!**

Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their group, parent, or guardian Web sites, or social media sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out emails only when working directly with a volunteer. Daisies and their volunteers must use only blind emails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their Web sites.
Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media

The Girl Scout Cookie Program has always been about and focused on the program outcomes, through which girls learn important entrepreneurial and life skills and invest their earnings to positively affect their local communities; the cookie program has never been about and does not focus on individual girls’ sales results.

- There are many impressive cookie bosses throughout the United States and the Girl Scout Movement will continue to recognize dynamic cookie sellers for various achievements tied to the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- Girl Scouts of the USA does not currently track the top seller(s) of Girl Scout Cookies on a national level and does not identify a specific Girl Scout as the number one or “record-breaking” national cookie seller.
- Girl Scout councils should not reference such girls as “top sellers” in the media. Doing so detracts from the essence of the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which is based on offering girls important experiences in entrepreneurship, business, and finance from a young age, as well as providing girls and local Girl Scout councils with the funds necessary to power amazing experiences and opportunities for Girl Scouts year-round.

The Girl/Volunteer Partnership

Underlying all the lessons that girls can learn from their participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the girl/volunteer partnership. Ideally, this is a partnership between the girl and her leader and between the girl and her parents or guardian. Volunteers do not sell cookies, they participate only in supporting the direct involvement of girls.

During the Girl Scout Cookie Program, the girl/volunteer partnership may look like this:

- A volunteer and girl working together to make plans and set goals.
- A volunteer assisting a girl by giving her access to the information and training she needs but letting the girl do the selling and delivering of cookies.
- A volunteer guiding a girl in understanding the finances and letting her practice the skills.
- A volunteer advising a girl on how to market her cookies but allowing her to make her own decisions.
A volunteer helping a girl understand her responsibility to support her local council but ensuring that her participation is voluntary.

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookie and other products. Volunteers, Parents and girls should be familiar with and practice the following:

- Chapter 4 Being Safety-Wise – Volunteer Essentials
- Girl Scout Cookie/Council – Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Safety Tips for Product Sales
- Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints

Preparing for your Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Your council may have established cookie booth locations; contact the council before planning a cookie booth of your own.

Here are some notes about locations for a cookie booth:

- We encourage councils and volunteers to use their best judgement in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all girls and potential customers.
- Certain locations may be inappropriate for young girls based on the standards of your local community, may negatively impact the cookie program experience for girls, and/or may negatively impact our brand in your community.
- For additional clarity, girls should not sell in or in front of establishments that they themselves cannot legally patronize.
- Additionally, with respect to marijuana dispensaries, we have been steadfastly combating the unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout trademark by the cannabis community, which has been marketing—without our authorization—certain cannabis products under our youth-appealing brand. We are continuing to aggressively fight these unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout brand and hope that our councils and volunteers will join Girl Scouts of the USA’s efforts by discouraging cookie booth locations at such locations.

Once you’ve obtained council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they’ll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a
security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located. In addition, review the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints, as well as Chapter 4, Safety-Wise to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible.

On the day of the sale, these tips will help make booth sales enjoyable for everyone:

- Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Plan to have at least two volunteers and one girl at the booth at all times. At least one of those volunteers must be registered with the council and have a background check. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra volunteers on hand.
- Girls make **all** sales, except in cases where volunteers are helping Daisies handle money.
- Respect the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn’t blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

**Cookie Donation Programs**

Your council may have a cookie donation program established where customers may purchase cookies for the sole purpose of having them donated to an organization coordinated by your council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that the cookie program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:

- All cookie donation programs must be approved by your council
- Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless your council has the approval from other council jurisdictions
- Donated products cannot be resold and must be used in a responsible and ethical way.
- Donated products are used in a way that does not undermine the work of councils or jeopardizes the integrity of the Girl Scout Brand
Handling Product Complaints

It has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their cookies. If a customer for some reason is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies, they can contact the baker via the number printed on the side of the box of cookies. Troops/group should notify their council if they are aware of any customer dissatisfaction.

Using Online Resources and Social Media to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are only to use the Internet to market the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Treats & Keeps Program to friends and family (for clarity, “friends and family” are people whom the girl or her family personally know).

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program and online marketing and sales efforts should always be led by a girl while also being supervised by her parents or caretakers.
- Friends and family of a girl participating in the cookie program must not market or share a girl’s contact information, sales links, or sales information on public-facing online sites. They also should not share their sales link with any news outlets (this includes online and traditional news media, such as radio, television, or magazines).
- For safety purposes and other reasons, online marketing activities, especially those conducted through social media platforms, should always be done through accounts set to “private.”
- Should any online marketing activities be identified as in violation of guidance, GSUSA or the council reserves the right to intervene and request removal or remove the post.
- Parents, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and GSUSA in advance on any national news media opportunities.

Girls may use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, text messages, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale and collect indications of interest. All are effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and other product program. Girls under 13 cannot independently set up online marketing sites. Girls under 13 can use their parent or guardians’ online sites with their approval and supervision.
The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social media, and group websites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers.
But first, please keep in mind that girls:

*Can* market to and collect indications of interest from customers within their councils’ zip codes. Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Family members and Digital Cookie sales are the exception to this rule.

*Must* sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (available at [http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp)) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of volunteers.

*Cannot* expose their own or any other girl’s email address, physical address, or phone number to the public. When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their council name.

See Chapter 4, Being Safety-Wise for additional information and guidance regarding online product marketing and sales.

**Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals**

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is so well known in communities, it’s likely that your girls will already know a bit about it and want to get out there to start selling as soon as possible. But it’s important that the girls have a clear plan and purpose for their product program activities. One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

**Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?

**Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group’s account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).

**Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.

**Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product programs—if approached proactively and
energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group’s financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

**Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your Council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

**Remember:** It’s great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie and Girl Scout Treats and Keeps Programs, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects; for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money! When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

**Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level**

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Daisies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other Council-sponsored product programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisies are always paired with a volunteer when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but volunteers handle the money and keep the girls secure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Brownies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group volunteer handles money keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in Council-sponsored product programs.

Girls may decide to pay dues.

**Girl Scout Juniors**

The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.

Girls set goals for and participate in Council-sponsored product programs.

Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.
Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout’s life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. This chapter helps you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

### Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low’s love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls’ international travel, participation in volunteer learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Individuals, as well as Girl Scout troops and groups, can celebrate Juliette’s love of travel, new cultures, and new friends by making a donation to the JLF: make your check to Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, but mark it for the JLF. Send the check to Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, 5601 North Allen Road, Mableton, GA 30126.

You can also donate online at [www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/juliette_low_fund.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/juliette_low_fund.asp).

### Traveling with Girls

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Your Journey volunteer guide has a lot of other ideas about trips that bring the Journey to life. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting’s Ladder of Leadership:

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.

- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal). Younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
◆ **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to create interest, but not long enough to generate homesickness.

◆ **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the southeastern United States. Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.

◆ **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.

◆ **International trips (age 14 and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation. When girls (14 years old and older) show an interest in traveling abroad, contact GSGATL to get permission to plan the trip and download the Global Travel Toolkit. Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to London, India, Switzerland and Mexico.

◆ **Overnight Camping (Daisies and older):** A Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience. Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in sleep away camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in sleep away camp experiences lasting four or more nights.

**Using Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting in Their Travels**

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the three series of National Leadership Journeys. The Journey’s theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the volunteer guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel.

Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen **Medi**a, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they’re traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using **SOW WHAT?**, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using **BLISS: Live It! Give It!** can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

If girls also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can.
The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit Chapter 3 in this handbook to find out more about the three exciting series of Journeys. The *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* is available for each level of Girl Scouts. The Volunteer Tool Kit is an excellent resource for the most up to date information on Journeys.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls’ brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

### Travel Progression Checklist

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Determine a group’s readiness for travel by assessing the girls’:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their homes
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges

### Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you will need to obtain Council permission, although GSGATL may not require this information for trips of one day with no overnight stay. All trips involving high risk activities, extended trips (three nights or more), cruises, and international travel require written Council approval.
Before working with the girls to plan any trip a responsible volunteer who will be working

- Read the “Troop Trip and Travel” Safety Activity Checkpoint.
- Be sure at least one volunteer attending the trip has completed the appropriate learning opportunities before planning your trip. Refer to Chapter 7 for trip planning activities.
- Additional training or certification may be required based on the activity. Carefully read the Safety Activity Checkpoint related to the activity for clarification.
- Ensure all volunteers attending or participating in any trip are at least 18 years old, are registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and are approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. Your Service Unit Director or designee can verify who has been approved.
- Read, be familiar with and understand the guidelines found in this publication and any additional Safety Activity Checkpoints related to the specific activity you are planning to participate in.
- Ensure that all appropriate paperwork such as Permission For A Girl Scout Activity Form, Health History Form, Volunteer Driver Log, and any other records be obtained prior to the beginning of any trip or travel.

**Travel Approval**:Troops/groups must submit a [Travel Approval Request Form](#) for:

- All trips of three nights or more;
- International trips and cruises (due 18-24 months before travel);
- All trips that include high risk activities (see below); and

**Troop Camping**: For more information, refer to on page 175.

**High Risk Activities**

Some activities are designated as high risk activities. These activities have been classified as such because many of them require certified or specially-trained instruction or oversight,
may require approval of the location and venue, and/or have specific age/permission restrictions related to their use in Girl Scout programming. Here is a list of the most popular high risk activities:

» Archery  » Fishing (if in the water)  » Sledding & Snow
» Backpacking  » Horseback Activities  » Snorkeling
» Boating  » Indoor Skydiving  » Surfing
» Camping  » Kayaking  » Swimming
» Canoeing  » Outdoor Cooking  » Tubing
» Caving  » Paddle boarding  » Waterskiing
» Challenge Course – any type  » Riflery  » Wake Boarding
» Climbing & Rappelling  » Sailing  » White-Water Rafting
» Fencing  » Scuba Diving  » Windsurfing

Participation in any of these activities requires written permission from GSGATL in advance of the trip. Use the Travel Approval Request Form to request permission for a high risk activity.

### Planning Trips with Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Type</th>
<th>Chapter(s)</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Get Permission Forms signed by parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day trips with no high-risk activities</td>
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<td>Day trips including high-risk activities</td>
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<td>Overnight trips with no cooking or high-risk activities</td>
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<td>Camping trips with indoor cooking</td>
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<td>Camping trips with outdoor cooking</td>
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<td>Trips of three nights or more</td>
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<td>Cruise and International Travel</td>
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Complete [Day Trips and Overnights](#) online learning

Review [Volunteer Essentials: Chapter 5: Safety Information and Chapter 7: Trips, Travel and Events](#)

Review [Volunteer Essentials: Chapter 8: Camping – Taking Leadership to the Outdoors](#)

Follow [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) (located online at)

Get [Permission Forms](#) signed by parents
Certified *Troop First aider* present during the trip

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Trained *Troop Camper* present during the trip

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Current *Volunteer Driver Log* listing every driver (If renting a vehicle, a Driver Info Sheet must be submitted to Council for each driver)

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All volunteers traveling with the troop are at least 18 years old, are registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and are approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three

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Travel approval request form (or *Troop Camping Reservation Form* for camping trips on Council property) completed in its entirety

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Detailed budget and itinerary

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Letters or notes from at least three of the girls traveling describing previous trips and how they have been involved in the planning for this trip

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Completed Insurance Application and premium payment

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Read the Safety Activity Checkpoint for *Cruise Travel* or *Global Travel* before beginning planning

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For international travel only, complete *Globe Trotting with Girls* for Chaperones, Leaders, and Girls at least 12 months prior to the trip

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**From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers**

The *Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace* in Savannah, Georgia, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit. Reservations are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace. Families and individuals, however, do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

In addition, four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. The *World Centers* are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world.

Closer to home, check with your Council to see whether Council-owned camps and other facilities can be rented out to the group of girls with which you’re working.

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Travel Guidelines

One tool that will help you keep trips girl-led, is to start with simple, close-to-home trips. As girls succeed at planning those, move on to longer or more complex trips. If girls are not able to choose the what/when/where/who and how of a trip, it may not be age-appropriate! As you help girls choose and plan their trips, be sure they use these Travel Guidelines established for troop and other pathways in GSGATL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Age</th>
<th>Day Trip Travel</th>
<th>Overnight Trip Travel</th>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies</td>
<td>Start out with short, local trips of several hours’ duration. You may want to invite a parent or other guardian to come along for the first few trips until you know the girls are comfortable in the troop. When girls are ready — take progressively longer trips.</td>
<td>Recommendation: The first overnight experience should include a parent or other guardian for each girl. An overnight troop camping experience once the troop has completed one full year together and have successfully complete a variety of day trips.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies</td>
<td>Day travel is unlimited.</td>
<td>May take overnight troop trips of one or two nights once progressive day trips have been successfully completed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors</td>
<td>Day travel is unlimited.</td>
<td>May take overnight trips of one or more nights based on previous troop travel experiences. Travel is unlimited in the continental United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors &amp; Ambassadors</td>
<td>Day travel is unlimited.</td>
<td>Travel is unlimited in the continental United States. Troop international travel is approved for girls 8th grade and above. <a href="https://www.girlscouts.org/globe/">Globe Trotting with Girls</a> is required at least one year in advance before applying for this type of trip.</td>
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How do you know if the trip is approved?

- Day trips: The troop leader or other responsible, approved volunteer who works with the troop is responsible for ensuring that all safety guidelines are followed for day trips taken by the troop, and that all accompanying volunteers are approved.
volunteers and registered members. Approval is not required from GSGATL unless a high-risk activity is involved.

All trips involving high risk activities, including camping (regardless of duration): Submit a Travel Approval Request Form

◆ __to GSGATL at least **two months** prior to the start of your trip.
◆ Trips of three nights or more, inside continental United States: **four months** prior to departure.

**Cruises:** Submit a Travel Approval Request Form

◆ __to GSGATL at least 6 months prior to departure. Cruises to US Territories are approved for girls 6th grade and above; all other cruises approved for 8th grade and up. Refer to the GSGATL Cruise Travel Guidelines for specific guidelines.

**International travel:** Submit a Travel Approval Request Form

◆ __to GSGATL at least 18 months prior to travel. Globe Trotting with Girls must be taken to receive permission to continue planning. Refer to the GSGATL Global Travel Guidelines for specific guidelines.

Encourage the girls to collect and submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

◆ Detailed budget and itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times.
◆ Location and type of premises to be used.
◆ Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained).
◆ Names and contact information for the volunteers participating.
◆ Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved.
◆ Participants’ skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on).
◆ Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable.
◆ Required agreements or contracts (if the document requires a waiver or limitation of liability).

**Involving Chaperones**

Every chaperone must be at least 18 years old, must be a registered member of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be an approved volunteer with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the volunteer-to-girl ratios (refer to page 110). As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:
Being a positive role model.
Respecting all girls and volunteers equally, with no preferential treatment.
Creating a safe space for girls.
Prioritizing the safety of all girls.
Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement.
Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor.
Creating an experience for and with girls.
Getting fit (appropriate to the trip).

Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, on page 27.

A volunteer chaperone’s primary responsibility is supervision of the girls to ensure that Safety Activity Checkpoints are being adhered to. Keep this in mind before participating in any activities with the girls that may distract your attention from this critical responsibility.

**Guidelines and Procedures for Tag-Alongs**

A tag-along is any unregistered volunteer or child who is accompanying the troop on a trip or activity. Tag-alongs are generally not covered by Girl Scout insurance, except in special circumstances. It should be noted that all volunteers who regularly participate in troop activities, assist with troop meetings, or attend trips are required to be currently registered members and GSGATL approved volunteers. We recognize that there are times when a troop leader or other required volunteer may have to bring along another child who is not participating in the program due to child care needs. Guidelines for the inclusion of tag-alongs are as follows:

- Tag-alongs must be aware of and follow all Girl Scout policies and procedures and are the responsibility of the troop leaders or other responsible, approved volunteer who works with the troop.
- Tag-alongs must stay with the group at all times.
- Tag-alongs are not allowed to participate in high risk activities.
- No child under the age of 5 years old may attend as a tag-along on a camping trip on Council property. Children under the age of 5 require a level of care that would not permit the accompanying volunteer to be able to act in a leadership position with the girls. They may camp during special family camping activities where each family is responsible for the supervision of their own children.

**Guidelines and Procedures for Males Traveling with Girl Scouts**

Dads are often involved in the leadership of a Girl Scout troop. It is not uncommon for a man to be a troop co-leader, troop first aider, or troop camper. There are no rules that preclude a male volunteer, who is invited by the troop, from troop camping with Girl Scouts. Common sense and prior planning will make camping with a male troop volunteer
a positive experience. Follow these simple guidelines and enjoy your camping trip.

◆ All volunteers, including males, accompanying a troop camping must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must have a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years.

◆ Make sure the facility you reserve has a separate tent or room for your male volunteer to sleep in. It is not appropriate for males to sleep in the same tent or room with Girl Scouts in the troop setting. This does not apply to family camping.

◆ Males need to have bathroom facilities available that are not used by the girls. If only one bath room is available, coordination of usage is of utmost concern. A sign posted when the bath room is off limits to girls is a must. Facilities with separate bathrooms for males and females are strongly suggested.

◆ Use common sense when couples share sleeping space at troop outings. There are no rules that spouses cannot sleep in the same tent or room. However, sexual behaviors of any kind are inappropriate at any Girl Scout function where girls are present. Girl Scouts should be sleeping in separate sleeping quarters from couples while troop camping or on overnight trips.

◆ Males are required to follow all guidelines and standards regarding troop camping, travel, and the Girl Scout leadership experience.

◆ GSGATL does not allow adolescent boys over the age of 10 to participate in troop camping activities on GSGATL properties. (They may camp during special family camping activities where each family is responsible for the supervision of their own children.) Many troop leaders and parents of Girl Scouts expect the Girl Scout camping experience to be a time when girls don’t have to worry about opposite sex-related issues.

A minimum of two approved, unrelated female volunteers who do not live in the same household must be present at all times during Girl Scout overnight trips.

**Travel Accommodations on Trips**

The safety and security of the girls and volunteers attending Girl Scout trips is always a top priority. Part of the planning process should include working with the girls and volunteer chaperones regarding appropriate behaviors when traveling, and especially when staying somewhere overnight.

When staying overnight in public accommodations such as commercial campgrounds, condos and hotels, troops leaders should discuss with girls the appropriate way to travel (always in pairs) and the group should set and agree to the parameters regarding answering phones, opening doors, etc.

Remember that parents/guardians must be involved in decisions about sleeping arrangements.
They must agree to the plan for accommodations and sleeping arrangements prior to the trip.

If at all possible, accommodations should be sought that allow for each participant to have their own bed or sleeping area (a place to set up a bed roll or sleeping bag). Be sure you do not exceed the recommended capacity of the room. The troop may rent a condo or make arrangements to stay at a local camp (Girl Scout or private).

When traveling and staying in a hotel room, it is generally not financially feasible for troops to rent enough hotel rooms to have two volunteers in each room, and the largest majority of troops traveling domestically usually only have two or three volunteers along with them. Here are some suggestions for Girl Scout troops when staying at a hotel:

- Request that all rooms are on an interior hallway and that they are all close together.
- Request that you have adjoining rooms whenever they are available – this allows you to leave the door between the rooms open at all times.
- For older girl troops who have traveled extensively, you may have girls in some rooms and volunteers in another room with no co-mingling. Whenever possible ask for the rooms to be in a block (for example if you have four rooms they are all on the same hall and facing each other).
- Renting a suite gives you two double beds and a pull-out bed, so you can have four girls in a room (two in each bed) and a female volunteer on the pull-out.
- For mother/daughter trips where there is a mom with each girl, you can have a mom and daughter share a bed in regular double rooms with two double beds.
- For regular double rooms with two double beds, you can request a roll-away bed and have four girls in a room (two in each bed) and a female volunteer on a roll-away bed.

Regardless of what the leadership and parents decided, in all cases girls and volunteers should be reminded about proper behaviors and encouraged to report any improper behaviors to the troop leaders or other trusted volunteer.

With the exception of mother/daughter groups, girls and volunteers should never share a bed together.

If you would like further information or help with determining the appropriate type of accommodations for a trip, please contact riskmanagement@gsgatl.org.

**Transporting Girls**

For more information on Transporting Girls, refer to on page 111.

**Letting Girls Lead**
Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same.

It’s true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip—from a day-long event to an international trek—starts by asking the following:

- What do we hope to experience?
- Who will we want to talk to and meet? What will we ask?
- Where are we interested in going?
- When are we all available to go?
- Will everyone in our group be able to go?
- Are there physical barriers that make the site inaccessible?
- What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What’s the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What’s the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- How will we share the Take Action story?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls can make specific arrangements, attend to myriad details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. Later, after they’ve returned from an event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

**Tips for Girls Traveling Alone**

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip less stressful, and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about
avoiding excess communication with strangers, not wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as smartphones, iPads, and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Staying Safe During the Trip

Be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have girls sign it):

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage
- How to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What to do in the event of a crime
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

GSUSA strongly suggests against using Airbnb, VRBO, Flipkey, Roomarama, Homeaway, VayStays, Tripping, Couch surfing due to safety and risk concerns including appropriate liability and homeowner’s insurance.

GSGATL does not prohibit the use of such travel companies, however, please use all caution when reserving, including:

- Reading reviews for the specific rental
- Closely look at the photos offered
- Pay close attention to the refund policy – if no refunds are allowed, you may want to consider a different option
• Condos and other multi-tenant units: If this information is not provided, ask the owner:
  o If security is provided; is it 24/7
  o How maintenance and safety concerns are addressed
  o How far from the parking lot is the room?
  o Is there an elevator available if multi-floor?
• Homes:
  o Do a google search for the address and check the neighborhood for crime records
  o Ask about parking, is there secure parking on grounds or is street parking required?
  o Are there street lights?

If you have any concerns at all regarding the location of the rental, try to visit it before hand to be sure it is in a safe neighborhood, in the vicinity of the activities you plan.
Travel Security and Safety Tips

According to FBI statistics, Atlanta ranks among the top 14 cities in the United States for domestic minor sex trafficking. Approximately 300 girls across Atlanta are lured into trafficking every month. It is the fastest-growing business of organized crime and the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world. It is not just an international problem; the United States has its own homegrown problem of interstate sex trafficking of minors. The average age at which girls first become victims is 11 to 14. Traffickers represent every social, ethnic, and racial group. Traffickers are not only men—women run many established rings. They have an especially easy time establishing trust with young girls. Stay safe and be alert to sex trafficking/child exploitation predators locally and abroad:

» Be wary of people (male and female) who seem overly friendly or overly interested in you or your group.

» Be cautious when you meet new people, and do not share your location or phone number.

» If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, try to act like you know what you are doing and where you are going; seek help from local authorities in a well-lit place.

» Exercise good judgment about what sorts of places to frequent during the day and at night and avoid being on the street at late hours more than necessary.

» Research host-country laws before traveling.

» Research and know where local authority offices are; relative to where you are staying.
Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

» Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.

» Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.

» Don’t mention or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.

» Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.

» Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).

» When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.

» Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.

» If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don’t stop to pack your suitcase.

» Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these

Hosting a Girl-Led Beyond the Troop Event

Girl-led Beyond the Troop Events include both multi-troop events and events held on the service unit level, whether for Girl Scouts only, for Girl Scouts and a parent or family, or for the wider community. A tea party for your service unit’s Daisy troops, a father-daughter dance for all Girl Scouts in your town, and an overnight service unit camporee are all examples of girl-led Beyond the Troop Events. Some events last for a day or less (such as a dance or ceremony), others may be overnight (a lock-in, for example), and some may last two nights or more (such as a camporee or trip). If you’re working with girls of any age who want to host an event for other troops or groups, the volunteer(s) advising the planning group must first complete the GSGATL online training in LARC called, Planning Events Beyond the Troop with Emergency Preparedness. In addition to risk management training, the workshop emphasizes the importance of having girls lead the event planning, not sitting by passively while you or another volunteer actually plan the event. If girls are not sure how to get started, ask them to think about the following questions:

◆ Why are we having an event? What’s its purpose?
What sort of event do we have in mind?
What’s our main topic or focus?
What’s our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
Who is our intended audience?
Does the audience have to be invited and pre-register, or can anyone come and pay at the door?
Will speakers or instructors need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find them?
Where will the event take place?
Is there a charge for this venue?
Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
What sort of entertainment will we provide?
Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
Keep in mind that if you are hosting an event that requires that girls be dropped off at the beginning and picked up at the end, you should have enough GSGATL-approved registered volunteers to supervise the girls attending without a parent.
At no time should girls be left unattended or in the care of a volunteer who is not a GSGATL-approved volunteer.
What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
How will we advertise the event?
What decorations will we use?
Will we give away any keepsakes?
Will we charge for the event?
Who will set up the event?
Who will clean up after the event?
How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Leadership Journey: Almost every Leadership Journey includes an event for family, friends, and/or community groups – usually as part of the “Take Action” step of the Journey. There are planning tips in the volunteer Journey guide, and step-by-step planning guides in the girls’ book, beginning with the Girl Scout Junior series. Encourage girls to refer back to them as they plan other events!
GSGATL’s Guidelines for Event Approval

Any event that will last more than three consecutive days does not fall under these guidelines and requires contacting Risk Management for further direction prior to any planning or incurring any expenses.

Step 1 - Training

The volunteer event director takes training called Planning Events Beyond the Troop with Emergency Preparedness. In this course, volunteers will learn how to help girls plan a successful event. You will also receive valuable tools and resources along with GSGATL-specific information that will help to make your event successful.

Step 2 – Brainstorming and submittal

The event director recruits a girl committee and mentors them as they decide on an event theme, date and time, costs, etc. The committee can be made up of representatives of many troops, or one troop may volunteer to organize the event. Most Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies are not developmentally ready to plan a service unit event, but older Brownies can certainly plan smaller events for other Brownies and for Daisies!

At least 60 days in advance, the committee submits the Beyond the Troop Event (BTTE) Application to Risk Management using the JotForm, which automatically sends it to Council risk management for review. If this is a troop money-earning event, refer to 29. Money-Earning for Troops and Service Units on page 56. Any venue rental agreement or contract must be submitted to GSGATL for review and execution at least 60 days in advance.

Note: For camporees/ingatherings and other overnight events, the application must be submitted to Council at least 90 days prior to the event.

Please be aware that review and approval of contracts may take a few weeks. If you are using a location that requires that any type of agreement be signed, you must submit the agreement or contract for approval by Council staff. You may submit the documents with your BTTE form or send them to riskmanagement@gsgatl.org

Step 3 - Approval

Once the event is approved, an email from the Risk Management Department will be sent to the event director, Service Unit Director and Volunteer Support Specialist for the area. An event sponsored by a troop or service unit is not approved until a Beyond the Troop Event application has completed the cycle of approval and an email has been received
from GSGATL’s Risk Management Department. Once the application has been approved, non-member insurance is ordered and certificates of insurance are issued if needed.

**Step 4 – Advertising**

Once you have written approval for the event you may forward flyers and other information to Service Unit Directors to share with troops, and continue with your planning.
Chapter 8: Camping- Taking Leadership to the Outdoors

Camping is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills and confidence, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they go for a day, week, or longer, Girl Scout camping gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun under the guidance of caring, trained volunteers. Every girl deserves a chance to camp! Read on for information about some of the camp experiences available in our Council.

Sleepaway Camp

Sleepaway Camp (also known as resident camp) offers girls entering kindergarten through high school the opportunity to camp for two to fourteen days and nights (the average is six nights). Girls sign up as individual campers or may elect to go with a buddy. At each of our camps girls have the opportunity to learn valuable life skills while making new friends in a fun, safe, all-girl environment.

Each camp offers a variety of living units in cabins. For most sessions, girls can choose their own skill and fun activities, and plan additional activities with their counselors, while taking advantage of the resources available at the campsite. While at camp, girls identify, and work on the skills in a variety of program areas that result in earning badges. Sleep away camping is available at our Council’s three camps: Timber Ridge, Meriwether and Misty Mountain.

All of the camps offer the traditional camp experiences girls know and love, including archery, canoeing, arts and crafts and outdoor skills. In addition, several camps offer the following specialty activities.

◆ **Equestrian:** Both Misty Mountain and Meriwether offer horseback riding programs. Misty Mountain is located in the beautiful mountains of northwest Georgia, while Meriwether is located on rolling hills south of Atlanta.

◆ **Water Enthusiasts:** Check out Misty Mountain where girls can hone their skills while sailing, paddleboarding, canoeing, or kayaking on beautiful Lake Marvin.

◆ **Thrill of high adventure:** Misty Mountain, Meriwether, and Timber Ridge offer a variety of adventure challenges including climbing walls, ropes courses, and more.

◆ **STEAM Center:** Timber Ridge provides a variety of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics labs and programs to enhance girl’s skills.
Counselor In Training and Leadership Development Experiences: Misty Mountain, Meriwether and Timber Ridge each offer Counselor in Training and other Leadership development experiences for middle and high school girls. These training programs combine group learning experiences and hands on practice in program design, leading younger girls and identifying needs and opportunities in the camp community.

The following chart shows some of the activities that are offered at each camp. Check out the Outdoor pages on www.girlscoutsatl.org for pictures and more detailed information about our camps. Refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints Handbook in the Appendix of this handbook to see which activities are appropriate for girls at each program level.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Horseback Riding</th>
<th>Challenge Course</th>
<th>Challenge Course</th>
<th>Climbing wall</th>
<th>Flying Squirrel</th>
<th>Giant Swing</th>
<th>Riflery</th>
<th>Swimming Pool</th>
<th>Paddle boarding</th>
<th>Sailing</th>
<th>Canoeing</th>
<th>Kayaking</th>
<th>Tow-behind Tubing</th>
<th>Archery</th>
<th>Outdoor Skills</th>
<th>Sewing</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Crafts</th>
<th>Drama</th>
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Day Camp

Day Camp is available for girls entering kindergarten and older. At day camp, girls typically camp for three or more consecutive days for four hours or more per day. The occasional overnight experiences are sometimes offered and are optional. Girls sign up as individual campers and may elect to go with a buddy. The girls and staff plan and carry out activities that develop skills and often provide an opportunity to earn badges. Day camping is usually Council-sponsored or approved, with the Council training the staff and approving the facilities and site. A day camp may also be offered at a Council-owned site or a site contracted by the Council in your local community.

Council sponsored Day Camp is available at Camp Timber Ridge. Girls attending day camp have the opportunity to participate in all the same activities as sleep away campers and can earn badges through the development of skills, have lunch and snacks provided, and before and aftercare is offered. Bus transportation is provided to the camp on a daily basis from select locations in the Greater Atlanta area. Weekly overnights are offered and are optional. The program targets
Kindergarten through 8th grade.

There are also over fifteen volunteer-run Girl Scout Day Camps in our Council which are sponsored by local service units. These day camps occur for three-day to one-week sessions in June or July. Volunteers are recruited and trained and the camps are generally held at parks, churches or other large gathering places in the local community near the sponsoring service unit. A variety of different activities are offered at each camp. Most of these day camps run from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday – Friday.

Outdoor Program Events

Over 40 events are held at Council camps each year offering opportunities for troop/weekend camping; Camporees; Skill focused educational events; day outings and family camping experiences. Girls may elect to attend as a part of a troop or as an individual depending on the event. Events are themed and most offer an opportunity for an all-inclusive camp experience. Find more information about event offerings on our Web site (under Events & Activities). Note that all overnight trips require at least two approved, unrelated female volunteers who do not live in the same household to be present at all times.

Overnight Program Events

Overnight troop (group) camping, often referred to as “weekend camping” in our Council, is available for girls in kindergarten and older, and typically lasts over three consecutive days and two nights. Weekend camp experiences are planned and carried out by a group of girls and their leaders, using Council-approved sites. Some weekend camp experiences are designed to include staff with program expertise—this a good choice for girls and volunteers who may want support with their camp experience. Learn more about troop camping at the Outdoor pages on our Web site. Where May We Camp?

Council Owned/Operated Camps

1. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Inc. operates three camps – Meriwether, Misty Mountain, and Timber Ridge. Each camp has sites (units) for beginning and intermediate campers as well as advanced campers. Each camp has one or more day use areas for groups not spending the night. Along with troop camping, some camps or units may be used for training, special events, day camp, sleep away camp and service unit camporees. Reservations for use of our Council camps can be reserved through the online application at https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/en/camp/ways-to-camp/troop-camp-and-service-unit-day-camps.html Select a camp and it will take you to our Doubleknot.reservations system for
that camp. If you have not used the system before, you will be prompted to set up an account for your troop and walked through the process. If you get lost, call the camp registrar at the Mableton Council Office.

- Council camps are not closed, and refunds are not made because of rain. Include rainy day activities in your planning with girls!
- **Severe Weather Conditions**: In the event of severe weather, leaders should evaluate the driving conditions and determine whether they should wait until the next day to travel. The Council will notify the leader of record if we close camp for any reason – a full refund will be issued under these circumstances.

The following is a quick checklist of each Council camp location and some of the facilities and activities available at each. For complete information about particular units at each camp, please refer to Campsite 411, available at www.girlscoutsatl.org.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cabins with full kitchens</th>
<th>Cabins with partial kitchens</th>
<th>Platform Tents</th>
<th>Primitive Camping – pitch your own tent</th>
<th>Fire Ring in the Unit</th>
<th>Archery</th>
<th>Outdoor Skills</th>
<th>Letterboxing</th>
<th>Self-Directed Kits</th>
<th>Canoeing</th>
<th>Swimming – when in season</th>
<th>Hiking Trails</th>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Mountains</th>
<th>On-Site Staff</th>
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<td>Misty</td>
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**Non-Council Campsites**

In addition to GSGATL’s four Council camps, Girl Scouts may camp on other Girl Scout Council campsites, or other youth agency camps; in state parks or national forests; or private campsites. These sites must meet the guidelines for troop camping in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, located on our Web site, and be approved by the Council. Troops that wish to camp on sites not operated by the Council should fill out a [Travel Approval Request Form](#) and submit it to the Council for approval at least [one month](#) prior to the requested date. It is recommended that the application be turned in several months in advance in case there is a problem with the proposed camping area. A volunteer should have a Troop Camper certified in [Troop Outdoor Training](#) and a volunteer trained and currently certified in first aid. All
volunteers accompanying the trip must be at least 18 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. As an organization committed to open membership regardless of race, creed, nationality, or socio-economic factors, Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta, Inc. will patronize only those public accommodations that are open to all individuals.

**Who Can Go Troop Camping?**

Currently registered Girl Scout Daisy (see special note below), Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador troops trained and accompanied by a volunteer who has taken Council approved outdoor training, (as detailed below) and a volunteer with a current First aid/CPR certification are eligible to apply for overnight camping. Girl Scout Daisy camping experiences can include:

- An overnight troop camping experience once the troop has completed a full year together and has successfully completed a variety of day trips.

**Required Outdoor Training for Troop Camping**

Refer to the Planning Trips with Girls on Page 197 for more information about the appropriate training and approval procedures for camping trips. If your camping trip requires a Troop Camper, use this link [https://training.gsgatl.org/outdoor-certification](https://training.gsgatl.org/outdoor-certification) for additional training details.

**Girl Readiness and Volunteer Supervision Checkpoints**

When is a girl ready for a day trip or one-night overnight at an indoor facility with kitchen and bathrooms? As troop leader, you must decide if the trip or overnight activity is appropriate for the maturity of the girls and their basic skill level. Refer to The Safety Activity Checkpoints Handbook on our website, for more information. Here are some things to consider:

A girl needs to...

- be ready emotionally and physically for the planned trip.
- have the skills needed to plan the trip and participate in activities/camp living.
- want to attend the planned trip.
She is ready when she...

- is not afraid to be away from home and family overnight (and parents are prepared to let her go!).
- can keep up with, and take care of, personal and troop belongings.
- gets along well with all girls in the troop, can work as part of a group, and can help resolve conflicts that might arise within the group.
- can cope with the “unknown” – strange places, darkness, “critters,” etc.
- is in good health* and takes responsibility for her personal health and safety, such as hygiene, dressing, staying with the group, etc.
- has stamina, does not tire quickly, and is strong enough to carry personal and troop gear like a bucket of water, armload of wood, etc.
- can help plan a simple trip – what, when, where, who, how; can plan simple menus.
- can help make and use kaper charts sharing responsibility: for general clean-up of site, food preparation, washing dishes, cleaning up kitchen or cooking area, cleaning bathrooms and sleeping quarters.
- knows health and safety rules, use of the buddy system, simple first aid, staying safe and sound, what to do in an emergency.
- knows how to dress and pack for activities/ weather; can make a bedroll or roll a sleeping bag.
- is willing to help the troop earn money for the trip (dues and product programs).

*Include girls with disabilities and other special needs! Communicate with girls and/or with their caregivers, to assess any special needs or accommodations related to health issues or disabilities. The “Campsite 411” document includes information on the accessibility of GSGATL’s campsites.

Learn more about adaptive camping resources and information from Global Explorers (http://globalexplorers.org/) and Wilderness Inquiries (www.wildernessinquiry.org/).

Pre-camp training for girls and volunteers should include:

- identifying the skills they will need
- learning new skills
- reviewing and practicing present skills
- learning about and practicing minimal impact camping (see below)
- learning health and safety procedures, first aid, and emergency procedures
- working together as partners to plan menus and activities.
Volunteer Supervision

As a troop or other pathway leader, you not only supervise activities yourself, you help the other volunteers accompanying you understand what supervision means when activities are girl-led. Volunteers supervise by

- teaching, watching, guiding, and directing girls as they take part in activities, but not taking over and doing things for the girls.
- encouraging girls to try new things and learn new skills.
- giving girls real responsibility for finishing a job, so they can see themselves as useful and competent.
- being aware of potential danger and if necessary, intervening before injuries occur. (Safety is a primary concern.)
- providing effective correction when needed – reminding girls what is and is not acceptable behavior; expressing disapproval of the behavior, not the child.
- taking full responsibility for the group and knowing where everyone is at all times (counting heads, checking that girls are where they say – in bathroom, in bed, etc.).
- being available for advice and assistance for difficult tasks.
- being a role model by your actions.

Volunteer Chaperones and Drivers must:

- be at least 21 years old, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement, and must be approved volunteers with a criminal background check on record that dates back no further than three years. At least two approved, unrelated female volunteers who do not live in the same household must always be present.
- know their roles and the leader’s expectations.
- understand the plans the girls have made for the trip and realize all volunteers on trip should be acting as coaches (watching, guiding, and not doing).
- be told what equipment and clothing they need and what the site will be like.
- be aware of the rules in force at the site as well as the schedule and expectations that the girls have set for themselves.
- understand the safety systems for the trip (travel rules, buddy system, staying found, etc.) that the girls have learned in Chapter 5.
- know the program standards for transportation safety in Volunteer Essentials in Chapter 5 of this handbook, and in the Safety Activity Checkpoints Handbook in the Appendix.
- know the emergency procedures for the site.
- have appropriate forms and emergency equipment in vehicles and on site.
Camp Safety and Security

Before going on any trip in the outdoors, become familiar with the security and safety guidelines in this manual, and, of course, in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Camp safety and security are just part of being prepared. Before any outdoor activity, girls and volunteers should plan ahead and discuss safety. Planning ahead, anticipating possible problems and their solutions, is all a part of prevention or risk management planning. Girls and volunteers should work together to create a prevention plan for their outing. Your troop’s certified First aider would be a good person to help girls review safety rules, check out the first aid kit and practice simple first aid. Safety means helping girls be safe and secure and preventing accidents as they take part in activities or use facilities, supplies, equipment and tools. Security means to protect, or safeguard. It also means freedom from fear. It is the protection of individuals and the protection of “things” – sites, facilities, and possessions – from unwanted visitors, both human and animal! Some basic security guidelines include:

- If possible, the troop leader and trained troop camper (and perhaps the troop officers in an older girl troop) should visit the campsite ahead of time and become familiar with its facilities. If camping at one of the Council run camps, leaders may call the camp staff member at a Council campsite to arrange a visit at a time convenient to the staff member, since s/he has a regular maintenance schedule to keep. If a troop wishes to pre-visit a camp, a day-use area may be reserved through the online application [https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/en/for-volunteers/online-support-for-volunteers/volunteer-essentials1/2015/camping_reservations.html](https://www.girlscoutsatl.org/en/for-volunteers/online-support-for-volunteers/volunteer-essentials1/2015/camping_reservations.html) which will take you to our Doubleknot reservations site for each camp.
- At camp, always use the treddy system. (1 adult and two girls, three girls or 2 adults and 1 girl) A volunteer may be a “substitute for part of a treddy, for after dark trips to the bathroom or latrine.
- Stay near the group. Don’t wander away from the campsite (unit).
- Get to know other troops camping near you. Avoid contact with strangers – if feeling threatened or in trouble, move away from the threat and toward people and lights.
- Always carry a flashlight at night. Be sure girls know where the certified first aid volunteer and other volunteers are.
- Girls should report suspicious sounds, activities or people to a volunteer in their group. A volunteer should report to the camp staff member, or if in a public place – call 911.
- Any food left out on tables, taken into tents or thrown into bushes is a great attraction for unwanted animals. Clean up promptly after meals and secure trash. Put food away in sturdy coolers locked in a cabinet, or cache it.
- Lock cars, cabinets and buildings whenever you leave your campsite. Bring only what you need to camp and leave your valuables at home.
Discuss and practice emergency drills with the group – lost camper, suspicious person, etc. Refer to Approaching Activities.

Role play or practice what to do if lost, approached by a stranger or animal, an alarm sounds, there is thunder or other trouble (girls can think of “scenarios” – that’s good risk management!)

**Emergencies**

Review the section Approaching Activities before your trip. When you arrive at a Council camp, locate the posted emergency procedures. They are usually located in the unit shelter, but ask the staff person if you cannot find them. Be familiar enough with what to do in various emergencies (fire, severe storms, etc.) so you and the girls can act quickly and efficiently. There is less chance of panic if girls have had “drills” and know what to do. Make this a natural part of your camp planning and preparation. If camping in a public use campground, make sure that you are aware of safety procedures and safe places to go in an emergency situation.

**Health History**

Girl Scouting helps girls discover how to stay healthy and have a feeling of well-being, and volunteers provide supervision and model healthy behavior, but ultimately the health of a girl is the responsibility of herself and her parent or guardian. In addition to an Activity Permission Form, girls need a Health History Form signed by their parent or guardian for troop camping, water sports, horseback riding, skiing, hiking, non-contact sports, or other physically demanding sports. Health History Forms are available from the service centers and on the Council Web site. They are filled out by the girl's parent or guardian to give an updated record of the girl’s health status. Volunteers participating in troop activities should consider whether any of their own health information should be shared with the troop First Aider in case of emergencies. Adults with known allergies or other health concerns may want to provide a completed health history form in a sealed envelope, to be opened by the First Aider only in case of an emergency. The Health History Form should be reviewed and updated before each trip if any information has changed or new medications are being used, and must be updated at least once a year.

**Insurance**

Make sure that you review Girl Scout Activity Insurance for the most current information regarding insurance coverage that the Council may provide for specific events.
Camp Equipment

When troops discover that they love camping and other outdoor adventures, it may become practical for them to own their own camping equipment. This will allow girls to use a wider range of camp sites, to have equipment available when they need it, and to become familiar with its use and care. Large items, like tents will take long-range planning and budgeting, but families might help with small items at a “camping shower” when extra utensils or gadgets from home are donated to the troop. For beginning campers, the next time your group wants to “make something,” try a campfire toaster, nest of kettles, stuff bag, patrol box, etc. made from recycled or re-used materials – it’s fun! If girls borrow camp equipment from family or friends, they must be prepared to return it clean and in good condition. Also be prepared to replace lost items promptly or pay for any necessary repairs. You might consider renting equipment from a local camping equipment supplier.

Campsite 411

What types of units are available at Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta’s camps? A wide variety! Some of the types of facilities include:

- Day-use only areas (picnic shelter, water, fire ring, space for activities).
- Primitive (pioneer) sites, where girls pitch their own tents.
- Platform tents with cots and mattresses; flush toilets or latrines are nearby.
- Cabins with HVAC, full kitchens (fully stocked) and bunk beds or mattress on the floor for sleeping.
- Cabins with HVAC, partial kitchens (minimal without dishes) and bunk beds or mattresses on the floor for sleeping.
- Cabins with HVAC without kitchens – outdoor cooking is the only option - and beds for sleeping.

Campsite 411 can be found on the Council Web site. Be sure to read the descriptions in Campsite 411 closely so you are sure that you are getting the type of facility you and the girls want or need. Call the Camp Program Coordinator or Director and ask specific questions. Most camps have crock pots, and other small appliances for rent if you need additional equipment for food prep. The following information provides an overview of what is available for use at each camp.

Unit Equipment*

These items can be found at every Council camp site, including cabins:
| One large and one small cast iron Dutch oven and frying pan for cooking over a fire | One each: rake, shovel, broom, and metal bucket |
| Three dish pans | One trash can |
| Fire extinguisher | Toilet bowl brush (not in units with latrines only) |
| Plunger (not in units with latrines only) | Posted emergency weather procedures and directions to the nearest hospital |

In a cabin with a partial kitchen you can expect to find*:

| Unit equipment described above | Stove (except at Misty Mountain) | can opener |
| Tables and chairs for capacity of unit | Refrigerator | Sink |
| Toaster | Electric Coffee Pot |

In a cabin with a full kitchen you can expect to find*:

| Unit equipment described above | Stove | Electric can opener |
| Tables and chairs for capacity of unit | Refrigerator | Sink |
| Toaster | Electric Coffee Pot | Small hand mixer |
| Cookware and bakeware (large pots, pans, baking and cooking utensils, etc.) | Tableware for the stated capacity (eating utensils, plates, bowls, cups, mugs, | Toilet paper, soap, paper towels, trash bags and firewood, if available. |

*These items are provided at Council properties only (Meriwether, Misty Mountain, Pine Valley, Timber Ridge).

**Guidelines and Procedures for Tag-Alongs**

For more information, refer to page 163.

**Guidelines and Procedures for Males at Girl Scout Events on page 164.**

**Minimum Impact and Leave No Trace**

To ensure that we, as well as generations that follow, have the opportunity to enjoy quality outdoor experiences, each one of us must share the responsibility of making it so. Each of us must adopt a personal code of conduct for outdoor activities and try to live by it. The rules and suggestions below are, for the most part, versions of commonly agreed upon practices employed to achieve minimum impact outdoor activities. Leave No Trace means exactly what it implies, that when we venture out-of-doors, we leave no impact to show that we were there. It is an awareness and an attitude rather than a set of rules. It applies in our backyard or local park as much as in the
backcountry. We should all practice Leave No Trace in our thinking and actions, wherever we go. Take some time to review the following with girls so they may plan their experience appropriately. The following bullet points are intended to help you understand the meaning of Leave No Trace and minimum impact:

- **Stay on the Trail** – Use established trails when hiking. Each time we leave the trail, we contribute to further erosion and degradation of the trail.

- **Do Not Litter** – Whatever we must pack in, we must pack out. If you can, pick up trash that someone else has left behind. It is always a good thing to carry a baggie in your back pocket just for this purpose.

- **Right of Way** – Give “Right of Way” to uphill packers – they appreciate being able to maintain rhythm. Also give “Right of Way” to pack animals, wild animals, and to motorized vehicles (for your own safety).

- **Take Care of Our Streams and Lakes** – Camp at least 200 feet away from streams and lakes, in order to minimize water pollution. Wash yourself and dirty cookware a reasonable distance from fresh water sources. Do not dump soap suds into streams and lakes, as someone might be downstream drawing water for cooking or drinking purposes.

- **Do Not Offend Living Plants** – Do not pick, cut, chop, smash, carve or stab living plants (including trees).

- **Keep Cooking Fires Appropriate** – Try cooking meals using propane or butane stoves instead of wood. The earth needs decomposing wood to renew itself, and it is a food source for many animals and insects. If you must cook over wood, keep your fire to the bare minimum needed to get the food cooked. Use only downed dead wood. Never take wood from live trees and use existing fire rings, where possible.

- **Respect Wildlife** – Quick movements and loud noises are stressful to animals. Considerate campers practice these safety methods:
  
  o Observe wildlife from afar to avoid disturbing them.
  o Give animals a wide berth, especially during breeding, nesting, and birthing seasons.
  o Store food securely and keep garbage and food scraps away from animals so they will not acquire bad habits. Never feed wildlife. Help keep wildlife wild.

- **Be Considerate of Other Visitors** – Thoughtful campers respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience. Be considerate of other campers and respect their privacy.

- **Travel and camp in small groups** (no more than the group size prescribed by land managers).
Let nature’s sounds prevail. Keep the noise down and leave radios, electronic
devices, and pets at home.
Select campsites away from other groups to help preserve their solitude.
Always travel and camp quietly to avoid disturbing other visitors.
Make sure the colors of clothing and gear blend with the environment.
Respect private property and leave gates (open or closed) as found.

Leave No Trace Principles for Girls

- Know Before You Go (plan ahead and prepare)
- Choose the Right Path
- Trash Your Trash
- Leave What You Find
- Be Careful with Fire
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Kind to Other Visitors

Procedures for Reserving a GSGATL Campsite

- Complete all appropriate volunteer camp training.
- Meet with troop and discuss camping plans with girls.
- Complete the online registration process on Doubleknot. Pay deposits when
  registering and final bill 30 days before your trip to be sure the camp can plan for
  your trip.
- Registration opens April 1 for the upcoming Girl Scout year (October-September).

Applications for troop camping are accepted online. If you cannot access the Doubleknot
account, please call the Camp Registrar, to secure a reservation. Refer to the Council Web site
for updated information and procedures.

CAMPS ARE NOT CLOSED AND REFUNDS ARE NOT MADE BECAUSE OF RAIN. Be sure girls
include rainy day activities in their planning! In the event of severe weather, leaders should
evaluate the driving conditions before leaving for camp and determine whether they should
wait until the next day to travel. GSGATL will notify the leader of record if we close camp for any
reason – a full refund will be issued under these circumstances.
Refund Procedures

Cabin –

- If written cancellation of a camp site is received at least 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date, and we are able to place a troop from a wait list, a refund less your $50 deposit will be applied.
- If written cancellation of a camp site is received at least 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date, and we’re not able to place a troop from the wait list, half of the payment will be refunded.
- If written cancellation of a camp site is received less than 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date no refund will be allowed.

Tent –

- If written cancellation of a camp site is received at least 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date, and we’re able to place a troop from a wait list, your entire payment will be refunded.
- If written cancellation of a camp site is received at least 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date, and we’re not able to place a troop from the wait list, half of the payment will be refunded.
- If written cancellation of a camp site is received less than 30 days prior to the scheduled camp date no refund will be allowed.
Girls and volunteers participating in troops can meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month for several months—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe and easily accessible to girls and volunteers, and within a reasonable commute (“reasonable” having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute subway ride may be too long. Use your knowledge of your girls to determine what is reasonable). In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet. Some ideas include:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Brownies who meet twice a month from November through March at a local community center.
- Seven girls who are homeschooled and meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop.
- Girls who meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities.

Forming a Troop Committee

You’ll want to involve other volunteers in the troop—there’s no need to go it alone or depend on too few volunteers! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it’s shared. Think about the people you know who you admire, who can connect with girls, who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. (Remember that these volunteers will need to register as Girl Scout members, complete a criminal background check, take online learning sessions, and review written resources.) Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support. And feel free to use the sample welcome letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop’s volunteer network.

Remember: Be sure every volunteer reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines.

Your troop committee members might help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating volunteers with expertise on a topic of special interest to girls
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
Managing troop records.

Troop volunteers must become registered and approved members following the processes in Policy 2, Membership Conditions and Policy 3, Selection. Volunteers select their volunteer role when they purchase their membership. Possibilities include:

- **Troop Volunteer-Product Sales**: Support troop by managing participation in Treats and Keeps or the Cookie Program.
- **Troop Treasurer**: Support troop by occasionally helping leaders at meetings, giving updates on troop finances and helping girls budget for troop expenses.
- **Troop Meeting Helper**: Support troop by occasionally helping leaders at meetings, supporting activities, encouraging participation and supporting positive behavior. (Troop helpers may drive or supervise girls.)
- **Troop First aider**: Support troop by accompanying the troop on trips or any activities requiring a First aid-trained volunteer.
- **Troop Camper**: Support troop by helping to prepare girls for outdoor experiences and accompanying them on camping trips.

To ensure a troop’s success, parents should be encouraged to volunteer in supportive roles from the start. This will allow co-leaders to focus on working with the girls and ensuring tasks for the troop are completed. You can also solicit help from others in the community particularly when needing a person of expertise for troop presentations.

### Holding Troop Meetings

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a comprehensive digital tool accessible via the web on your home computers, smartphones, and tablets to help you have a fun and successful year with your Troop!

### Parts of a Troop Meeting

Many volunteers find it helpful to think of meetings having six parts, as outlined below, but feel free to structure the meeting in a way that makes sense for you and the girls.

| Start-up | Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting starts. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages or active games; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk. |
|———|———|
| Opening | The opening focuses attention and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, |
story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special.

**Business**

Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to lead, especially as they grow up! (Note that some troops move the business portion of the meeting to a later slot.)

Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to hold an activity at a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the three leadership Journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the volunteer guide for Journey activity ideas.

**Activities**

Treats are an option some troops decide to include in their meetings and range from a bottle of soap bubbles or a jump rope to a food snack. If girls choose to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a treat. You’ll also find plenty of snack ideas and signup forms in the volunteer guide of most leadership Journeys.

**Clean-up**

Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls’ names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.

**Closing**

The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle.

You help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their program levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouting. They can also assist you in preparing materials for activities. For trips, campouts, parent meetings, and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, handing out programs, cleaning up, gathering wood, and so on. As long as you pay attention to program level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!
Letting Girls Lead

Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities. Girls partner with you and other volunteers, and you facilitate, act as a sounding board, and ask and answer questions. Girls from Daisies through Ambassadors will gain confidence and leadership skills when given the opportunity to lead their activities, learn cooperatively as a group, and learn by doing instead of by observing.

The following are some traditions troops have used for girl-led governance, but these are just examples. National Leadership Journeys offer examples of team decision making, too.

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle/Treehouse**: While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System**: In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a Take Action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project; girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board**: In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board’s responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting**: Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.
Transporting Girls

For more information on transporting girls, refer to Transporting Girls on page 166 in Chapter 7 of this handbook.

Kaper Charts

“Kapers” is the traditional Girl Scout word for the jobs or chores that need to be done at troop meeting, at camp, or for a ceremony, party, or other special event. A kaper chart divides and rotates the jobs fairly among the girls. A kaper might be done by an individual girl, by “buddies” or by a patrol, team, or committee. Typical kapers for a Daisy, Brownie, or Junior troop meeting might include:

- Attendance Taker/Secretary - Girl marks attendance sheet at each meeting (younger girls might use a poster).
- Dues Collector/Treasurer - Girl collects dues, if brought to troop meetings; adds up total (with volunteer help if needed) and reports to rest of troop during business portion of troop meeting. This could be combined with taking attendance.
- Opening Ceremony - Girl or small group chooses and/or leads opening activity, which might be a flag ceremony, a song or poem, the Girl Scout Promise and Law, or something created by the girls; it could also be the opening activity from the Journey Sample Session.
- Note Taker/Recorder/Secretary (Girl Scout Juniors) - Takes notes or “minutes” during meetings or discussions and reads them back to the group. (Fourth graders may need a volunteer “helper” when it comes to spelling!) During brainstorming or troop planning sessions, writes ideas on newsprint while someone else facilitates the discussion.
- Clean-up Manager(s) - Everyone is involved in clean-up! At the end of the meeting or session, the manager or clean-up team ensures tables and chairs are put in order, all trash is put in the correct place and all lights are turned off – or whatever needs to be done at your meeting place. (Girl Scouts ALWAYS leave a site better than they found it!)
- Closing Ceremony - Girl or small group chooses and/or leads the closing, which could be a Friendship Circle, good-bye song or activity, or the closing activity from the Journey Sample Session.

“Kapers” for Older Girl Scouts

A large Cadette troop may still need a kaper chart to divide work fairly, but it is the responsibility of
the girls to determine what jobs go on the chart, and who will make and maintain the chart (usually the troop secretary.) By middle and high school, girls may prefer to elect troop officers who serve for two or three months or longer: president, vice president/sergeant-at-arms, secretary, treasurer, and others as needed. (Or in a small troop, a town meeting moderator, recorder, and clerk.) Seniors and Ambassadors generally prefer to work out their own methods of dividing up jobs – often just working together to get things done.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Here is just one example of how you and the girls could set up your troop year:

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting.
- Open a checking account, if needed.
- Register all the girls in the troop.
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each other’s names and find out more about each other.
- Kick off a Leadership Journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.
- Enjoy the full Journey, including its Take Action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year.
- Have the girls plan, budget for, and “earn and learn” in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Treats and Keeps Program.
- Help girls plan a field trip or other travel opportunity.
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the Journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the Journey girls’ book and/or volunteer guide.
- Pre-register girls for next year.
- Camp out!
- Participate in a Council-wide event with girls from around your region.
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level.

Keeping Girls Engaged with Girl Scouts

As you begin planning your end-of-the-school-year activities or start talking about plans for “next year”, you may find that while some girls can’t imagine their lives without this same troop of girls – and you as the leader - other girls (or their parents) feel they no longer have time for a full-year
commitment and don’t plan to continue with the troop.

- Let girls who feel their life is too busy for troop meetings know that’s okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways (pathways) to participate. Talk to girls about day and sleep away camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events GSGATL may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.

- If big changes are happening in the troop (older girls bridging, leaders “retiring” or moving away) try to prepare the girls as far in advance as possible. Arrange for bridging girls to visit and do activities with their “new “troop, and help them plan a special ceremony to celebrate advancing to the new level. Involve new troop volunteers (or potential volunteers) in troop meetings and activities so the girls get to know them and feel comfortable with them. If girls or volunteers are moving away, help the troop plan ways to stay in touch.

- If the whole troop is bridging, but you’re not planning to continue as their leader, we hope you will find lots of exciting ways to be involved in Girl Scouts, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life! Be sure to capture the girls’ excitement and work with them as they plan a meaningful bridging ceremony. Let your Service Unit Director know as soon as possible that you won’t be continuing, and offer to help find or recommend a replacement.

- If girls are unsure about bridging (or continuing in the same level), talk to them about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities. Or better yet, have older girls meet and talk with them!

- What about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with girls to plan activities or the coming year. If you’re a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let GSGATL know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp, help organize a series or event, take a trip? The possibilities are endless.

**Disbanding a Troop**

*(please refer back to chapter 2, where policies regarding troop disbandment is discussed)*

All remaining troop resources (camping equipment, books, or materials) should be either divided equally among the receiving troops (if girls are joining other troops) or given to the Service Unit Director. Service Unit Directors generally use funds and resources from disbanded troops to help start new troops.
When One Troop Becomes Two Troops

Occasionally, with agreement among troop volunteers, parents and girls, one troop will decide to split into two troops. Before the troop divides, there must be a clear understanding about what happens to existing troop funds and materials/supplies. They may either be used as planned before the new troop is formed or be evenly distributed between the old and new troops, using a pro rata per girl share. At no time are troop funds given to an individual girl or volunteer. The final Troop Finance Report from the original troop must indicate how the funds were distributed. The signed report is turned into the Service Unit Director.

Raising Awesome Girls

From the time she came into your life, you've only wanted the best for your daughter. You want to see her feel happy and loved, be confident, make new friends, stay healthy, excel in school, and eventually rise up the ranks in a career she finds fulfilling. But you also want your girl to be independent, grow into her own person with her own unique strengths and beliefs, and to learn to use her voice. And all of that? Well, it can be overwhelming at times to say the least.

That's why we're happy to share straightforward, realistic, and proven parenting advice on everything and anything you might deal with when raising girls. From when to get a family pet and how to help her make new friends to more serious issues like bullying, discussions about current events, and school struggles, we've got you covered. Hand-in-hand, we can take the guesswork out of parenting and bring the fun back in.

For the full list of articles, visit: http://www.girlscouts.org/en/raising-girls.html

Thank you for being an awesome volunteer!

We * Love Our Leaders
Appendix

Glossary

What we mean when we say...

» **Approved Volunteer** is a volunteer Girl Scout member who has an approved criminal background check on file that dates back no further than three years. Only approved volunteers may work directly with girls or handle troop or service unit funds.

» **Badges (national proficiency badges)** are official awards that Girl Scouts of all ages may earn - although Daisy “badges” are called Petals and Leaves. Earning badges is an opportunity to “educate, not decorate” and girls, parents, and troop volunteers are asked to read and talk about the Girl Scout Honor Code, found in the *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* for Brownies through Ambassadors, before starting work on a badge. Also, see “Patches” and “Council’s Own badges,” below.

» **Badge & Sash Stores** are our Council-operated Girl Scout shops; they carry most of the items found in the *Girl Scout Catalog* or online. This is where troop volunteers can order membership pins and stars, proficiency badges, Journey awards, and other award pins and patches, the *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*, and the Leadership Journey books. The Badge & Sash Stores also carry uniform components, fun patches, official and local Girl Scout casual wear, and gift items.

» **Bridging** is the process of moving from one Girl Scout program level to the next; Daisies bridge to Brownies, Brownies bridge to Juniors, and so forth. Bridging is often celebrated a with special ceremony, and girls may earn a bridging award to help them progress to the next level.

» **Council, “the Council,”** is often a shorthand reference to a professional staff member at Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta – as in, “Council says you have to be registered to sell cookies.” In reality, a Girl Scout Council is both a geographic area and a corporate entity. Councils are chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA to manage Girl Scouting in a specific area, and are made up of all the registered Girl Scouts in that area, not just Council staff members.

» **Council’s Own badges** are Council-created national awards that provide a unique, local opportunity that girls cannot experience anywhere else. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta’s “Own” badges for Brownies and Juniors may be downloaded from Anytime Activities at www.girlscoutsatl.org.

» **Financial aid, scholarships** are available for girls whose family cannot afford the annual national membership dues or basics such as Girl Scout and World Trefoil pins, a uniform sash and the *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* or a Leadership Journey book.
» **GSLE (Girl Scout Leadership Experience)** is what girls do in Girl Scouting, how they do it, and how they will benefit from it. The GSLE engages girls in three key activities: discovering who they are and what they value; connecting with others; and taking action to make the world a better place. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to 5 national leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys. The best way to deliver the program is through the leadership Journeys.

» **Investiture** is a traditional ceremony that welcomes girls and volunteers into Girl Scouting; each new member makes her Girl Scout Promise and is *invested* with the symbols of membership, the appropriate Girl Scout pin and the World Trefoil pin. Typically, troops have their (girl-planned) Investiture Ceremony between the fourth and sixth meeting, but there’s no rule.

» **Journeys (Leadership Journeys)** are a hands-on approach to teaching leadership skills to Girl Scouts of all ages. Through a series of activity sessions that lead to awards, girls discover more about themselves, their values and skills; learn to connect and work with others; and learn and use steps in planning to carry out a Take Action Project. Girls use the skills they learn during their Journeys to earn the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

» **Juliettes** are girls who choose to register as an individual member of Girl Scouts of the USA, as opposed to registering with a troop, series, camp, or other pathway.

» **LARC (Learning and Resource Center)** is an online resource for volunteers where you can find online training and downloadable resources to help you work with girls, get organized, and be your best leader.

» **Membership registration** is one of the steps required to become a Girl Scout is to pay GSUSA’s annual membership dues for the year. Girls and volunteers must register every year to continue their Girl Scout membership. Registered members are covered by Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance and are entitled to wear the Girl Scout pins, uniforms, and official casual wear, etc. *Being a registered member of Girl Scouts is not the same as being an approved volunteer; see Approved Volunteer, above.*

» **Patches** are cloth award emblems; some are official, but many are not! Official GSUSA awards that are patches include the Leadership Journey awards, LiA awards, and the World Thinking Day and Global Action awards. In addition, there are many **unofficial** earned awards (Cookie Program, Council enrichment patches) that are patches. There are also fun and souvenir patches (My Mom’s a Leader, Pizza Tour) and participation patches (camps, events, etc.) that have no requirements. Unless a patch is an official Girl Scouts of the USA award, it goes on the back of the uniform tunic, vest or sash, or on a camp blanket or jacket, or a tote bag or in a patch book.

» **Rededication** is a ceremony where reregistering Girl Scouts renew their Promise. Some groups include a rededication as part of their bridging ceremony; in a group with both new and returning members, girls often plan a joint investiture/rededication ceremony to start off the new Girl Scout year.
» **Service Unit** is a smaller geographic area of our Council, usually defined by school districts. It is managed by the volunteers in the area, and supported by a Volunteer Support Specialist, a Council staff member. Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta is made up of 93 service units.

» **Service Unit Meetings** are real-time, in-person meetings open to all registered Girl Scouts ages 14 and older – but are mostly attended by troop co-leaders! Most service units meet six to nine times a year to share news, get ready for Council and service unit events, have learning roundtables, and network.

» **Service Unit Teams** are committees of volunteers, usually experienced troop co-leaders, who take on the added responsibility of helping the Service Unit Co-Director (see below) manage the service unit. Service team members may help organize troops, mentor new troop co-leaders, help girls plan service unit-wide events, track the training and recognitions of other volunteers in the service unit, manage service unit funds, set up a service unit Web site, chair the Annual Fund, the Cookie Program, or the Treats & Keeps Program.

» **Start-Up Fees** are often collected by new troops to purchase the basic supplies they need to get started. Parents may be asked, *but never required*, to contribute up to $25 or make an in-kind donation (first aid supplies, for example) to the troop.

» **SUD** is an acronym for Service Unit Co-Director, an administrative volunteer who manages Girl Scouting in a specific geographic area, called a service unit (see above.) She (or occasionally he!) works with her Volunteer Support Specialist to set goals and create a plan to meet those goals. She is the chairperson of the service unit team and chairs service unit meetings. She is probably the person who welcomed you to Girl Scouting and directed you to *Volunteer Essentials*.

» **Take Action Projects** are at the heart of the Leadership Journeys and the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. They happen when girls first observe and explore in their community to identify problems, challenges or issues that need to be addressed or solved, then dig deeper to find the cause, or root of the problem. Finally, girls take action to correct or solve that root cause and make the community a better place.

» **WAGGGS, World Association** refers to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts; WAGGGS is the acronym. Through the work of a World Bureau in London plus an elected board, WAGGGS links its 145 member countries (including the United States) through programs, events, conferences, and a [Web site](http://www.waggsworld.org). It also provides training and support for potential new member countries. When you wear your World Trefoil pin, it shows you are a member of WAGGGS.