

# GIRL SCOUTS OF NASSAU COUNTY, INC

## **POLICIES, STANDARDS & GUIDELINES**

A Girl Scout of Nassau County Resource for Adults in Girl Scouting providing direction and guidance to ensure the delivery of quality program in a reasonably safe and secure environment.



**Girl Scouts®**

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## **Introduction**

*Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.* The Girl Scout Leadership Development Program provides girls an opportunity to discover more about themselves and the world around them, to connect with other girls and adults, and to take action. The Girl Scout Promise and Law is the cornerstone of all Girl Scout programs and activities.

Adults partner with girls to deliver the Girl Scout Program. It is expected that all efforts will be made to ensure that Girl Scouting is delivered in a reasonably safe and secure environment. Adults and girls must work together to ensure physical and emotional safety, to protect property, to respect natural resources and to uphold the good name of Girl Scouts.

The purpose of adopting policies and standards and providing safety guidelines, resources and advice is to support adult volunteers, especially adults who work with girls. When these policies, standards and guidelines are followed, the Girl Scout organization, the public, and the families who entrust us with their daughters, can be assured that we have acted with care and prudence.

This document and Girl Scouts of the USA's [GSUSA] *Safety-Wise* cover many situations. However, no document can anticipate every eventuality. Adults are expected to use prudence and good judgment in dealing with extraordinary circumstances. When questions arise, volunteers are encouraged to seek advice from the Chair of Association Volunteers [CAV] for their area, or to contact Girl Scouts of Nassau County [GSNC] staff.

The Board of Directors of GSNC has established policies, standards and guidelines pertinent to delivering Girl Scouting in Nassau County with input from policy-influencing volunteers, operational volunteers and staff. This document, *Policies, Standards and Guidelines for Girl Scouts of Nassau County, Inc.*, is designed to be used in conjunction with GSUSA's *Safety-Wise*, *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, and/or *Leader's Digest*, as well as with GSNC's *Volunteer Policies* and *Money in Girl Scouting*. Issues and topics not directly addressed in this document may be found in the other documents listed, or in other Girl Scout program resources.

## **Policies, Standards, Guidelines definitions**

A Girl Scout Policy is an established course of action which must be followed. Policy assures uniformity and consistency of action throughout the Council.

A Girl Scout Standard is the desired course of action that provides the optimum level of health, safety and informal education experience which should be provided to the girls. Standards are similar to policies in that they help people achieve effective results through consistent action. While standards are worded more flexibly than policies, they permit the Association Service Team, with the Chair of Association Volunteers and the Field Director, to exercise a certain degree of judgment to meet the needs of a particular situation.

A Girl Scout Guideline provides further interpretation and should be used as a direction, a 'road map'; the way we get there, showing the ways and the hows; not specific.

## **Membership**

**Policy:** Membership in Girl Scouts is open to all girls ages 5-17, as well as to all adults, who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and who pay the membership fee. (Financial assistance is available to girls and adults.) Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, creed, national origin, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or disability.

**Policy:** All girls who participate in the Girl Scout Program, and adults who directly provide services to girls or other adults in an Association or the Council in general, must be registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA.

**Standard:** Troop Leaders accept responsibility for ensuring that all registration materials are submitted to the responsible persons within the Association or to the Council Service Center within two weeks of the Troop's first meeting, and in a timely way throughout the year as other individuals join.

## **Adult Leadership – Roles and Responsibilities**

Adults are expected to model welcoming behavior and attitudes.

### **Background Checks**

**Policy:** All adults who wish to serve in leadership positions, either working directly with girls or in administrative or governance positions, must consent to a criminal background check. Background checks are done at the time of initial application, and the Council may request periodic updates. The Council covers the cost of a standard electronic background check.

**Standard:** In lieu of GSNC's own background check, GSNC will accept verified proof of current criminal background screening from another youth serving organization, including public and private schools.

### **Training**

**Policy:** All adults who have accepted a Troop Leader position must take the appropriate and approved leadership training as outlined and provided by Council.

**Policy:** In order for a Girl Scout Troop to conduct meetings, there must be at least one registered, trained adult Leader present. In addition, there must be enough additional adults present to provide the ratio of adults to girls as set forth in *Safety-Wise* for the age level of girls.

**Standard:** For optimum functioning of a Troop, there should be a minimum of two registered and trained adult Leaders.

**Standard:** All adults in roles other than that of Troop Leader are expected to take training appropriate to their roles.

## **Troop Support Team**

**Standard:** In order to provide girls with quality experiences, a Troop should have sufficient adult support known as a Troop Committee.

**Guideline:** The Troop Committee includes adults who will provide assistance for implementing participation in Product Programs, solicitation for Family Campaign, and for supporting Troop activities including regular programs, earning awards, supplying refreshments, providing transportation and providing coverage to maintain appropriate adult/child ratios at meetings, trips and events.

## **Adult Coverage Ratios**

**Policy:** GSNC maintains coverage ratios in compliance with New York State and GSUSA's *Safety-Wise*. These ratios will be published annually and updated in the interim as necessary. These ratios will be found on the GSNC website. Coverage ratios vary for meetings, trips and events.

## **Meeting Places**

GSNC follows standards set forth in *Safety-Wise*.

## **Tag-Along Insurance**

**Policy:** Tag-Along insurance provides coverage for all non-registered children and adults who may attend Girl Scouts of Nassau County Troop activities. Tag-Along insurance payments must be submitted at the time of Troop registration.

## **Trip Approval**

**Policy:** All applications for trips or excursions away from the usual designated Troop meeting site must be approved in advance. The proper Trip Application may be submitted on line or directly to the Association Service Team.

## **Adult Training for Camping Trips**

**Policy:** When a Troop goes on a camping trip utilizing tents or an indoor facility at a camp, there must be a "Camp Trained" adult involved and present who has completed all requirements for approved outdoor experiences as set forth by Girl Scouts of Nassau County. "Camp Training" must be updated periodically as required by GSNC.

## **First Aid Requirements for Camping Trips**

**Policy:** A Troop must have an adult in attendance who is certified in Level 1 First Aid or equivalent as listed in *Safety-Wise*.

**Guideline:** If a Troop is unable to arrange for a Level 1 First Aider for a camping trip, it may arrange to share a Level 1 First Aider with another Troop at the same site. Written consent from the cooperating First Aider should be secured prior to the event and presented with the Camp Application.

## **Day Trips and Simple Overnight Trips** (as described in *Safety-Wise*)

**Standard:** An adult responsible for guiding the planning, and accompanying girls on a day trip or a simple overnight trip (excluding camping trips) must be familiar with *Safety-Wise* and/or participate in appropriate trip training and educational opportunities offered by the Council.

## **Transportation for Trips and Activities**

Girl Scouts of Nassau County adheres to the standards set forth in *Safety-Wise* for transporting children.

## **Debt Policy**

**Policy:** A person owing a debt to Girl Scouts of Nassau County for more than 90 days may be removed immediately from any adult volunteer position currently held. Girl Scouts of Nassau County reserves the right to seek collection of all debts.

## **Drug/Alcohol Use**

**Policy:** Alcoholic beverages (including beer and wine), marijuana, narcotics (except by doctor's prescription), or illegal drugs of any kind must not be brought, sold, bought or used at any Council, Association, Camp or Troop girl event.

**Guideline:** Alcohol may be served at events that are designed to be attended primarily by adults. It is assumed that any girls who might be present at such events will be under the supervision of responsible adults who will not be using alcohol, and/or that girls will be separated from the areas where alcohol is being served. Examples might include a child who accompanies her family to an adult recognition event or girls from a Troop or GSNC messenger unit who are receiving recognition or performing at a community event.

## **Use of Confidential and Personal Information**

**Policy:** From time to time in the course of doing Girl Scout work, adult Girl Scout volunteers may have access to personal and/or confidential information involving girls, their families and other adults. Information may include names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses and/or medical records, as well as other information that might relate to family health, circumstances, living arrangements or financial matters. Girl Scout adults should never share such information beyond its intended use, including using mailing lists, phone lists or email distribution for other than Girl Scout matters without the permission of the other individuals. Likewise, Girl Scout adults should be prudent in discussing details relating to girls, their families or other adults in public settings and in ways that are not directly related to their responsibilities as Girl Scout volunteers. It is important that Girl Scout adults model appropriate behavior for girls.

## **Troop Finances and Money- Earning Activities**

### **Troop Bank Accounts**

**Policy:** Each Troop that has funds in excess of \$25.00 shall deposit said funds in a checking or savings account in the name of Girl Scouts of Nassau County Troop #\_\_\_\_\_.

**Policy:** Each Troop account must have a minimum of two signatories on the account; one being the Troop Leader and the other a member of the Association Service Team or a representative from Council.

**Standard:** Three or more signatories ensure appropriate and responsible access to the account in an emergency and/or special circumstance.

### **Troop Financial Reports**

**Policy:** Each Troop must submit a Troop Financial Report to the Association Service Team, by the published deadline.

**Standard:** Troop Leaders are responsible for completing and submitting the Troop Financial Report. The Troop Leader may not be reappointed if these reports are not submitted by the end of the current Girl Scout Year.

### **Troop Monies**

**Policy:** A Troop should primarily finance their activities through Troop dues and money earned through Council-sponsored Product Programs. If necessary, additional monies can be earned through Council-approved Troop money-earning activities. These additional activities may not take place during Council-sponsored Product Program core dates (as published annually).

## **Product Programs**

**Policy:** Girl Scout Product Programs provide girls opportunities to learn valuable skills while earning money to fund Troop activities and trips, as well as support community service and action. Girl Scout Product Programs allow every girl the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouts, regardless of a family's ability to pay. While no girl is ever required to participate in Girl Scout Product Programs, every girl and her family should be offered the opportunity and receive all materials to participate in Girl Scout Product Programs.

## **Other Troop Money Earning**

**Policy:** Troops who have participated in Council-sponsored Product Programs are eligible to conduct other money-earning activities when they have specific goals and funding needs. Troop money-earning activity applications must be submitted in writing and approved by both the Association Service Team and by Council prior to implementation. These additional activities may not take place during Council-sponsored Product Program core dates (as published annually).

**Standard:** In order to assure there is enough time for planning and implementation of the additional money-earning event, it is necessary that the Troop submit the application in sufficient lead time and with appropriate financial documentation.

## **Solicitation of Funds**

**Policy:** All girls, adults, Troops and/or Associations must obtain written permission from Council before soliciting funds (outside of Product Programs) for Girl Scout use from any other organization, institution, corporation, business, foundation, government entity, elected official or other individual. Girls, adults, Troops and/or Associations should submit their requests to Council stating the reason for the request, how the funds will be used to support Girl Scouting and the current status of the Treasury involved.

**Policy:** Unless otherwise notified by Girl Scouts of the USA, all girls, adults, Troops and/or Associations are prohibited from soliciting funds on behalf of Girl Scouting to be used for any other charitable, religious, school, community, civic, political or relief group or organization.

**Standard:** Troops may decide to use a portion of their own Treasury to support charitable or community efforts. Such decisions should involve all girls in the Troop and should be made by a democratic process.

## **Disbanded Troop Monies**

**Policy:** Prior to disbanding a Troop, a Summary of Troop Finances must be submitted to the Association Service Team and arrangements made for the transfer of funds to the Association.

## **Association Monies**

### **Association Bank Accounts**

**Policy:** Each Association shall have a checking account bearing the name of Girl Scouts of Nassau County, Inc. and the Association. This account should have a minimum of four signatories.

**Standard:** The signatories must include the Executive Director (or her/his staff designee) and the Chair of Association Volunteers (CAV), the Association Treasurer, as well as another member of Service Team appointed by the CAV. It is recommended that the Association as the fiduciary of the funds act prudently and require two members of the Service Team to sign checks for conducting Association business. The four signatories ensure appropriate and responsible access to the account in an emergency and/or special circumstance.

### **Association Financial Reports**

**Policy:** The Chair of Association Volunteers (or her/his appointed designee) must submit a written Annual Financial Report to the Council by the end of the current Girl Scout Year.

**Policy:** The Chair of Association Volunteers (or her/his designee) should submit copies of all Troop Financial Summary in the Association's jurisdiction to Council by the end of the current Girl Scout year.

**Standard:** Proper handling of monies, accurate tracking of funds, and timely financial reporting is necessary in the Association to ensure appropriate oversight of funds. Associations should use the Troop Financial summaries as a resource to review Troop activities, and to approve Troop money-earning activities. This helps ensure a quality balanced program in a reasonably safe environment within their Association.

**Standard:** Associations should provide an updated report of finances at each Service Team Meeting, at the Annual Meeting of the Association, and upon request of the public.

### **Association Money-Earning**

**Policy:** Association money-earning activities must be submitted in writing and approved by the Council prior to implementation and may not take place during Council-sponsored Product Program core dates (published annually).

**Standard:** In order to assure there is enough time for planning and implementation of the additional money-earning event, it is necessary that the Association submit the application with sufficient lead time and appropriate financial documentation.

## **Girl Scout Program and Activities**

Program and activities in Girl Scouting are focused on leadership development, utilize the values found in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and each program and/or activity should allow girls to discover, connect and/or take action.

*Safety-Wise* provides a wealth of direction that focuses on ensuring the safety and security of girls in a variety of activities, events and situations. All adults in charge are expected to review *Safety-Wise* whenever new activities and events are being contemplated, planned and executed.

### **Commitment to Girl-Centered Programming and Decision Making**

***Policy:*** Girl Scouts of Nassau County affirms its commitment to a girl-adult partnership in planning and delivering the Girl Scout Program. Girls should be involved at age-appropriate levels of decision making within a Troop, including goal setting, and planning and implementing activities.

### **Girl Scouts and the Internet**

The Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Nassau County supports and promotes the use of the internet and stresses the importance of safety and security on the internet for girls, adults, Troops, and the organization.

***Policy:*** Girl Scouts of Nassau County defers to Girl Scouts of the USA's current policies regarding use of the internet to promote Girl Scout Product Programs.

***Policy:*** All Association and/or Troop websites must be registered with Girl Scouts of Nassau County's Information Management Department.

***Policy:*** An Association or Troop website may not use copyrighted designs, text, graphics, trademarks or symbols without specific written permission from the copyright or trademark holder. (See *Safety-Wise* for specific examples.)

***Guideline:*** An Association and/or Troop should refer to Girl Scouts of Nassau County's publications "Surfing the Internet ... Guidelines for Girls' Online Safety" and "Creating Your Own Website." Girls should be encouraged to follow the good practices in these and other publications while earning technology awards, emailing other individuals or a Troop, creating a website, surfing the net for information, using instant messaging/text messaging/chat rooms and/or social networking sites.

## **Glossary of Terms Frequently Used in Girl Scouts of Nassau County**

**Association/Service Unit** – The geographic jurisdiction for delivering and managing Girl Scouting in Nassau County, generally organized around public school districts. There are currently 36 Associations in this Council. Association boundaries are determined by the Girl Scouts of Nassau County Board of Directors. The term Service Unit is used in most other Girl Scout Councils.

**Blue Book of Basic Documents** – Issued by Girl Scouts of the USA. Contains the Charter, the Constitution, the Bylaws, Policies and Credentials of the National Organization.

**Board of Directors** – Governing body of Girl Scouts of Nassau County that is responsible for setting policy, providing financial oversight, serving as stewards of the assets of the corporation and ensuring the delivery of Girl Scouting in this jurisdiction, in keeping with the Charter issued by Girl Scouts of the USA. The Board is comprised of officers and members-at-large. The Board is a volunteer body with the exception of the Executive Director/CEO who is a non-voting member.

**CAV – Chair of Association Volunteers** – An adult volunteer appointed by Council to promote and maintain Girl Scouting in the local community. The CAV leads and manages a Service Team of other volunteers who identify and recruit other adults, recruit girls, plan programs at the local level, and work to ensure that information flows between the Council staff, Girl Scout members and the community.

**Delegate Chair** – An elected volunteer who is the lead on the Association governance team. The Delegate Chair works with the Delegate Communications Committee to ensure that the policies and standards of the organization are followed on the local level.

**Delegate Communications Committee** – One of the standing Board Committees concerned with the governance system of Girl Scouts of Nassau County.

**Girl Scouts of Nassau County Bylaws** – The set of rules adopted by the Council to conduct Council and Association meetings and nominate and elect the Board of Directors.

**Girl Scouts of Nassau County *Policies, Standards and Guidelines*** – Document containing policies, standards and guidelines adopted by the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Nassau County. The information in this document provides resources and support for adults working with girls.

**Girl Scouts of Nassau County Volunteer Policies** – Girl Scouts of Nassau County acknowledges that the direction and success of Girl Scouting rests in the voluntary participation of its adult volunteers. This document addresses the recruitment, selection, placement, development and recognition of volunteers.

**Guideline** – Is a direction, a “road map”; the way we get there, showing the ways and the how’s; not specific.

**Leader’s Digest** – Excerpts taken from *Blue Book of Basic Documents* to give the Leader a quick referral to those parts of the official documents, policies and procedures of the Girl Scout Organization.

**Policy** – A selected, planned line of conduct; an established course of action that must be followed.

**President of the Board of Directors** – Chief Volunteer Officer of Girl Scouts of Nassau County. The President is the principal officer of the Council and is responsible for seeing that the lines of direction given by the members of the Council and the action of the Board are carried into effect.

**Product Programs** – Council-wide program that may include the sale of authorized tangible products such as, Fall Products or Girl Scout Cookies, in which girls, Troops and groups may participate.

**Program Levels** – The five different grade/age level groupings of Girl Scouts – Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador. (Begins September 2008)

**Safety-Wise** – Is a publication issued by Girl Scouts of the USA. It contains program standards and safety guidelines to protect and maintain the well being of every Girl Scout. In addition, *Safety-Wise* provides basic leadership resources for Leaders and other adults who work directly with girls.

**Service Team** – Operational group of volunteers that is led by the CAV to ensure that Girl Scouting “happens” in the Association.

**Standard** – Action which should be followed to provide the optimum level of health, safety and informal education for the girls; a suggested course of action.