



Volunteer Policies & Procedures

January 2021

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try to serve God and my country, to help people at all times and live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be:

Honest and fair,

Friendly 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.

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Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York Volunteer Policies & Procedures

I. Introduction

Volunteers are vital to the successful accomplishment of Girl Scouting goals and objectives. Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York (GSNENY or Council) is particularly appreciative of its volunteers and the inspiration, skills, and time they give so generously. Please refer to this document for guidance on expectations for volunteers as well as other materials found under [Volunteer Resources](#) on the GSNENY website for other assistance.

Definition. A “volunteer” is any person 18 years of age or older who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of the Council.

II. Obligations of All Volunteers

Volunteers are held accountable for following volunteer policies as stated in this document. Additional resources can be found in Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) Volunteer Essentials.

Girl Scout volunteers are expected to serve as appropriate role models for Girls and for other volunteers. The attitudes, appearance, and actions of volunteers have a direct impact on the lives of Girls. The image of Girl Scouting, as well as the image of the individual, can be compromised by words, actions, or behavior that violates a law, policy, standard, the Girl Scout Law, or customary courtesy and respect.

Membership Registration

All adults participating in Girl Scouts must register as members with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), except those adults who are working in a temporary advisor or consultative capacity. [See Section III below for clarification.] All adults working directly with Girls or handling any Girl Scout money must be background checked as well.

General Expectations

Behavioral expectations for volunteers include, but are not limited to, the items listed below:

- Maintaining conduct consistent with the Girl Scout Promise, Law, and values.
- Communication in an appropriate, respectful, and polite manner that supports healthy personal and professional relationships.
- Following Girl Scout safety and program standards.
- Maintaining confidentiality and privacy and refraining from sharing sensitive information.
- Handling of Girl Scout funds in accordance with Council policies and utilizing of funds only for Girl Scout purposes.
- Resolution of adult matters or conflicts away from Girls, without involving Girls, and with respect for the Girl Scout Law.

Prohibitions (including Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drugs)

The Council expressly prohibits:

- Use of tobacco in the presence of Girls.

- Consumption of alcohol or other mind-altering substances at Girl events or while responsible for Girls.
 - Alcoholic beverages are acceptable at events designed **primarily** for adults; however, if Girls are in attendance, consumption of alcohol is prohibited for those responsible for supervising Girls.
- Possession, sale, use of illegal drugs, or misuse of prescribed/over-the-counter drugs.
- Performance of volunteer duties or driving while under the influence of alcohol or substances (legal or illegal) that impair alertness or judgment.
- Promotion of religious or political preferences while functioning as a Girl Scout Volunteer (Girl Scouting believes that these are private matters for Girls and their families to address together).
- Promotion of an individual opinion or philosophy inconsistent with Girl Scout beliefs and principles at Girl Scout programs, activities, or events.
- Willful or malicious damage to Girl Scout property or reputation.
- Guns, ammunition, and other weapons are not to be carried during Girl Scout activities.
 - If weapons are stored in the area of an activity, they must be unloaded and in a locked storage case or cabinet and the keys must be secured in an inaccessible place
 - Under this policy, prohibited weapons include all firearms and any form of weapon or explosive that is deemed unsafe or is restricted by local, state, or federal law. Guns and ammunition are not carried during Girl Scout activities.
- Presence of hazardous materials*.
 - Volunteers should be aware of all items that might be dangerous (for example axes, knives, sharp tools, solvents, pesticides, poisons, etc.) and secure them to remove any hazard presented by them.

*Volunteers should consult the most recent version of the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), located at www.girlscoutsnyny.org Forms page for regulations regarding certain approved Girl Scout activities that allow for education on the handling of certain types of firearms, axes, and other weapons.

Adult Uniforms and Dress Codes. A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities. When volunteers choose to wear a uniform, the Girl Scout pin (full size or miniature) is the only requirement. Uniforms should be worn in compliance with GSUSA guidelines.

GSNENY requests that volunteers always remember they are serving as role models for Girls; therefore, their dress must reflect that in appropriateness for their position and/or situation. GSNENY reserves the right to discuss inappropriate attire choices with individuals when they arise.

III. Eligibility, Selection, Appointment, Onboarding of Adult Volunteers

A positive female role model is essential for meeting the Girl Scout program goals and purposes. However, membership standards are inclusive, diverse, and non-discriminatory. The Board of Directors of the GSNENY reaffirms its support of the following GSUSA policies and the development of an affirmative action plan for volunteers and staff within GSNENY's jurisdiction.

Non-Discrimination for Volunteers

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified volunteer based upon a person's race, color, creed, religion, age, disability, sex, national origin, citizenship, genetic information, marital status,

or other protected group status. To ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, Non-Discrimination Policies and Procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers.

Pluralism and Diversity in Girl and Adult Membership

GSNENY is committed to seeking members that are reflective of the pluralistic nature of our community and that membership is extended to all Girls in all population segments and geographic areas in Council jurisdiction. Accordingly, GSNENY seeks pluralism and diversity among adult volunteers.

Participation of Male Volunteers.

GSNENY welcomes and encourages male volunteers to participate in our program. All policies and procedures concerning men are designed to protect our male volunteers and our Girl members. Male adults may be part of the leadership team for a Girl Scout Troop of Girls, including being designated as the Troop Leader for the Girl Scout Troop. Male Girl Scout Leaders are expected to fulfill the same requirements as female Girl Scout Leaders.

Men may not participate alone with Girls. At Troop meetings, one unrelated female volunteer must be present. In addition, men will not take Girls on overnights, camping trips, extended trips, or events without two female volunteers present at all times.

Requirements for Registration.

Any adults participating in the following ways must register with GSUSA, and successfully complete the background check process every three years.

- Responsibility for the safety of Girls not a part of their family.
- Responsibility for managing and handling Girl Scout money and funds.
- Volunteers participating in overnight programs where Girls attend without adults from their family. This includes volunteers transporting Girls, parents/volunteers, and overnights to a designated destination.

Adults participating in an event as a parent with their own daughter (such as Mom/Dad & Me events), and not taking responsibility for Girls who are not a part of their family, are not required to complete this process. These adults, however, may register as an adult member if they wish to be covered by Girl Scout activity insurance for programs and activities.

Steps in the Volunteer Onboarding Process. New volunteers will follow this process:

- Become an adult Girl Scout member & pay for membership.
- Complete a background check process.
- Receive a welcome email upon completion of the background check.

Appointment

The decision to appoint and retain volunteers is made on an individual basis. GSNENY does not discriminate against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer on the basis of race, age, disability, color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

A volunteer may, however, be released at any time due to failure to fulfill the requirements of the position or due to a change in the needs of the Council.

Volunteers will not be appointed or retained if an outstanding debt to GSNENY is unresolved. During processing of appointments, information on outstanding debts will be reviewed. Any application for a volunteer appointment with current outstanding debt will be rejected.

Adult Development and Training

The strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the voluntary leadership of *trained* adult members. All volunteers will receive basic training for their role. Depending upon the role, they may also be required to complete additional training within a specified time frame. To ensure ongoing improvement of Girl Scout programming, volunteers should continue to take advantage of adult education opportunities. These trainings ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their volunteer role.

All new volunteers are required to complete the training associated with their role.

Girl Scout Troop Leaders/Co-Leaders/Assistant Leaders

- Complete New Leader Training
- Access online resources relevant to their Troop functions
- Review *Volunteer Essentials* on an annual basis
- Review *GSNENY Volunteer Policies & Procedures* on an annual basis
- Access, sign up for, and utilize the Volunteer Toolkit

Troop Cookie Managers

- Cookie Manager training provided by their Service Unit Cookie Manager.

Additional training requirements for camp activities are outlined in the Outdoor Program section.

IV. Reappointment, Termination, Change in Membership Status

Reappointment

Several volunteer positions have certain requirements that must be performed during the course of the Girl Scout Year (i.e., completing a Financial Report, required training, etc.). GSNENY documents completion of specific volunteer position requirements, and reappointment is contingent upon completion.

Termination of Volunteer Appointment

Situations may arise whereby the Council may release or terminate a volunteer from one or all positions prior to the end of the assignment term. Any action to release a volunteer receives careful and detailed consideration. A volunteer may have their appointment terminated because of, but not limited to:

- Refusal to comply with GSNENY or GSUSA policies.
- Conduct inconsistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement as indicated by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Refusal or failure to adhere to financial guidelines of GSNENY.
- Registered sex offender status* or crimes against a child.

*Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scout programs. Volunteers shall not knowingly hold activities where a registered sex offender is present.

If charges are pending related to any criminal offense (other than minor traffic violations), serving in a volunteer capacity (i.e., Troop meetings, field trips, etc.) will not be allowed, or will be temporarily suspended, pending disposition of the case.

Resignation

Volunteers may choose to resign or request change of positions at any time. Volunteers are encouraged to give as much notice as possible when resigning. If resigning will result in disbanding of the Troop, a Dropped Troop Form must be filled out and processed by the Volunteer Services department prior to the leader being released from any further responsibility for the Troop.

Change in Membership Status

When a Girl Scout, or Girl Scout volunteer, is representing Girl Scouts in any way, she or he must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout Movement. If a Girl Scout and/or Girl Scout volunteer acts in violation of this procedure, she/he may lose membership privileges.

The Council is committed to an environment in which relationships between volunteers, staff, parents, and Girls are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect, and equitable treatment. Girl Scout volunteers do not have the authority to end Girl Scout membership or participation in Girl Scouts for either adults or Girls. Membership and participation status can only be changed by following the processes outlined in the GSNENY Volunteer Policies & Procedures.

V. Troop Volunteers & General Responsibilities

Leadership

The leadership of every Girl Scout Troop must include two unrelated, registered, background checked adults, at least one of which is female. Both leaders must agree to meet the training requirements for their positions.

Expectations of Troop Volunteers

GSNENY Troop Volunteers are expected to carry out the duties of the volunteer role, while abiding by the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. Volunteers are expected to embrace and promote pluralism to the best of their ability to ensure that all Girls feel welcome regardless of socioeconomic status, racial, ethnic, cultural, religious background, or disability.

Troop Size

There must be a minimum of three (3) Girls to register as a Girl Scout Troop. Girl Scout Troops with less than three (3) Girls will be registered as individual members (“Juliettes”).

There is no restriction on the maximum number of Girls in a Troop. Volunteers are encouraged to welcome additional Girls to the Troop while maintaining appropriate Girl/adult ratios by level. Please see the ratio breakdown for the appropriate numbers for your Troop.

Registration

Girl Scout Troops may be formed and registered at any time during the membership year. For newly formed troops registering using paper forms, forms are submitted to GSNENY prior to their second meeting. For the purposes of activities or events, registration is effective when the completed membership forms are received by an employee or a registered Troop leader, or service unit team member, who will then turn it into the Council office.

Re-registering

Continuing Girl Scout Troops should register the Girl and adult members via the online registration system or paper registration forms by October 1 of each year.

Additional Members

Additional Girls or adults may be added to a Girl Scout Troop at any time during the year.

Leadership for Troop Activities

At least two unrelated, registered, background checked volunteers, one of whom is female, must be present for any Troop meeting or other activity to be conducted.

VI. Volunteers in Non-Troop Positions

Service Unit Team Members

Service Unit (Service Unit) Team Members are appointed annually. Service Unit Managers (Service Unit Manager) are appointed by the Volunteer Services Director and Volunteer Engagement Specialist. All Service Unit Team positions are appointed by the Service Unit Manager, pending Council approval. Additional enrichment workshops and courses are encouraged.

Camp Volunteers

Camp volunteers must successfully complete the background check process and training. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description.

Short-term Volunteers

Volunteers who participate in a one-time or short-term opportunity will receive an orientation specific to their volunteer activity. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description.

Other Volunteer Roles

For roles not listed above, the volunteer should complete appropriate training as defined by the GSNENY's Volunteer Services department.

VII. Conflict Resolution

GSNENY recognizes that conflict can occur between people working together. Council encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts promptly and efficiently. Recognizing that each individual has both a personal interest in and a share of the responsibility for resolving conflicts in which they are involved, GSNENY favors a collaborative conflict resolution process.

The most effective way to resolve complaints and concerns is through a calm and open discussion between the persons involved by telephone or face to face. For this reason, prior to utilizing the formal grievance procedure, aggrieved persons are encouraged to try to resolve the matter informally among themselves, with respect given to each other and to Council. E-mail exchange and use of social media are generally not conducive to effective resolution and, therefore, should be avoided.

Procedures for Conflict Resolution

If a conflict is not easily resolved through a conversation, a GSNENY staff member must be notified of the conflict. The following procedure must be followed during a conflict.

1. Have a calm and open discussion between the persons involved.

NOTE: If you have experienced harassment, witnessed bullying, or witnessed any abusive behavior, you are not expected to deal with this concern on your own. It is the volunteer's

choice to notify the Service Unit Manager themselves or contact their GSNENY Volunteer Engagement Specialist to notify the Service Unit Manager about the concern.

2. If the conflict is not resolved, gather the information and facts you are aware of.
3. Contact your Service Unit Manager and discuss the conflict and present the information.
 - a. If you are the Service Unit Manager or the conflict is with a Service Unit Manager, skip this step and proceed to Step 5.
4. The Service Unit Manager is expected to review the situation and provide guidance or advice on steps to resolve.
5. If the Service Unit Manager is unable to resolve the conflict or believes the conflict requires additional assistance, they should contact their Volunteer Engagement Specialist at Council.
6. The Volunteer Engagement Specialist will review the situation, gather information, and speak with all parties involved. The Volunteer Engagement Specialist may set up a mediation session or provide alternate solutions to help de-escalate the conflict.
7. If the conflict is still not resolved or the parties are not actively participating, the Director of Volunteer Services will be consulted and may take the lead to de-escalate.
8. If the conflict is still not resolved or the parties are not actively participating, the CEO of GSNENY will be presented with the information and facts of the conflict and render a decision on resolving the conflict.

Financial Conflicts

In the event the conflict concerns financial matters, all records including bank statements, receipts, the most recent Annual Troop/Service Unit Financial Report, and any other financial records may be requested, and an audit may be conducted.

Harassment

GSNENY is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment or harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin or ancestry, creed, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, mental or physical disability, or any other bias proscribed by non-discrimination laws.

Any volunteer who feels that they have been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, Council staff member, or any agent of the organization should promptly report the incident; please see procedures for escalating a conflict.

The Council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement, refuse to reappointment volunteer positions, and to dismiss or suspend affiliation with the Council, of any volunteer who while conducting Girl Scout program, is found to have harassed another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member.

Anti-Retaliation Policy

GSNENY strictly prohibits any type of retaliation against an individual who raises a concern of unlawful harassment, who opposes unlawful harassment, who participates in any investigation under this policy, who files any charge or complaint of harassment with an appropriate government agency, or who provides assistance in any proceeding or hearing by the government agency. Any individual who engages in such retaliation will be subject to discipline. At the same time, any individual who knowingly raises a

false claim that this policy has been violated or knowingly provides untruthful or misleading information in the course of an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

VIII. Health and Safety

The Health and Safety of Girls and volunteers is a primary goal for GSNENY. All adults who are responsible for the safety of Girls at Girl Scout events must be registered and have a current background check on file. GSNENY provides health and safety guidelines, which are updated as needed, please consult [Volunteer Resources](#) and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for specific information. Both documents can be found on the Forms page of the GSNENY Website, at www.Girlscoutsny.org under Forms.

Privacy & Confidentiality

GSNENY does not require parent/guardians to disclose health history or immunization status for Girls to participate in basic Troop meetings. If parents do not disclose health history, they are accepting the risk and liability for their children in the case of an emergency, regardless if the parent/guardian is present or not. All health-related information must be maintained in a confidential manner in accordance with state and federal laws.

Maintaining confidential information is outlined by New York State as:

- Identify and label confidential files.
- Store confidential information in a secure environment.
- Securely and completely destroy unnecessary confidential information.

Health Information

Girl Scout Troops are expected to follow all New York State law mandates for public schools in regard to health standards, including vaccinations. It is considered best practice for Troop Leaders to have a copy of each Girl's Health History Form for Troop meetings and Troop outings. Forms completed for Troop should not be transferred to Council for Council activities; Council Health History forms should be used.

Certifications

The presence of an adult with a current first aid and CPR certification is required whenever participating in an activity where Girls are present. Volunteers providing certified expertise must maintain current certification to meet Safety Activity Checkpoint requirements.

Medications

No Girl will be given any prescribed or over-the-counter medication without prior, expressed written approval and instruction from the custodial parent/guardian (prior written approval and instruction is *only* to be given to a registered volunteer). No medication will be administered unless it is in the original container and unexpired. All prescriptions must have the Girl participant's name clearly printed on the label, as prescribed for the Girl by a medical doctor or other authorized, New York State licensed provider.

Allergies

Allergies requiring any accommodations must be disclosed in advance in writing to the appropriate volunteer or staff.

Child Safety Regulations. State and County Health Regulations for child safety must be adhered to at all times.

- Girls must be accompanied at all times by an approved ratio, please see Volunteer Essentials for ratio information.
- Adults and Girls must follow regulations regarding food handling and child safety.
- Children must be supervised by an adult while cleaning supplies are in use.

First Aid/CPR

Injuries or other emergencies (such as cuts/bleeding, burns, seizures, etc.) require prompt action and quick judgment. At least one adult volunteer must be first aid/CPR certified at all Girl Scout Activities. Volunteers 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 Girl Scouts of Northeastern NY. If possible, volunteers should take age-specific CPR training—that is, take child CPR if they're working with younger Girls and adult CPR when working with older Girls and adults. There is different level of First Aiders that are required for activities, please see the classifications below:

- General First Aider: The presence of a First Aider is required for most group activities. The course required for a First- Aider offers standard first aid and CPR, preferably with a focus on children.
- Wilderness First Aider/First Responder: Depending on the type of wilderness activity a First Aider with Wilderness First Aid Certification may be needed. If the access to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is more than 30 minutes, there must be a Wilderness First Aider/Responder, for more information see the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Advanced First Aider: The presence of an Advanced First Aider is required at resident camp, and at any camp activity with more than 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as advanced First Aiders for large groups: physician; physician's assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician. Other activities may require an Advanced First Aider; for more information see the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Note: New York's Good Samaritan Laws protect "rescuers" who aid a victim to the best of their ability in a medical emergency.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, the volunteers must:

- Provide care for the ill/injured persons.
- Call 911/emergency medical care.
- Notify the child's parent or guardian.
- One adult must stay at the scene. Do not disturb the victim or surroundings until assistance arrives.
- Report the emergency using the GSNENY Emergency Staff Contact List.
- Make NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. DO NOT give out any names or information. Ask them to contact GSNENY (518-489-8110).
- Secure/maintain all permission forms and medical records to submit to a GSNENY service center.
- Complete a GSNENY *Supplemental Accident Report* within 48 hours of the incident.

Accident/Incident Reports

In the event of an incident, a *Supplemental Accident Report* must be filled out within 48 hours and sent to the assigned Volunteer Engagement Specialist at Council headquarters. All accidents reports will be maintained by GSNENY in compliance with HIPAA regulations.

Date Restrictions for Privacy/Confidentiality

Health History forms gathered by a Troop/group leader are outdated 12 months past the date originally completed. Health History forms should not be maintained past their applicable use. At that time, they may be reviewed and updated to extend their use. Health History forms gathered for the purpose of a specific event should not be kept past the final date of the event. In this case, forms should be returned to the participant, their parent/guardian, or shredded.

If a volunteer is collecting Council required paper forms from parents/guardians that contain confidential information, such as social security numbers and drivers' license numbers, these forms should be submitted to a Council office or staff member within 7 days of receipt of completed forms.

Infractions of Health and Safety Policy

Any infraction of the GSNENY Health and Safety Policy, as outlined above, will be subject to prompt review under Council volunteer disciplinary guidelines. The volunteer may be removed from their responsibilities at the activity. If a volunteer believes another volunteer is in breach of these policies, they should report the situation to GSNENY within 7 days.

IX. Child Protection

Child Custody Parental Arrangements

GSNENY staff and volunteers are not responsible for interpreting or enforcing parental custodial agreements. Further, GSNENY staff and volunteers are prohibited from taking on the role of a mediator in these situations.

The data system provides the ability for one parent or guardian to manage the membership data for Girl members and associated family online, this person is identified as the Family Manager.

When a Girl is first registered, this relationship is established by the person completing the registration (online or paper). In order for the family manager or any guardians to be changed, GSNENY requires the current family manager to notify the staff at GSNENY; this can be done through email, phone, or written notice.

Child Abuse

Some positions within the Council have direct contact with children, the Council supports and maintains environments that is free of child abuse and neglect.

Child abuse or neglect is defined as:

any act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare. The definition of 'child' may vary from state to state but is usually a person under the age of 18.

Child sexual abuse is defined as:

Employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the

purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct, or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Sexual abuse may include sexual touching, bodily contact of a sexual nature, exhibitionism, voyeurism and/or involvement of children in *pornographic material*.

In accordance with these statutes, the Council will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon Girl members or emotional maltreatment of Girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.
- Physical neglect of Girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities.

Council reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the organization any volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect.

Mandated Reporting

All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse, these professionals are labeled as "Mandated Reporters". Under New York State standards the volunteers of GSNEY are not considered Mandated Reporters.

Reporting Abuse

While volunteers are not required to report instances of or suspected abuse, they are encouraged to do so. The Child Abuse Hotline does not require that you to have proof of child abuse or maltreatment. While the Child Abuse Hotline answers all calls, a report will only be registered if you provide a reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment.

The New York State Child Abuse Hotline will register a report regarding a child in need of care and protection in New York. If you suspect a child may be a victim of abuse, please follow these steps:

1. **Have the information you want to report ready.** These are some questions you will be asked:
 - a. What is the Child's name, home address, age?
 - b. What is the name and address of the parent or other person legally responsible who caused the injury, or created the risk of harm to the child?
 - c. What is the nature and extent of the child's injuries, or the risk of harm to the child?
 - d. Do you have any information regarding treatment of the child, or the child's current whereabouts?
 - e. Have there been any prior suspicious injuries to this child or his/ her siblings?
2. **Call 1-800-342-3720 to report the abuse.** This hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If this is an emergency, for example young children currently alone or you witness a child being beaten, call 911 or your local police department, as they can respond immediately.

- a. You will have the option to make an anonymous report or provide your name and phone number for potential follow up. Your information will only be used by the investigative agency and will not be provided to the individual you are making the report on.
 - b. Your report will either be registered or not registered; registered reports will be provided to an investigative agency. There is no follow up done on not registered reports.
3. **Notify Council.** Please see the Accident/Incident section for information on filing an incident/accident report if appropriate. You can also notify your Volunteer Engagement Specialist by phone or email to discuss the incident and report.

No Tolerance Policy

It is the policy of the Council to provide an environment that is free of child abuse and that safeguards the health and well-being of all Girl members, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The following are, therefore, prohibited by all adults and Girls in the program:

- **Physical Punishment:** Volunteers cannot restrain, spank, or use any other physical means to punish a child.
- **Physical Abuse:** Any action that causes harm or injury to a Girl, such as hitting, hazing, kicking, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
- **Sexual Misconduct:** This includes any inappropriate sexual physical contact, lewdness, or communication in words, print or images.
- **Physical Neglect:** This includes failure to give supervision, failure to provide for safety during activities or time of danger, or failure to meet medical needs.
- **Emotional Abuse:** This includes verbal attacks, anger outbursts, hostility, humiliation, hazing or socially inappropriate language such as cursing.

Council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or exclude from affiliation with the Council, any volunteer implementing the Girl Scout program who is found guilty or convicted of child abuse and/or neglect.

X. Risk Management

The Council recognizes that, through its varied activities, there is substantial exposure to risks associated with its operations.

Council's Responsibilities

In order to provide a safe organizational environment for youth, volunteers, and employees, the Council will take reasonable and prudent steps to limit potential organizational liabilities through a program of risk management which includes (but may not be limited to): maintenance of a comprehensive liability insurance program, compliance with all regulatory requirements and organizational standards, educational opportunities for employees and volunteer personnel, and regularly scheduled review and assessment of the program's effectiveness.

Insurance

\$25 of the annual membership fee is sent to GSUSA. This fee covers the cost of liability insurance for members. There are times when additional insurance is required such as non-members present at an

event, extended overnight trips, international trips, or adventure activities. Certificates of Insurance for locations may be required. For information on what locations require Certificates of Insurance and for copies please contact Council.

Supervision.

During any Girl Scout event there must be a minimum of 2 registered, unrelated, background checked adults, one of whom is female. This includes travel to the destination if the Girl is not being transported by her parents. There are specific ratios for the number of Girls per adults, which vary based on Girl Scout Level, specific guidelines regarding the adult-to-Girl ratios can be found in Volunteer Essentials. Additional adults can attend past the defined ratios, if the event and space allow for the additional bodies and the coordinating adults find it appropriate. If you are with a mixed level Troop you must abide by the ratio of the youngest Girl Scout.

XI. Programs

Girl Scouts is an informal-educational program designed to help Girls put into practice the fundamental principles of the Girl Scout Movement as set forth in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, with a particular emphasis on leadership development in an all-Girl environment. Programs are designed to foster courage, confidence, and character, with the ultimate goal of helping Girls discover their full potential, connect with others, and take action to improve their lives and their communities.

A. TRAVEL & OUTINGS

Travel with Girl Scouts is defined as any meeting of Girls and Adults outside of their normal meeting location or normal meeting time. Be sure to consult the Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints when traveling and abide by all listed guidelines. These documents can be found on the forms section of the Girl Scouts of NENY website, girlscoutsneny.org.

Travel Notification

Girl Scout Troop Leaders or other adults who work with Girl Scouts are responsible for informing parents/guardians about the activities of the Girls and obtaining parent/guardian approval before trips occur. Depending on the type of travel additional notification and paperwork may be required, please see the guidelines below.

Travel Notification Guidelines

- If you are traveling inside Council Boundaries* or less than 100 miles outside of Council Boundaries while still in the US – you must inform your Service Unit Manager (Service Unit Manager)** through email or other written notice.
- If you are traveling more than 100 miles outside of Council Boundaries – you must complete the GSNENY Intent to Travel Form and send it to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist and Service Unit Manager**.
- If you are traveling outside of the United States – you must complete the GSNENY Intent to Travel Form, the international travel forms, and acquire additional insurance, 3PI – International, and send it to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist and Service Unit Manager**. The list of international travel forms can be found on the forms section of the GSNENY website, www.girlscoutsneny.org.

- If you are participating in an Adventure Activities, as defined by the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)– you must complete the GSNENY Intent to Travel Form and acquire additional insurance, 3P – Overnight, and send it to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist and Service Unit Manager**.
- If your travel includes an overnight of 3 or more nights – you must complete the GSNENY Intent to Travel Form and acquire additional insurance, 3P – Overnight, and send it to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist and Service Unit Manager **.

* – Council Boundaries include the following counties: Albany, Clinton, Columbia, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Warren, Washington.

** – If the person completing the form is the Service Unit Manager, the travel notification and appropriate forms should be submitted to their Volunteer Engagement Specialist for all travel.

Drivers

When adults are transporting Girls not under their guardianship as part of a Girl Scout activity, they must be registered members of GSUSA and successfully complete the background check process. It must be verified that each adult driving is an approved driver and that the vehicles meet the legal insurance, licensing, and registration requirements. Drivers should not drive more than 12 hours in any one 24-hour period. Rest stops should be planned every few hours.

Private Transportation

Individuals operating motor vehicles transporting Girls must be a current registered Girl Scout Adult, have a current valid background check, be at least 21 years of age, and be properly licensed and insured for the vehicle they will be driving. The number of passengers must not exceed the vehicle’s intended number of passengers. Each person in the vehicle must have and use their specific seatbelt. All vehicles transporting Girls and/or Girl Scout equipment must be properly registered, adequately insured, and operated within New York State laws. Each vehicle shall carry passenger Permission Slips and Health Histories (as submitted).

Transportation Rentals.

- Only reputable vehicle rental agencies with good maintenance and service records may be used.
- Most rental agencies rent to the driver(s), not the Girl Scout Troop, even if the Girl Scout Troop is paying for the vehicle.
- The driver’s insurance is the primary insurance. Drivers should contact their own insurance agent to make sure their personal insurance covers the rental vehicle and meets or exceeds the insurance requirements for the states or countries in which the vehicle will travel.
- We recommend that the driver purchase the “damage/collision waiver” insurance from the vehicle rental agency, which covers the replacement value of the rented vehicle, when renting the vehicle.
- Drivers need to be experienced in driving the type of vehicle being rented.
- Remember to always consult [Volunteer Resources](#) and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) when traveling beyond your usual Girl Scout meeting place.

GSNENY Equipment Use

All Council equipment that is borrowed for use by a Troop or Service Unit is signed out on a temporary use basis only. Council equipment is very limited and all equipment must be returned within 15 days from the date it is borrowed. There may be a deposit required for certain equipment.

Troop Certified Volunteers

Activities or programs for Girls that require leaving the Troop meeting place means assuming responsibility for the transportation and safety of the Girls in the Troop. Different activities require preparation and/or certifications in addition to those described in the Orientation Video-- depending on the type of activity for the Girls. Required Troop-certified volunteers include volunteers who are "first aid" and "outdoor-skills" certified.

Field Trips & Sleepovers.

- A Girl Scout Troop that is leaving its regular meeting place on a *field trip* must be accompanied by at least one (1) adult who has accessed GSNENY's *Beyond Your Troop Meeting Video* and one (1) certified First Aider (as defined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)), as well as an appropriate number of adult members, who are background cleared, to comply with the adult to Girl safety ratios.
- A Girl Scout Troop that is having a *sleepover* (such as a slumber party, lock-in, or overnight at the local zoo) must be accompanied by at least one (1) adult who has accessed GSNENY's *Beyond Your Troop Meeting Video*, and one (1) *First Aider* (as defined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)), as well as an appropriate number of safety-ratio adults who are background cleared.
- A single overnight *backyard* campout in a tent-- not using grills or fire of any kind is considered to be a sleepover.
- **Forms required:** Parent Permission Slips (Yearly or event specific), Health History Forms*, proof of Girl Scout Membership registration for all participants, Intent to Travel Form.

** With respect to vaccinations, Girl Scouts as an organization follows all state law mandates as they pertain to public schools (for those 18 years old and younger). Therefore, the change in New York State law, which no longer permits a non-medical exemption, will apply to Girl Scout troops.*

B. OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Outdoor Day Outings

Definition of Outdoor Environment & Activities: an outdoor environment is characterized by the presence of natural features such as wooded areas, hiking trails, bodies of water, as well as insects and creatures not normally found in everyday situations. Outdoor activities could include, but are not limited to, activities such as fire building, outdoor cooking, and hiking.

- A Girl Scout Troop going on a *one-day outing in an outdoor environment* (not sleeping over and *not making a campfire or doing outdoor cooking*) must be accompanied by at least one adult (who has accessed GSNENY's *Beyond Your Troop Meeting* and had new leader training with Council, plus one First Aider (as defined in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*), and an appropriate number of safety-ratio adults who are background cleared.
- A Girl Scout Troop going on a *one-day outing in an outdoor environment* (not sleepover) and planning to participate in outdoor activities such as making a campfire or outdoor cooking is considered to be camping and, therefore, must be accompanied by at least one (1) adult who has completed *Outdoor Skills Training*, one (1) *First Aider* as defined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), and an appropriate number of safety-ratio adults.

- **Forms required:** Parent Permission Slips (Yearly or event specific), Health History Forms*, Proof of Girl Scout Membership registration for all participants, Intent to Travel Form.

**Girl Scouts does not require parents to disclose health history or immunization status for Girls to participate. However, Girl Scouts of Northeastern NY follows all NYS laws in regard to immunizations. Therefore, the NYS law, which no longer permits non-medical exemptions, also applies to Girl Scout Troops.*

Camping Overnight

- Girl Scout Troops who are camping on Council owned sites with established sleeping and restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed Outdoor Skills Training, one First Aider (as defined in Safety Activity Checkpoints), as well as an appropriate number of safety-ratio adults who are background cleared.
- Girl Scout Troops who are camping on non-Council sites which have established restroom facilities must be accompanied by at least one adult who has completed Outdoor Skills Training, one First Aider (as defined in Safety Activity Checkpoints), as well as an appropriate number of safety-ratio adults who are background cleared.
- **Forms required:** Parent Permission Slips (Yearly or event specific), Health History Forms*, Proof of Girl Scout Membership registration for all participants.

** With respect to vaccinations, Girl Scouts as an organization follows all state law mandates as they pertain to public schools (for those 18 years old and younger). Therefore, the change in New York State law, which no longer permits a non-medical exemption, will apply to Girl Scout troops.*
- The primary First Aider for any overnights and the primary Camp-Trained adult for overnight camping cannot be male. Males may, however, act as additional "First Aiders" and "Outdoor Skills" trained adults.

Camping is an integral and fun part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Because it is important to protect the safety of the Girls in the program, the following policies are in place for camping:

- Each Girl Scout Troop must follow the Volunteer Resources requirements for the ratio of adults to Girls and follow all guidelines that are appropriate to the activities they are doing while camping.
- One of the volunteers camping with the Girl Scout Troop must provide proof when asked that they are currently certified in First Aid/CPR/AED.
- Men who camp with a Girl Scout Troop must follow all volunteer procedures. When men are part of the Girl Scout Troop Leadership Team, separate sleeping arrangements must be provided. No men may sleep in the same room as Girls; a separate room, tent, or sleeping area must be provided. In the case of a husband-and-wife team, separate sleeping arrangements away from the Girls and other volunteers is recommended.

Camping Formats

Registration for GSNENY camps and requesting approval for camping at non-GSNENY sites should identify the type of camping format being applied.

1. Individual Format: A Girl(s) camping at GSNENY facility with a female parent/guardian.
2. Troop Format: Troop/Groups of Girls camping at any approved outdoor facility with the appropriate number of registered and trained adult volunteers with the appropriate volunteer security status and background clearance—can include groups of troops such as a Service Unit Campout.

3. Non-Troop Format -- Girls camping in several formats:
 - Camping event where Girls are supervised by a parent/guardian such as a MOM-N-Me campout.
 - Camping event where Girls are supervised by a parent/guardian and include members of their immediate family such as a Family Camp.
 - Camping event where troops/groups of Girls are supervised by the appropriate number of registered and trained adult volunteers with the appropriate volunteer security status and background clearance. This can include groups of troops such as a Service Unit campout.

Note: Service Units may organize their camping events using formats 2 or 3 (Troop/Non-Troop Formats) as described above.

Camp Trained Adults

Requirements for trained adults vary by camping format.

1. Individual Format: Girl(s) must be accompanied by a registered female parent/guardian with an appropriate volunteer security status and with the appropriate level of “Outdoor Skills”/“Overnight Tent Camping” training. Because Girls are supervised by their parent/guardian, the adult is not required to be First Aid/CPR/AED certified.
2. Troop Format: Each Girl Scout Troop must have at least one (1) registered Camp Trained Adult who has completed the appropriate level of camp training, and one registered First Aid/CPR/AED Trained Adult – it is strongly encouraged that this not be the same individual. Each Camp and First Aid/CPR/AED certified adult must have the appropriate volunteer security status.
3. Non-Troop Format: The # of camp-trained adults must be one (1) for each group of up to 10 Girl Scout Daisies or Brownies and one (1) for each group of up to 35 Girl Scout Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors or Ambassadors and one registered First Aid/CPR/AED Trained Adult – it is strongly encouraged that this not be the same individual.

Domestic Animals or Pets at Camp

Domestic animals or pets, other than service animals, must not be brought to any GSNENY camp at any time. Pets belonging to on-site, permanent staff will be contained—either indoors, behind a secure fence, or on a tie-out – while campers are on the property.

Men at Camp

It is expected that men camping with Girl Scout Troops are an active part of the adult team accompanying the Girl Scout Troop/group camping. If a MALE VOLUNTEER is one of the adults camping with a Girl Scout Troop/group, these steps must be followed for both Council and non-Council Facilities:

- A separate sleeping area must be designated for males away from Girls.
- Registered males **CANNOT** be counted as Safety Wise Ratio adults due to the fact they must sleep in a different area than the Girls.
 - A male cannot serve as the primary Troop Camp Trained adult, or adult to meet Girl/adult ratios.
 - A male volunteer may supervise camping activities between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.; during other hours he is expected to be in the designated separate sleeping area.

- A female Troop Camp-Trained Adult, First Aider and/or Safety Wise Ratio adult to meet Girl/adult ratios must supervise camping activities involving male volunteers.

Vehicles at Camp

A maximum of one vehicle per Girl Scout Troop per unit will be allowed to park at the Girl Scout Troop campsite. All other vehicles must park in designated parking areas. The Site Coordinator/Site Manager has the final decision as to the safe placement of vehicles. With the exception of loading and unloading directly related to arrival and departure of Girl Scout troops, all vehicles must remain parked in the designated areas.

If you have special needs (e.g., medical, physical, and ADA accessibility) and will need to drive your vehicle into camp, the Fire Road may be used. However, you *must* notify the Site Manager (of your need to drive your vehicle into camp) at least one week in advance, giving the Site Manager time to work on site designations, as well as making sure that the Fire Road will be open/cleared. It is very important to remember that the 5 mile per hour speed limit *must* be followed at all times.

Personal Property

GSNENY is not responsible for property damage such as loss, theft, vandalism, acts of nature to personal vehicles and effects brought onto camp property for programs, events, training, Girl Scout Troop camp, special events, and resident camp.

Camp Emergency Procedures

Girl Scout Groups will access and read a copy of the camp emergency procedures prior to attending camp.

Reservations of GSNENY Facilities.

See GSNENY website ([Property Rentals](#)) for current guidelines.

Camping on Non-Council Sites

All sites must meet all Safety Activity Checkpoints (Found at www.girlscoutsneny.org on the Forms Page_), and Council approval must be obtained.

Day Use of Council Sites

Reservation requests may be made for picnics, hiking outdoor skill building nature study, etc. Girl Scouts troops wishing to use Council sites during the day for Girl Scout programs must follow Camp Reservation Procedures.

Burn Bans

Burn bans are occasionally implemented by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for the protection of life and property. GSNENY will follow their recommendations. The Encampment Director or Troop Leader may be contacted for updates. During burn bans, only propane, solar and indoor cooking is permitted.

Camp Closings

In the case of inclement weather conditions, emergency repairs, etc., GSNENY will decide no later than noon on the date of arrival/departure as to whether facilities will remain open for activities. Listed Event Coordinators will be notified by phone and/or email if camp is officially closed.

Commercial Kitchen Reservation and Use

Use of commercial kitchens at GSNENY camps are subject to local regulations. GSNENY will abide by any and all regulations that apply and require that GSNENY staff, volunteers and Girls do the same. Therefore, documentation that appropriate food management and/or food handling licensing has been obtained must be provided at the time the reservation is requested. Additionally, copies of that licensing must be on hand at time of use and shown upon request. In no case may children under age 14 be permitted in the commercial kitchens.

Port-a-Potty Cleaning Procedures.

Kapers (chores) related to a “refresh” of port-a-potties used by Girl Scouts at Girl Scout events are permitted according to the guidelines that follow.

Girls may:

- Perform a general sweep of the port-a-potty area for litter.
- Check supplies (such as toilet paper and paper towels) and restock if necessary.
- Spray air freshener and/or disinfectant provided it is in non-aerosol form.

Any physical cleaning of the port-a-potties must be performed by adults and/or third-party vendors; this includes wiping of the seats and/or interiors of the port-a-potties and removal of human waste.

Environmental/Ecological Issues.

GSNENY is committed to conservation of the environment. Good stewardship of the environment will be modeled by all volunteers working with Girls and will be apparent in all we do. **GSNENY** encourages members to reduce, re-use and recycle during Girl Scout activities. Members should follow guidelines in *Volunteer Essentials, Outdoor Education in Girl Scouting, and Safety Activity Checkpoints* (www.girlscoutsnyny.org under Forms) on minimal impact to the environment during all outdoor activities.

XII. Girl Scout Financial Management

All volunteers who are responsible for GSNENY/Troop finances, fund raising, and associated collections must be registered Girl Scouts with an appropriate volunteer security status.

Girl Scout Funds

All money collected, earned, or deposited in the name of Girl Scouting is used to meet the purpose of Girl Scouting within GSNENY. Such money becomes the property of Girl Scouting and is not the property of individuals. Girl Scout Troop funds are not to be credited or given to individuals, because it will affect our 501(c)3 tax exempt status. Girl Scout Troop funds are not to be co-mingled with an individual’s personal/business accounts.

Money Owed to the Council or Taken from Girl/Group Accounts

GSNENY reserves the right to pursue collection efforts and/or prosecute to the fullest extent allowable under the law. Situations involving large amounts of money or product may require that a police report be filed, and/or be referred to the District Attorney for investigation. Additionally, individuals involved in delinquencies, theft, or misuse of Troop funds (such as borrowing funds from the Troop account for personal use) will face release from their current Girl Scout position and will be ineligible for future appointment. Primary communication and collection attempts will begin and will be the responsibility of

Council staff. Failure to repay the amount owed can result in immediate criminal charges, notification to creditors, referral for collection by an outside agency, and/or wages garnished.

Bank Accounts

To safeguard Girl Scout funds, all Girl Scout Troops and Service Units must establish a Troop or Service Unit bank account. Troop and/or Service Unit funds **MUST NOT** be placed into a personal bank account. All account information must be registered with Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York. Council reserves the right to periodically audit and inspect transactions of Troop bank accounts. Troops and SUs may request a bank letter from Council.

A. SERVICE UNIT BANK ACCOUNTS and FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Bank Choice and Account Name

Choose a bank that does not charge monthly service charges or charges only minimal fees on non-profit bank accounts.

“GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK” must be included in the name of bank accounts, e.g., Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York Service Unit 0000.

Signatures and Safeguards

Two (2) authorized signatures are required for Service Unit bank accounts; only one (1) signature is required on each check. However, issuing a check for over \$500 requires *either* two signatures *or* written authorization (may be through email) of the second signatory *or* other designated Service Unit Team member, documenting approval for the purchase/expense.

The documentation must be attached to the monthly bank statement. Appropriate signatures are registered Girl Scout volunteers in the Service Unit (having successfully undergone a background check). On each account, there must be at least two (2) people who are not related to each other and do not reside in the same household. *All signatories must be registered Girl Scout adults and approved volunteers.*

The Service Unit may obtain one debit card to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit card is not to be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely bi-annual reporting and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.

Any Change on a Bank Account

To make any changes in the banking account, a Service Unit must inform the Council. Examples of changes include but are not limited to:

- Changes in any signatures.
- Change in address.
- Change in bank name, account number or account type.

GSNENY must be notified within 30 days of any changes to bank accounts.

Reporting to Service Unit Members.

- At least two (2) times during the year, Service Unit Members should be informed about the current status of the Service Unit’s income and expenses (Treasurer’s Report must be provided).

- Service Unit Members always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Service Unit. It is highly recommended that the Service Unit Members be provided a copy of the Annual Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report.
- Be sure to obtain receipts for all Service Unit expenses and deposits and attach them to the Service Unit's copy of the required Annual Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report.

Note: ATM withdrawal receipts do not qualify as a receipt for reimbursement or justification for Service Unit purchase. Service Unit checks may not be made out to cash. All purchases made with cash require detailed receipts of the goods and services purchased or provided.

Annual Service Unit Financial Report to GSNENY

- Every year, the Annual Service Unit Financial Report is submitted, along with the May Bank Statement, to Council by no later than June 30th. *Note:* Service Unit money should be spent as a percentage of the income; if for some reason it has not been, an explanation should be provided with the finance report.
- Service Units and Service Unit Managers that have not turned in the Annual Service Unit Financial Report will be contacted by Council staff regarding submission of the completed report and may not be reappointed to their position.

Expenses and Reimbursements.

- Service Unit Teams will reimburse only those expenses that were approved in advance and that directly relate to a Service Unit activity. Expenses that exceed the amount approved may not be reimbursed. If possible, potential overages should be discussed with the Service Unit Team before purchases or expenditures are made.
- Checks issued by the Service Unit Team for reimbursement of expenses must be deposited within 90 days of issuance. The Service Unit Team will not be obligated to honor, reissue, or replace checks still outstanding beyond this 90-day period.
- The Service Unit Treasurer must deposit checks received from third parties (parents, GSNENY, etc.) within 30 days of receiving them.
- All funds received by a Girl Scout Volunteer payable to GSNENY must be turned over to GSNENY within 30 days.

Notification may occur at a Service Unit Meeting via a Treasurer's Report. Members of the Service Unit always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Service Unit. Keeping Service Unit income and expense records up to date will reduce misunderstandings about the use of the Service Unit's funds. Accounting of Service Unit operational funds and individual event funds are maintained separately, then combined for reporting on the *Annual Service Unit Financial Report*.

Service Unit Annual Financial Reports are prepared and submitted, along with the May Bank Statement to Council. Be sure to obtain bills and receipts for all Service Unit expenses and deposits and attach them to the Service Unit copy of the required Annual Financial Reports. A copy of the report must be shared with the Service Unit members.

B. GIRL SCOUT SERVICE UNIT SOURCES of FUNDING

All volunteers responsible in any way for GSNENY or Girl Scout Service Unit finances and money-earning projects must be registered Girl Scouts and in good standing.

Accounts. Girl Scout Service Unit accounts may be audited by GSNENY at any time. Girl Scout Service Unit bank accounts must be reconciled monthly and must always maintain a positive balance.

Compliance. Money-earning projects must be managed in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. All money-earning projects must be with organizations aligned with the mission of Girl Scouting. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers, organizing and executing money-earning activities for the service unit, to ensure they are complying.

Source of Funds.

The Girl Scout Service Unit will receive funds from the Product Sales Program. Money collected for Service Unit Girl events should balance out with expenditures. If there is money left over, it should be used for the next Girl event.

Sweets and Treats and cookie profits for Juliette's will be received by the Service Unit. Just like with Troop bank accounts, funds are not credited or given to an individual. Juliette members may request funds from the Service Unit to renew membership or attend events and programs.

Funds from a disbanded Troop will be placed into the Service Unit Bank Account.

Additional Money-Earning

Service Units are encouraged to limit the amount of time spent on additional Money-Earning Projects so they can spend time on Girl programming and adult development and recognition. Service Units are not allowed to conduct any money-earning projects while GSNENY Product Sales are occurring.

Other Permitted Money Raising Projects for Service Units are the same as *Other Money Raising Projects for Troops*.

Service Units should complete the Money Earning Project Form and submit it to the Volunteer Services Department at volunteering@girlscoutsnyny.org for approval prior to starting any permitted money raising project.

Tax Deductions for Donated Funds.

As noted above, Service Units may not solicit direct cash donations. Grants such as Stewart's Holiday Match may be applied for, with the support of the Council Fundraising Team. Any donations of \$250 or more, or donations of any amount that need a tax receipt must be:

- Made payable to GSNENY.
- Mailed to or dropped off at a GSNENY Service Center--noting which Service Unit the donation is for.
- Funds will be returned (by Council) to the designated Service Unit.

The Council will send the donating organization an official tax receipt.

Since only the Council holds non-profit status as a 501c (3) with the IRS, any donations or proceeds from fundraising events conducted by Service Units are not eligible for tax receipts, unless they are submitted to the Council for processing.

Accountability for Girl Scout Service Unit Funds

The Service Unit Manager is accountable for the management of Service Unit funds, even if another volunteer is appointed to help manage the funds. The Service Unit Manager may appoint another volunteer to be responsible for managing the Service Unit bank account. The volunteer must be a current

registered member of Girl Scouts, have a clear background check, and not be related to the Service Unit Manager.

C. TROOP BANK ACCOUNTS and FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Bank Choice and Account Name

Choose a bank that does not charge monthly service charges or charges only minimal fees on non-profit bank accounts.

“GIRL SCOUTS OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK” must be included in the name of bank accounts, e.g., Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York Troop 0000.

Signatures and Safeguards

Two (2) authorized signatures are required for each Girl Scout Troop bank account; only one (1) signature is required on each check. However, issuing a check for over \$500 requires *either* two signatures *or* written authorization (may be through email) of the second signatory documenting approval for the purchase/expense. The documentation must be attached to the monthly bank statement. Appropriate signatures are Girl Scout volunteers who are registered with the Girl Scout Troop and have undergone a background check. On each account, there must be at least two (2) people who are not related to each other and do not reside in the same household. *All signatories should be registered Girl Scout adults and approved volunteers.*

The person who holds the debit card and/or checkbook should not be the only person who receives the monthly bank statements. Both individuals need to have access to bank statements. Troop bank accounts and funds are the property of GSNENY, and GSNENY reserves the right to randomly audit Troop accounts (and will do so on a rotating basis). Any time the authorized signers on a bank account are changed, GSNENY should be notified. All signatories on the account are responsible for reviewing Troop finances regularly.

The Troop may obtain one debit card to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit card is not to be used for personal purchase. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely bi-annual reporting and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.

Any Change on a Bank Account

To make any changes in the banking account, a Troop must be registered with the Council. Examples of changes include but are not limited to:

- Changes in any signatures.
- Change in address.
- Change in bank name, account number or account type.

GSNENY must be notified within 30 days of any changes to bank accounts.

Letter of Authorization

A *Letter of Authorization* to open a bank account or to make a change to the account may be required by some banks. To obtain a *Letter of Authorization* from Council, contact your Volunteer Engagement Specialist prior to going to the bank. Please give Council staff two-business days to process the letter. When contacting the Council, have the following information:

- Girl Scout Troop number
- First and last names of the two signers
- Bank Name
- Account Number

Reporting to Troop Parents and Adults.

- At least two (2) times during the year, parents/guardians of the Girls in the Girl Scout Troop should be informed about the current status of the Troop's income and expenses (Treasurer's Report must be provided).
- Parents/guardians of the Girls in the Girl Scout Troop always have the right to review the income and expenses of the Troop. It is highly recommended that the Girls and their parents be provided a copy of the Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report.
- Be sure to obtain receipts for all Girl Scout Troop expenses and deposits and attach them to the Troop's copy of the required Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report.

Note: ATM withdrawal receipts do not qualify as a receipt for reimbursement or justification for Troop/group purchase. Troop/group checks may not be made out to cash. All purchases made with cash require detailed receipts of the goods and services purchased or provided.

Annual Troop Financial Report to GSNENY

- Every year, the Annual Troop Financial Report is submitted, along with the May Bank Statement, to the Service Unit Treasurer by June 15th. The Girl Scout Service Unit Team must submit reports to Council no later than June 30th. *Note:* Troop money should be spent as a percentage of the income; if for some reason it has not been, an explanation should be provided with the finance report.
- Troop Leaders/Assistant Troop Leaders whose troops have not turned in the Annual Troop Financial Report will be contacted by Council staff (and may not be reappointed) regarding submission of the completed report.

Managing Troop Finances.

- Troops will reimburse only those expenses that were approved in advance and that directly relate to a Troop activity. Expenses that exceed the amount approved may not be reimbursed. If possible, potential overages should be discussed with the Troop committee before purchases or expenditures are made.
- Sales Tax Exemption Forms are provided by GSNENY and should be used when purchasing goods and services. With these forms, troops can avoid paying state and local sales taxes, which are not reimbursable expenses.
- Expenses must be submitted no later than 30 days after the expense was incurred or the date of the event, whichever is later. The Troop/group may elect not to reimburse items submitted after

this date. No expenses will be reimbursed if submitted after six months of when the expenses were incurred.

- Mileage will not be reimbursed unless the Troop committee elects to do so under special circumstances.
- Checks issued by a Troop or group for reimbursement of expenses must be deposited within 90 days of issuance. The Troop/group will not be obligated to honor, reissue, or replace checks still outstanding beyond this 90-day period.
- The Troop treasurer must deposit checks received from their parties (parents, GSNENY, etc.) within 30 days of receiving them.
- Expenses should be reported including the name of the vendor, store or other location, the purpose of expense, the date the purchase was made, and a detail of the itemized amounts to be reimbursed. Itemized receipts must be provided in order to be reimbursed.
- All funds received by a Girl Scout Volunteer payable to GSNENY, must be turned in to GSNENY within 30 days.

D. GIRL SCOUT TROOP MONEY-EARNING ACTIVITIES

Troop Money-Earning

Girl Scout Troop money-earning projects can be valuable program activities and should be suitable to the age and ability of the Girls. These Girl Scout Troop money-earning projects should be consistent with the goals and principles of the Girl Scout program. For more information see *“Chapter 5, Managing Group Finances” in Volunteer Essentials*.

Parent Permission

Permission must be obtained in writing from a Girl’s parent/guardian before she may participate in Girl Scout Troop/Group money-earning projects and Product Sales programs.

Council-Sponsored Money-Earning

The primary money-earning activities for Girl Scout Troops are Sweets and Treats and the Cookie Program. In most cases, the Product Sales program should be sufficient to support the Girl Scout Troop activities. Girl Scout Troop participation in all GSNENY Product Sales is required for approval of additional money-earning projects. The determination of how proceeds from Girl Scout Group money-earning projects are used must be a Girl decision.

Note: If financial obligations from the previous “cookie sale “year have not been resolved, Girls will only be able to sell cookies (with a signed permission slip) at established cookie booths--this applies to Troop and Service Unit booths.

Service Unit Permission Needed for Additional Money-Earning.

Additional money-earning projects must be approved in writing by a Service Unit Manager or by members of the Council’s Volunteer Services Support team before the money-earning project is undertaken. Participation in Sweets and Treats and the Cookie Program and completion of the Annual Troop Financial Report, for the most recent year, will be reviewed if approval is requested for an additional Girl Scout Troop/group money-earning project.

For any non-Council money-earning project, the Girl Scout Troop/Group Leader must complete [Money Earning Request Form](#) and submit it to their Service Unit Manager or if there is not a Service Unit Manager, to the Council’s Volunteer Services Support team for approval before finalizing money-earning

plans. Girl Scout Daisies are permitted to conduct one additional Group Money-Earning Project outside of the Product Sales Programs.

Other allowable money-raising projects for Troops include items made and sold by Girls, or where Girls are doing a service. This could include garage sales, bake sales, holding events for younger Girls, and other similar events. Additional money-earning projects will not take place while GSNENY Product Sales are occurring.

Money-earning projects must be managed in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations. All money-earning projects must be with organizations that align with the mission of Girl Scouting. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers organizing and executing money-earning projects with their troops to ensure they are complying.

Prohibited Money Raising Activities for Troops

- Raffles, bingo, scratch cards or any game of chance
- Auctions--live and on-line
- Selling of gift cards (script) / coupon books or discount cards
- Direct selling of any non-Girl Scout products (like Avon, Pampered Chef, etc.)
- Direct solicitations for cash
- Grants from corporations or foundations (unless working through the Council's Grants and Fundraising staff).
- Use of any external online fundraising sites that are not related to the GSNENY cookie program. Prohibited sites include but are not limited to: gofundme.com; kickstarter.com; giveforward.com and crowdrise.com. Any funds solicited in this manner will not be passed through to troops.

Donated Funds

Troops and Service Units may not solicit cash donations. Occasionally, someone may offer a donation to a Troop or Service Unit who did not solicit them. (i.e. offering a \$10 donation at a cookie booth because they don't want to buy cookies). Any donations of \$250 or more, Care & Share donations, or donations of any amount that need a tax receipt must:

- Be made payable to GSNENY
- Be mailed or dropped off to a GSNENY Service Center with a notation of which Troop the donation is for.
- Be sent back (by Council) to the designated Troop.

The Council will send the donating organization an official tax receipt. Since only the Council holds non-profit status as a 501 c (3) with the IRS, any donations or proceeds from fundraising events conducted by troops are not eligible for tax receipts, unless they are submitted to the Council for processing.

For volunteers earning matching dollars through their employer for volunteer hours, please refer to the guidelines in *Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts and Other Tax-Deductible Gifts.*"

Spending Funds

Always keep in mind that Girl Scouting is an organization for Girls and all funds should be spent to benefit the Girls. Direct benefit for the Girls could include but is not limited to:

- Re-registration costs for Girl members
- Girl Scout activities and programs open to all Girl Scout Troop members

- Girl Scout Badges and/or patches
- Girl Scout uniform components or Girl Scout program books
- A donation of goods or merchandise purchased with Troop funds to a cause the Girls decide upon

Long term Girl-planned activity must be based on the Girls' decision and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- A future Girl Scout trip that is age-appropriate and will take place within three to four years.
- Assistance so that all Girl Scout Troop members will have the opportunity to attend Girl Scout activities/camp.

Recognition of Volunteer Contributions based on Girl input could include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Re-registration costs for adult volunteers
- Girl Scout patches
- Girl Scout adult uniform components or Girl Scout program books
- Small appreciation gift for the volunteers--such as flowers for the leader

Since the Girls earned the money through Product Sales Programs or other Group-Money Earning Projects, they are to decide how the Troop funds are spent.

E. INDEPENDENTLY REGISTERED GIRL MONEY-EARNING PROJECTS

Money earned by independently registered Girls (Juliettes) (non-Girl Scout Troop/Group members) participating in the cookie program will be deposited in the Service Unit's account.

Eligibility. Juliette Girls may only participate in a cookie program under the supervision of a Girl Scout Service Unit Cookie Manager.

- The Juliette Girl will participate in the program in the same manner as the other members of the Girl Scout Troop.
- Proceeds generated will be retained by the GSNENY Service Unit and will become the property of the Service Unit treasury.
- The Juliette Girl will be eligible to apply for proceeds from the Service Unit account.
- Girls participating in this manner will be eligible to receive a "Cookie Dough" Card with a dollar amount equal to her product sales profit, based on the Girl's program grade level and level of participation.
- Any booth sales are coordinated by the Service Unit Cookie Manager and the Service Unit Manager and inputted into eBudde).

F. DISBANDING GIRL SCOUT TROOPS.

Disbanding a Troop occurs when all the Girl members in the Troop decide to leave the Troop and are either not going to re-register as Girl Scouts in any Girl Scout Troop or are going to join another Girl Scout Troop. At that point, the disbanding Troop number is retired, and the Troop is no longer active. The term Disbanding Girl Scout Troop does not apply to one or more Girls choosing to leave a Girl Scout Troop that remains active.

Allocating Funds of Disbanded Troop:

- If none of the Girls in a disbanding Troop are continuing as a Girl Scout in another Troop, all remaining funds must be sent to the Service Unit. Write the Service Unit# on the memo line on the front of the check.
- If all of the Girls continuing in Girl Scouts choose to join the same active Girl Scout Troop, all funds shall be transferred to that Troop/group.
- If the continuing Girls choose to join two or more other active Girl Scout Troops, funds will be divided on a per Girl basis with input from the Girls' and Troop leaders.
- The Girl Scout Troop Leader must complete a final *Annual Girl Scout Troop Financial Report* indicating that the Girl Scout Troop is disbanding and that the bank account has been closed.
- If some Girls are continuing, with another Troop(s), the report should list the checks and their amount that were sent to the other Troops.
- If Girls are joining another Council, the funds stay with the Troop, or the Service Unit, per IRS Guidelines.

Girl Transferring to Another Girl Scout Troop or Becoming an individual Girl Scout Member (Juliette).

When a Girl decides to move her membership to another active Troop or becomes an independently registered Girl, a proportional share of the Troop money is to be shared with the Troop where the Girl is moving to, provided there is an amicable agreement between Troops.

If the Girl is becoming an independently registered Girl Scout, a proportional share of the Troop money would be shared with the Service Unit. If an agreement cannot be reached between the Troops or the Troop and Service Unit, then Council must be contacted to resolve. The remaining funds are the property of the original Troop and remain with that Troop. Money cannot be transferred between Councils.

G. OTHER FINANCIAL SITUATIONS

Collection of Outstanding Funds

To protect the integrity of Council-approved Girl Scout Troop money-earning activities, all efforts will be made to ensure that the outstanding balances are paid.

Safeguards & Guidelines.

The Girl Scout Troop will not assume debt responsibility for any individual.

As per GSUSA policy, **ALL troops must have a Troop bank account.**

A Troop Product Sale Manager is responsible for handling large sums of cash during the Sweets and Treats and Cookie Programs. Do not leave cash lying around your home, in your purse, or in your car. The Troop is responsible for paying for all Sweets and Treats products and cookies products ordered. If the money is lost, the amount is still owed to Council.

Girl participation slips and receipts are the Troop's responsibility and financial protection. The Troop Product Sales Manager is financially responsible for all the Troop's Sweets and Treats products and cookies, until they have been signed for by the parent or guardian. Receipts must be complete and signed by the parent/guardian--*not* by the Girls.

Troops must pay their entire Troop balance in full regardless of non-payment or insufficient funds from a parent. If the Troop cannot pay for the entire cookie bill on the due date, the Troop should hand in as

much money as they can to GSNENY—including the Troop proceeds. GSNENY will work with the Troop one-on-one to determine the Troop proceeds based on the monies paid.

By New York State law, the Troop receives Sweets and Treats products and cookies from GSNENY and owes GSNENY for all product received. It is a separate transaction between the Troop and the parent when products are given out from the Troop and, therefore, the parent owes the Troop money. Small claims cases can only be filed by the entity (person/Troop) that is owed money against the person that owes the money. Small claims cases must be filed in the city/town where the person that owes money resides. If the Troop would like assistance with the Small Claims Court filing or a GSNENY representative to accompany them, please email info@Girlscoutsneny.org

The following guidelines should be kept in mind:

- Payment for Sweets and Treats product and/or magazines is due at the time the order is placed.
- Payment for cookies is to be collected ONLY upon delivery to the customers, not at the time of order. Only for Gift of Caring orders should payment be collected when ordered.
- If you have Girls with large orders (100+ packages), do not give them all the cookies at once-- give them 6-8 cases at a time. When they make payment, give them more cookies.
- Collect money at least once a week.
- Receipts are to be used for all transactions when product is moved and when money is collected.
- Checks must be made payable to the Troop. Do not accept starter checks, counter checks, out-of-state or third-party checks.
- In no case does the income from product sales become the property of Juliette members. In addition, for Girl members who participate as Juliettes, the total proceeds resulting from their efforts are retained by the Service Unit in which they are registered.

Cookie Program Collections Assistance

GSNENY is aware that some Troops have parents or guardians that do not pay for some or all cookies they received during the Cookie Program. GSNENY may have some limited funding to assist Troops that are in this situation. Please reach out to finanace@Girlscoutsneny.org for more information.

Relationships with Third Parties

- While soliciting financial contributions for Girl Scouts, adult members may not solicit contributions for other organizations/beneficiaries. However, adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by GSNENY in which *the Council* is the beneficiary (such as United Way).
- Girls may not engage in any direct solicitation for money.
- Any permission for endorsements, individual testimonials, or authorization of books, plays, promotion pictures, radio and TV programs about Girl Scouting shall be first referred to the CEO of the Council.
- Sales on the Internet of Girl Scout merchandise such as uniforms, insignias, publications, and equipment may only be conducted by duly authorized and licensed Girl Scout Councils, Council shops retail agencies and/or GSUSA licensed vendors. Permission to sell on the internet must be obtained from GSUSA (The Blue Book of Basic Documents – “Internet Sales”).
- Soliciting of funds, using any external online fundraising sites that are not related to the GSNENY, is prohibited. Prohibited sites include, but are not limited to: gofundme.com, kickstarter.com,

giveforward.com and crowdrise.om. Any money solicited in this manner will be retained by Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York.

Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts and Other Tax-Deductible Gifts

All voluntary contributions intended to benefit the Girl Scout program in the Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York jurisdiction regardless of value, form, or designated use shall be made only to the Council and must follow current IRS guidelines. Incorporated as a public charity and designated as a 501(c) (3) organization, the Council is the only entity to which tax-deductible contributions may be made. The Federal Internal Revenue Code determines any tax deduction available to a donor.

Because Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts are adult-generated funds and not generated by the Girls as money earning program activities, they must be considered separately. Once Volunteer Hour Matching Gift funds are received at one of the Council Service Centers, 100% may be returned to the Girl Scout Troop or Service Unit.

In cases where a company will match volunteer hours with a donation to an organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c) (3) charitable organization, Council will verify hours as requested and all contributions must be receipted by Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York. Individual Girl Scout troops and Service Units are not recognized as 501(c) (3) charitable organizations and, therefore, may not deposit these gifts.

Donations received as matching grants for volunteer service may be credited to the Family Partnership Campaign at the direction of the Service Unit or Troop but only if the funds are retained by the Council.

For the funds to be appropriately distributed, the volunteer must follow these steps:

- Complete the paperwork or online form required by the company.
- Send an email to Give2GirlScouts@Girlscoutsneny.org, letting us know you applied so we can watch for the check. Include, in your email, the following information:
 - Who is the volunteer requesting the grant? – Provide *Full Name, Service Unit #, Troop #, Address*
 - What is the name of the company to which the grant request is directed?
 - How many volunteer hours are being reported?
 - What amount is being requested?
 - Will the funds be added to Family Partnership or returned to the Troop/Service Unit?
- Email the information to Give2GirlScouts@Girlscoutsneny.org--subject line "Volunteer Hours."

XIII. Product Sales Crisis Management

In the food industry, product complaints are not unusual. Councils and GSUSA expect a certain number of product complaints every year. These include, for example, reports that the product does not taste right or found damaged when the package was opened. Occasionally, there are reports of foreign objects in the product. Containment (confining a difficult incident to the situation and the location in which it took place) is the key to the successful resolution of product complaints.

Immediately notify the Product & Retail Services Team of any irregularities with the product or other situations to ascertain a course of action – whether an exchange of product or a refund is appropriate.

What if a Girl Scout is injured while selling Magazines, Nuts and Candy or Girl Scout Cookies?

- Give priority to securing medical attention for the injured person.
- In the event of a fatality, notify police and leave the victim and surrounding area undisturbed.

- Make notes about exact happenings. Be ready to answer – who, when, where, how, nature of injuries and/or damage. Have names and phone numbers of injured persons.
- Keep a responsible adult at the scene. Make sure the injured person and the surrounding area is not disturbed until police and ambulance arrive and assume authority.
- Put an adult in charge of the rest of the Troop/group.
- In the event of an emergency, contact one of the following individuals in this order:
 - Chief Administrative Officer – Denise Williams – work 518-489-8110, ext. 210 – cell 518-429-7178
 - Director of Product & Retail Sales – Amanda Allen – work 518-489-8110, ext. 202 – cell 518-207-6031
- Refer all media inquiry (newspaper, radio, TV) to the Director of Product and Retail Sales, Amanda Allen aallen@girlscoutsneny.org or media@Girlscoutsneny.org.
- Follow all *Activity Checkpoints* in the *Leadership Essentials Manual*.

All media contact must be handled by GSNENY.

XIV. TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Safety Activity Checkpoints and *Volunteer Essentials* must be consulted and guidelines followed.

Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York supports the development and use of technology, and it is the Council’s intent to protect the safety, security, and privacy of all registered members of the Council. Electronic mail (email), sent to Girl Scout volunteer lists, is never to be used to send solicitations of any kind, inappropriate jokes, or political information.

The use of email is a convenient and quick method of communication between Council staff and Girl Scout volunteers, Girls, or their parents.

Confidentiality. Anyone using email should be aware that most emails are not necessarily sent through secure channels and that they should only send content which is not confidential or libelous. Persons using email should not “blanket mail” an email from someone else to others, without the permission of the person who sent the original email. Steps should be taken to properly secure and protect personal information in possession of volunteers, whether in paper or electronic form.

Conflict Resolution. Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York 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 exchanges and use of social media, to resolve issues, are not recommended by Council.

Social Media Policy

According to Wikipedia, Social Media has been broadly defined to refer to the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that enable anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort or build relationships.” Some of the most common types of social media include social networking sites (Facebook) and (LinkedIn), microblogging sites (Twitter), forums, blogs and content-sharing services (YouTube).

The goal for GSNENY is to create and maintain a social media presence to recruit potential Girl Scouts, volunteers, and donors, as well as to retain current membership. The use of social media enhances the visibility of our Council as a united front,-reaching out to the community and media regarding

Council activities, events and more. Our goal is to continue to strengthen the mission of building Girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Five Key Guidelines for Social Media Use by Volunteers:

1. Act responsibly on and offline:

- **Act responsibly.** Girl Scouts asks that volunteers and Girls follow the ethical values to which all Girl Scouts aspire, including responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty. Ensure that your online content and conduct reflect your responsibility, especially when identifying yourself as a Girl Scout volunteer. Be respectful of the opinions of others, especially when acting as a representative for Girl Scouts.
- **Separate personal, business and Girl Scout networking.** Be aware of areas where lines between the personal, professional and Girl Scout arenas are likely to blur. Use privacy settings to separate activity on your personal social networks from your professional and Girl Scout persona. Create a separate account for your Girl Scout identity.
- **Avoid threatening communications.** Girl Scout volunteers should avoid speech that threatens, insults, or ridicules any person or groups based on their race, religion, gender, disability, or other characteristics.

2. Add value:

- **Understand each social network's compliance policy.** When using a social media network, review the network's policies and ensure that you comply before posting. Norms of use vary depending on the social space, as do rules for posting promotions, reviews, links, and solicitations.
- **Listen first.** Read conversation threads thoroughly before responding to individual comments.

3. Be transparent:

- **Include a disclaimer.** As a Girl Scout volunteer, you have informed opinions on topics related to our work, and we want you to share them. However, if you choose to talk about Girl Scouts on Girl Scout related topics via social media channels, it is necessary to include a disclaimer acknowledging that your personal opinions are not an official statement on behalf of Girl Scouts of Northeastern NY. Disclaimers may be stated one time in your biography or profile page rather than being repeated in each post.
 - Full sample disclaimer: *This is a personal blog. I am a Girl Scout volunteer, but opinions expressed are my own and not those of Girl Scouts of Northeastern NY.*
 - Short sample disclaimer (as on Twitter bios): *Girl Scout volunteer. Opinions are my own.*

4. Abide by Girl Scout volunteer policies:

- As a volunteer it is important that you pay attention to social media etiquette and follow the general guidelines outlined for Social Media use for Girl Scout volunteers.
- **Remove yourself from discussions in which a conflict of interest may be a concern.** Be aware of your relationship to Girl Scouts and other organizations. If you have a conflict of interest, be the first to acknowledge that relationship and remove yourself from the conversation.

5. Give credit:

- **Respect [intellectual property laws](#).** Give credit where credit is due. If you are using another organization's content, obtain permission and make sure that the rights holders have received proper attribution in your post.

GSNENY Social Media Code of Conduct

Below are some general tips to remember when using social media.

1. Be honest and fair.

Be transparent about your role as a Girl Scouts of Northeastern NY volunteer when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online.

2. Be friendly, helpful, considerate, and caring.

Treat others as you want to be treated. Do not use social media to attack other volunteers, Troop members, the Council or staff.

3. Be courageous and strong.

Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouts. If you see posts, comments or behavior that concern you, please notify your (insert staff title). Do not be afraid to speak up or ask questions.

4. Be responsible for what you say and do.

Remember that what you post online will be around for a long time (think of it as your online carbon footprint), and nothing is really "private" anymore. Use discretion and if you have questions about whether you should post something, ask your (insert appropriate Council staff person or volunteer role).

5. Respect yourself and others.

Respect other people's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when choosing to accept or invite a fellow volunteer and/or parents as your Facebook "friend" on your personal Facebook page or who you follow on Twitter. (For the service unit or Troop Facebook page, the privacy settings will give you the ability to give permission to only those who are involved with the service unit or Troop.)

6. Respect authority.

GSNENY reserves the right to block or delete any postings, administrators, or group members or to restrict volunteer access to social media sites within Council control. Also, if you are contacted by a member of the media through a social media site and asked to comment on an issue, please refer them to media@girlscoutsneny.org and an authorized member from Council will respond.

7. Use resources wisely.

Your time is a valuable resource and your social media activities should not interfere with your volunteer commitments.

8. Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

This is true regardless of how you are communicating, but it is especially true in the online world.

9. Be mindful of how you look and act by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Your online presence can reflect positively or negatively on GSNENY. Be wary of your

actions captured via images, posts, or comments. It is always recommended to set your personal Facebook profile to "private" (only your Facebook friends can see it), especially if you have GSNENY listed as an organization you volunteer for or represent. Please remember that your Facebook profile can be viewed publicly, so use discretion when choosing how the world sees you.

10. Deliver effective and deliberate communication.

Respond to questions and concerns. in a timely manner. Be a valuable resource for information.

XV. Public Relations

The public impression of GSNENY is affected by the activities of everyone in the Girl Scout Movement. Keeping positive, consistent messages before the public is primarily the function of GSNENY's Leadership Team and external Public Relations firm, which handles all broadcast media (television and radio). By coordinating communications, Council will provide strong, consistent messages to external and internal audiences.

In the case of serious accident, health emergency or death, all volunteers and staff need to be aware of the Council procedures. All medial inquiry should be directed to Council Leadership or designated public relations firm.

Girl Scout Service Unit Public Relations

When a newsworthy event or happening in a Girl Scout Service Unit occurs, Girl Scout volunteers must contact Council's external Public Relations firm (media@girlscoutsneny.org) and/or Service Unit Manager. The external Public Relations firm and/or Service Unit Manager will then draft a press release and contact the appropriate local print media, (newspapers, newsletters, etc.) in their Girl Scout Service Unit.

Multiple Girl Scout Service Units' Public Relations

In some cases (where several Girl Scout Service Units are in an area served by one newspaper) the external Public Relations firm (media@girlscoutsneny.org) and/or the Service Unit Manager will be designated to work directly with the newspaper, to ensure a steady, non- repetitive flow of information.

Council-wide Public Relations

When it is felt that a newsworthy event or happening has the potential to interest a widespread audience, Girl Scout volunteers must first contact the external Public Relations firm (media@girlscoutsneny.org) and/or Service Unit Manager. If the PR firm and/or Service Unit Manager agree that the newsworthy event or happening has widespread appeal, a media/press release will be drafted and the Council's Leadership Team will be notified. If the Leadership Team agrees with the PR firm and/or Service Unit Manager that the event has widespread appeal, then the external Public Relations firm will contact the broadcast media (TV/radio).

National Public Relations

National media are never to be contacted by members of Girl Scout Councils; GSUSA's PR staff handles all national media contact. If a Girl Scout volunteer feels that an event or happening has national appeal, they will follow the steps listed in the above "Council Wide Public Relations" procedure--if the Council's Leadership Team agrees that the event or happening has national appeal, the Leadership Team will contact GSUSA's Public Relations staff.

Emergency Situations. If an emergency occurs, Girl Scouts and volunteers must follow the GSNENY Emergency Procedures which include making NO statement of ANY KIND to the media. Do NOT give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact GSNENY Council Offices at 518-489-8110 or email media@girlscoutsneny.org.

Cookie Program Public Relations. In order to give every Girl Scout an equal opportunity to meet and exceed their personal Cookie Program goals, ALL Girl Scout Cookie Program media efforts (newspaper, magazine, television, radio, billboard, etc.) are coordinated by the Council's Marketing Department. A single Girl Scout Troop, Service Unit, or individual may NOT contact the media nor list their contact information in an advertisement, commercial, PSA, etc. without written approval from the GSNENY Leadership Team.

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

DISCLAIMER

These policies are not a contract for participation as a volunteer nor are they intended to create or imply a contract. The Council reserves the right to change, suspend, or eliminate any or all matters contained herein and all other policies, rules, and procedures at any time without prior notice. It also retains the sole discretion to interpret the provisions of these policies and to depart from the provisions if the Board of Directors determines that such action is appropriate.

The current Council volunteer policies supersede the provisions of all other previous handbooks, manuals, policies, rules, and procedures that address the subjects covered herein or are inconsistent with these policies and procedures. All such previous handbooks, manuals, policies, rules, and procedures are expressly revoked.

The Council volunteer policies are consistent with the policies of GSUSA. The Council volunteer policies are reviewed periodically. Notice of revision(s) will be placed on the Council's web site, and in the Council newsletter, and will be communicated through the standard Council volunteer organizational system.