



Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes, Inc.

COUNCIL POLICIES

Definitions

Policy:

1. A definite course or method of action to guide and determine present and future decisions.
2. An established binding course of action to be followed.

Standard: An established model or example which acts as a criterion for a given purpose.

Guideline: An established way of work, an indication or outline of conduct.

General

1. GSUSA *Safety-Wise* standards and all applicable state and federal laws/codes shall be followed at all times by all members of Girl Scouts of the Northwestern Great Lakes, Inc (GSNWGL) in all phases of operations.
2. Troop/Group leaders/advisors must obtain the written consent of a parent/guardian from every girl wishing to participate in an activity or outing that is held at a different place or time from the regularly scheduled troop meeting. Similar permission must be obtained prior to participating in any program focusing on subjects that may be considered sensitive or controversial in nature.
3. Troops/Groups and Service Areas cannot legally enter into contracts. All contracts require a signature authorized by the board of directors. (Includes contracts with and without fees.)
4. GSNWGL recognizes that members with communicable and/or life threatening illnesses may wish to continue to engage in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition allows, including Girl Scout activities. As long as medical evidence indicates that their condition will not be a threat to themselves or others, they will be treated consistently with their peers. The Council will adhere to State statutes dealing with medical records confidentiality and the current publication of *Safety-Wise*. GSNWGL is committed to providing a safe environment for Girl Scout activities. Every precaution will be taken to ensure that the health and/or safety of members of GSNWGL is not threatened.

Finances

Troop Bank Accounts

All troops/groups must have a checking account in the name of GSNWGL, Troop # XXXX. Each account must have two signers, both of whom are nonrelated registered adult members of the troop/group. Each account must have the Council's current Corporate Resolution on file with the bank or financial institution.

Troop Financial Reporting

Upon registering each fall, each troop must file annually a *Troop/Group Bank Account Record* form. In addition, at the end of the year, each troop must file an *Annual Troop Financial Report* with the Council.

Troop Funds

Funds earned from troop activities, projects, product sales and from troop dues must be deposited in the troop bank account. Troop funds are not the property of individual girl or adult members. Troop money belongs to the entire troop and decisions on its use and spending are made through the troop's system of troop government. Individual "accounts" within troop funds are not permitted.

The loss of troop/group monies through mismanagement or theft is the troop's/group's responsibility, but Council assistance will be provided as appropriate. In the case of theft, a police report must be filed immediately by a troop/group representative.

Funds and equipment of disbanded troops will be held for 18 months. If reorganization does not take place within that time, the troop will be considered officially disbanded, and the resources will be used by the Council in the interest of Girl Scouting, as designated by the board of directors.

Outstanding Debt

A person owing a debt to GSNWGL for more than 45 days will be removed immediately from any adult volunteer position currently held. Only if the debt is repaid within six months from the date it was incurred may the individual be reinstated in a volunteer position.

Financial Assistance

Parents may apply for financial assistance on behalf of a registered girl.

Refund of Registration Fees

The annual national membership dues are not refundable or transferable.

Service Area Funds

A Service Area may open and operate checking accounts utilizing GSNWGL taxpayer identification number following the Service Area Treasury Guidelines and ensuring the quarterly and year end reports are filed on time.

Troop Travel/Trips

Troops/Groups planning or taking field trips must follow all policies and procedures as outlined in *Safety-Wise* AND the following additional steps:

Category 1: Trips to Council-owned properties or to Council-sponsored events - Leaders must follow directions for property reservations using the current form.

Category 2: Trips within the Council jurisdiction AND not involving an overnight stay - Leaders must carry with them a Parent Permission Form and a Medical History Form for each girl. Council approval is not required.

Category 3: Trips of one or two nights in length - Leaders must send in a Troop/Group Travel form to notify the Council at least two weeks in advance. Council approval is required. Additional insurance is only required if non-registered individuals are traveling with the troop/group.

Category 4: Trips of three or more nights in length - Leaders must send in the Troop/Group Travel form at least three months prior to the departure date. Council approval and additional insurance are required.

Category 5: International trips - Leaders must send in the Intent to Travel Form at least one year in advance of the departure date. Council approval and additional insurance is *required*.

Rationale

The Council office needs to know of all troops/groups who are travelling in the name of Girl Scouts. The forms a leader fills out will provide the critical contact information needed in case of an emergency. If an emergency should occur, the Council spokesperson will have the information necessary to deal with questions from parents and the media. Sending the forms in to the Council office in the required time frame insures adequate preparation time for the troop, and allows time for the proper insurance coverage to be obtained. Council approval may be withheld if the trip is too difficult or advanced for the age level of the girls involved, or if it feels there has not been adequate preparation.

Transporting Girls

All adults transporting Girl Scouts (for the purpose of a troop, Service Area and/or Council event) must ensure that all passengers are legally restrained. If booster seats are required by state law, parents of Girl Scouts carpooling or attending an event that includes transportation will be required to supply a booster seat for their child, unless the driver provides sufficient seats. The driver of each vehicle is responsible for ensuring that all of their passengers are properly and legally restrained.

Cell Phones

The use of a cell phone by the driver of a vehicle carrying Girl Scouts is not permitted. When a driver must use a communication device, she/he must first bring the vehicle to a complete stop out of traffic.

Troop Operation

Supervision

During all troop/group meetings and related small-group activities, a leader, assistant leader, or other responsible adult designated by the leader or by the Council must be present. At least *one of these* must be an adult female not residing in the same household with, or related to, the other adult(s).

Donations

Troop Money Earning

Girl Scout troops who participate in the annual Cookie Program are eligible to take part in money earning activities provided that:

- a) All fundraising guidelines are followed.
- b) Activities requiring approval are submitted within defined timelines (see pre-approved list).
- c) Money earning activities are not scheduled during the order-taking or direct sales phases of the Council's Cookie Sale Program, during the Council's Fall Product Program, or during local United Way drives.

Monetary Donations to Troops/Groups or Service Area

Any monetary donations greater than \$50 from a foundation, corporation, organization, government entity, or individual (including recognition of volunteer service hours) received on behalf of a GSNWGL troop/group, Service Area, or individual must be accepted and recognized by GSNWGL. The Council will return 50 percent of the donation, not to exceed \$250, to the designated troop/group or Service Area. The balance of the donation will remain at the Council to support program development, property maintenance, volunteer support and development.

Unsolicited monetary donations of \$50 or less may be accepted directly by a troop/group, or Service Area. No troop/group/Service Area may solicit donations. Special consideration may be given to girls seeking support for Gold Award projects.

Council-Owned/Leased Property

Firearms/Hunting

Hunting and the use of any firearms is prohibited on Council-owned properties.

Alcoholic Beverages

Persons under the undue influence of controlled substances or alcohol, or in possession of same, are prohibited from participation in any Girl Scout program or event.

The use of alcohol is not permitted on Girl Scout property, or at any Girl Scout function involving girls, except on specific Chief Executive Officer pre-approved occasions.

Drugs

The use or possession of any drugs at Council-owned or leased properties, other than prescribed by a physician, are strictly prohibited. The use or possession of any drugs is not permitted at any girl event.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any Council-owned or leased building, property or vehicle, or on Council property. Smoking or use of tobacco products is prohibited at any girl event.

Outside Group Usage

The facilities of GSNWGL may be used by outside groups if the group and the planned activity are not in conflict with Council activities. Sponsoring groups agree to follow all guidelines and policies and pay all fees and deposits as currently established and can provide proof of sufficient liability insurance coverage. The Chief Executive Officer has the right to approve or refuse a request by any outside group or establish additional restrictions for use at any time if she/he feels it is in the best interest of the Council.

Pets

Bringing cats and dogs to Council-owned or leased property is prohibited, with the exception of service pets. In certain pre-approved occasions by the Chief Executive Officer, permission may be granted for those living on site for extended periods provided they meet Council-defined conditions.

Approved by the GSNWGL Board on October 8, 2009