

**Girl Scouts of Northern California**  
**Volunteer Management Policy**  
**Board Approved: 7.23.2016**

Girl Scouts of Northern California is governed by the policies of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) as stated in the Blue Book of Basic Documents 2015 edition and the Volunteer Management Policies stated below. The goal of the Girl Scouts of Northern California is to provide beneficial and safe program for girls. The Girl Scouts of Northern California Board of Directors has adopted the following as policy:

### **Safety**

Volunteers and participants in the Girl Scout program should familiarize themselves with Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints, which outline the guidelines and checkpoints for maintaining a safe environment in which to conduct Girl Scout activities. All activities should be conducted following the Safety Activity Checkpoints and the guidelines listed in the Girl Scouts of Northern California Volunteer Essentials, or following state or federal laws, whichever is most stringent. Where no specific activity checkpoints or laws are stated, the guidelines of Girl Scouts of the USA and the policies and procedures of Girl Scouts of Northern California are recognized as the authority on the specific activity as an acceptable practice.

### **Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action**

Girl Scouts of Northern California seeks to offer volunteer opportunities to all adults, age 18 and up, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, citizenship, pregnancy, childbirth or other related medical condition, marital status or any other classification protected by federal, state or local laws or ordinances. Adult volunteers are selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer tasks, willingness and availability to participate in training for the position and acceptance of the principles and beliefs of Girl Scouting. All girls and adults who meet the membership requirements will not be denied access to the program. Annually we review our Affirmative Action Program to monitor progress toward our council goal. Girl Scouts of Northern California is committed to the Affirmative Action policies of GSUSA and our local Affirmative Action Policy as set forth in this paragraph. The council will endeavor, through targeted recruitment efforts, to enroll and train adult volunteers of culturally, racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. The council is committed to assuring equal opportunity and equal consideration to all applicants. In most cases, a written agreement will be completed at the time of appointment, which will include a term of appointment, specific expectations for tasks, and signatures of the volunteer and her/his supervisor.

Girl Scout volunteers who are diagnosed with HIV/AIDS are treated no differently than those with any other catastrophic illness. They are subject to Girl Scout volunteer policies and practices in the same manner as other volunteers.

For purposes of transgender volunteers, the Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints apply based on the volunteer's most consistent gender expression. If an adult does not identify as female, the same rules will apply to that volunteer as apply to male volunteers.

Male volunteers are welcomed to the organization to serve in accordance with standards established in the Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Girl Scouts of Northern California believes that female role models are especially important to girls as they develop the decision making and planning abilities they will need as women. Therefore, when men serve in troop/group leadership roles, they do so as assistant leaders or co-leaders with female leaders.

Girl Scouts values diversity and inclusiveness, and our staff and volunteers are representative of our diverse communities. Girl Scout membership does not discriminate on any basis; including sexual orientation and gender identity. There are established standards that do not permit adults to advocate or promote a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation, nor do we recruit accordingly. Adults working with girls must adhere to our firm standards relating to appropriate conduct, and we comply with all federal and state human resource regulations.

With guidance from volunteers and their parents, girls themselves are expected to respect the values and beliefs of other girls and refrain from advocating or promoting a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation. We believe that sexual orientation is a private matter for girls and their families to address together. In relation to gender identity, if a child identifies as a girl and the child's family presents her as a girl, Girl Scouts of Northern California welcomes her as a Girl Scout. GSNorCal will work with the family to get the child involved in Girl Scouts and will provide

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training and support, as necessary, to our staff and volunteers to ensure the child's Girl Scout experience is a positive one.

## Inclusion and Accomodation

Girl Scouts is inclusive. We support troop leaders to accommodate girls of all abilities and support each girl to make the most of her Girl Scout experience. We work with troop leaders to identify reasonable accomodations that can be made to meet the needs of each girl. We also understand that each troop leader's ability to provide such reasonable accomodations may vary given all of the circumstances of their troop.

It is always our preference to find ways to support the troop leader, while accommodating the girl. Occasionally, a troop leader determines that they are not able to meet the needs of one or more girls in their troop. A troop leader in this situation should contact their service unit Leader Support Manager, or other designated service unit volunteer, for guidance and support.

If the troop leader and LSM are not able to resolve the matter to the satisfaction of all parties involved, then the troop leader and/or LSM should involve GSNorCal staff to resolve the matter in accordance with the [GSNorCal Grievance Process included below](#).

A member of the GSNorCal staff will evaluate the circumstances and provide resources and support to help resolve the issues. If GSNorCal staff determines that the troop leader's concerns are reasonable given all of the circumstances of the troop, then GSNorCal staff will support removal of the girl from the troop and will work with the girl and her family to locate an alternate troop and/or other reasonable accomodations. If an alternate troop placement or other reasonable accomodations are not possible, then GSNorCal will issue a refund of membership dues and council service fee paid for that membership year unless the girl chooses to continue to participate as an individual member.

## Harassment

All girl members, volunteers and employees in Girl Scouts of Northern California are entitled to work in an environment free of harassment in all forms including sexual, verbal, and physical harassment. Girl Scouts of Northern California maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment of all forms. Council policy and equal opportunity law prohibit harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, citizenship, pregnancy, childbirth or other related medical condition, marital status or any other classification protected by federal, state or local laws or ordinances.

## Adult Screening

A screening process for volunteers has been established for the safety of our girl members and the protection of our adult members. All volunteers must complete the screening process as established by the council for the specific role they will assume or have assumed.

Before any adult will work directly with/supervise girls (or drive them), work with money or be responsible for products, work with girls' or other adults' personal information, or attend an overnight activity (including family camp or a parent/daughter event), she or he must complete the volunteer screening process as outlined by GSNorCal, including completion of a background check. The adult's clearance status will be shared with staff or volunteers only as needed. The reasons for a disqualification will always remain confidential. Any Girl Scout volunteer who is formally accused of, charged with, or under investigation by authorities for any automatically disqualifying offense (or offenses which might result in disqualification at the discretion of GSNorCal), will not be allowed to volunteer until disposition of the charge.

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The following procedures will be followed. A volunteer so accused is required to:

- Suspend all Girl Scout activities and duties until the matter has been resolved.
- Turn over all monies, materials, and records to a designated representative of the council until the matter is resolved.
- The accused is considered innocent until proven guilty.

## Volunteer Conduct

Standards outlining acceptable conduct of volunteers are important for the orderly operation of any organization and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all the members. Volunteers are expected to abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law and all policies, standards and practices established by Girl Scouts of Northern California and GSUSA. Inappropriate conduct may result in revoking volunteer status. Some examples of unacceptable conduct are identified below:

Possession of alcohol or any controlled substance at a Girl Scout event where girls are present, or while on Girl Scouts of Northern California premises (unless at an adult event) or participation in Girl Scout activities under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance, unless as prescribed by a personal physician. Alcohol must not be consumed by adults for the entirety of the event or activity when they are responsible for the supervision of girls as part of the adult-to-girl ratio.

Smoking in areas designated as non-smoking areas or any place girl members are present.

Bringing dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms and other similar items onto council properties or to Girl Scout activities unless such items are part of the program and are under strict supervision and control.

Failure to comply with California State Law requiring the driver and each passenger to be restrained by a separate safety belt when a passenger car, truck or van is being used.

Failure to comply with California State Law regarding the use of car seats for children, and the use of cell phones or other electronic devices without a hands-free device while driving. Children must be in a belt-positioning booster seat until they are at least 8 years old or 4 feet 9 inches tall.

Failure to comply with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration guidelines which prohibit children under 12 years of age from riding in the front seat of a car equipped with air bags.

Falsifying or making material omissions in Council records.

Misappropriation of any Girl Scout funds.

Theft or inappropriate removal of property that belongs to or is in the possession of Girl Scouts of Northern California, council employees, girl members or visitors, and/or malicious or willful destruction or damage to such.

Soliciting or accepting gratuities for personal gain or benefit.

Violation of federal, state, or local laws.

Girl Scouts of Northern California reserves the right to release any volunteer from service if, in the sole discretion of the Girl Scouts of Northern California, the volunteer's actions are inconsistent with Girl Scout policies, principles, or procedures.

Adult volunteers are responsible for informing parents and others participating in Girl Scout activities of the standards of acceptable conduct.

## Grievance Process

A grievance is a complaint regarding the application of policies and procedures. The grievance process is set up for handling these complaints in an orderly and fair manner. All council adults should seek resolution to problems through open communications and informal discussions.

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If a volunteer has a concern or conflict, they should take it to the person involved first and negotiate for a mutually beneficial resolution.

If informal communications fail, the people involved should meet with their volunteer supervisor. The parties should try to resolve the conflict and specify the specific steps necessary.

If this does not solve the problem, the appropriate staff member should be contacted to provide assistance. (If the staff member is involved in the problem, that person's supervisor should be contacted.)

If the volunteer still feels that the situation is not adequately resolved, the issue may be taken to the Chief Officer for the department involved who will make a final decision on the conflict and see that the decision is implemented. All decisions should be documented, and each party should sign the agreement and keep a copy.

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

Girl Scout volunteers have a moral responsibility to report known or suspected cases of child abuse to Child Protective Services. If a volunteer is told or suspects that a child has been abused, she/he may report this information to the council staff member assigned to her/his area for assistance with the report to Child Protective Services. Staff are mandated reporters and must ensure that a report is filed. California law defines an abused child as one who is any one or more of the following:

- Physically abused
- Sexually molested
- Emotionally neglected or abused
- Under constant verbal attack or torment
- Without proper food, clothing, or shelter
- Left alone for long periods of time
- Volunteer suspected accused of abusing children

In the event that a Girl Scout volunteer is formally accused of, charged with, or under investigation by authorities for the crime of child abuse, the following procedures will be followed.

A volunteer so accused is required to:

- Suspend all Girl Scout activities and duties until the matter has been resolved.
- Turn over all monies, materials, and records to a designated representative of the council until the matter is resolved.

The accused is considered innocent until proven guilty.

## **Registered Sex Offenders, Those Living in Households with Registered Sex Offenders**

Registered sex offenders are expressly prohibited from serving as Girl Scout volunteers in any capacity. Those living in households with registered sex offenders are expressly prohibited from serving as Girl Scout volunteers in any capacity where they work directly with, drive, or supervise girls.

## **Adult Education/Training**

All volunteers with primary responsibility for working with girls must be adequately prepared for the position they will assume or have assumed in accordance with guidelines established by the council. Basic courses that are designated as mandatory for the position must be completed within a specified time frame. Adult courses will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his work.

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## **Drivers**

Drivers for Girl Scout activities where the transportation is arranged by Girl Scout volunteers or staff, must be at least 21 years of age, have a valid driver's license, carry the minimum insurance required by law and have completed screening procedures for drivers established by the council.