

Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas Volunteer Policies

The operational volunteer policies contained herein were adopted by the board of directors of Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas on October 6, 1998, revised November 16, 1999, September 26, 2000, November 28, 2000, January 23, 2001, November 19, 2002, February 9, 2003, September 23, 2008, July 17, 2012, and supersede previous policies. They are reviewed biennially, in part or as a whole, to ensure that they continue to reflect current thinking in the field of volunteer relations and are consistent with Girl Scout of the USA requirements.

**"The strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the
voluntary leadership of its adult members"**

Preamble to the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the United States of America

Volunteer Policies

Volunteers should familiarize themselves with those GSUSA and Council policies and practices that guide and protect their status as Girl Scout volunteers. The policies listed below pertain to all volunteers regardless of position or role.

Affirmative Action for Volunteers

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of under-represented population groups.

*-Blue Book of Basic Documents
2016 pg. 23*

Membership Registration

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the United States of America and individually pay the \$15 annual, or other applicable membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

*-Blue Book of Basic Documents
2016 pg. 22*

Recruitment

The recruitment process consists of a number of methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions. Written position descriptions that define specific responsibilities and clarify expectations will be completed prior to recruitment and used in the search. Each volunteer will also be required to complete a Volunteer Application, provide references, sign agreements, and in most cases, undergo a background check, prior to selection.

Background Checks

Effective January 1, 2001, in order to ensure the safety and well-being of the girl members of the Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas, the council reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been convicted of certain crimes.

All prospective volunteers must complete and sign a form authorizing the council to conduct a criminal background search. Without a completed and signed authorization

form, a person cannot serve in or be appointed to a volunteer position with the council.

A criminal background check is one component of the council's volunteer placement procedure, the goal of which is to screen prospective volunteers and place capable and qualified adults in all operational positions.

The criminal offenses that will disqualify a person from volunteer participation in the council, as well as the process used to determine disqualification of a person from volunteer participation, are set forth in greater detail below. As a general matter, the decision whether to exclude all together or to limit a prospective volunteer's participation in the council is exclusively within the discretion of the Council. Factors to be considered by the Council in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, and safeguard the safety and best interests of its girl members.

Criminal Background Check Procedure

1. Application and Authorization Form. Each prospective volunteer must complete and sign the Volunteer Application form. The form authorizes the council to search the records of the Texas Department of Public Safety in order to ascertain the applicant's criminal history record.

2. Accuracy of Application and Authorization Form. Providing false information on the application or authorization form, including Social Security number or date of birth, is grounds for automatic exclusion from participation in the council, regardless of the result of the criminal background search.

3. Challenging the Accuracy of the Criminal Background Record. Any applicant who disputes or desires to contest the information provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety must file a written notice with the council within 10 days of being notified that her or his application for a volunteer participation has been denied. It is the applicant's responsibility to challenge the report received from the Department of Public Safety and to arrange for any corrections, if necessary.

The council has no control over the information maintained by the Department of Public Safety. The council cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided by the Department of Public Safety to the council, or for any actions taken by the council in reliance on such information. The council is entitled to and shall rely upon information contained in the Criminal History Report until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript is provided.

Disqualification From Volunteer Participation

The following rules shall apply if the council learns that a prospective volunteer has been convicted of one of the crimes under the laws of the State of Texas, another state, or the United States.

1. Automatic disqualification, including, but not limited to:

- * Crimes against children

- * Crimes defined as public indecency
- * Felony offenses against persons
- * Crimes involving the use of weapons
- * Arson
- * Any violent crime or felony drug related offense, other than the exception stated in #2 below
- * DWI, DUI. Or possession of marijuana under two ounces: First offense where it has been less than five (5) years since the date of disposition and any second offense or more.

2. Discretionary Disqualification: The decision whether to allow a volunteer's participation shall be within the absolute and exclusive discretion of the council in the following instances: DWI, DUI or possession of marijuana under two ounces, **only** if it has been a first time offense and it has been more than five years since the date of dispositions, and all other criminal offenses (other than traffic violations classified as Class C misdemeanors)

Confidentiality

The Council will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background search information, including information regarding disqualification decisions.

Approved by Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas Board of Directors

November 28, 2000

Revised November 19, 2002

Selection

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socio economic status, or other characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law. Volunteers will receive some type of face-to-face interview prior to selection.

Membership

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards, be registered through the council as members of the Girl Scout Movement, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scout council.

Placement

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed

in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions and they may request reassignment.

Appointment

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one year. (See “Reappointment” for additional information.)

Training

All volunteers will receive basic training for their position and will also be required to complete additional training that is designated as mandatory for the position within a specified time frame. Training will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his work.

Orientation

Each volunteer is provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, local council information, and the support systems available to help them in their work. Orientation can be done one-on-one or in a group setting.

Advantages

Advantages to volunteers include support in their position, traveling, and other learning opportunities. Volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their skills while serving with the council. As appropriate, the council will assist volunteers in broadening their skills through assignment to new volunteer positions involving additional and/or greater responsibilities. Other advantages for volunteers include council publications, tools for recording volunteer experience, references upon request, liability insurance, and supplementary accident insurance, as part of national and/or council membership.

Performance Appraisal

Each volunteer shall be provided with the opportunity for a periodic performance appraisal and evaluation. The performance appraisal should include both a review of the volunteer’s performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The performance appraisal session should also be utilized as an opportunity to ascertain the mutual interest of the council and volunteer in the volunteer’s continued service in her or his position. It shall be the responsibility of each staff person in a supporting relationship with a volunteer to schedule and conduct the performance appraisal.

The position description and standards of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of the performance appraisal. A confidential written record should be kept on each appraisal session.

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the responsibilities of the position, measurable indicators of

whether responsibilities were accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of responsibilities. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the beginning of her or his assignment.

Reappointment

Prior to completion of her or his term, each volunteer who is to be reappointed to the same position or rotated to a different position may receive confirmation of such reappointment or rotation. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers, and employed staff. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations and time commitments.

Uniforms

Girl Scouts at each level have one required element (Tunic, Sash or Vest) for the display of official pins and awards which will be required when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement.

For girls in grades Kindergarten through 12th, the unifying look includes wearing a choice of a tunic, vest, sash for displaying official pins and awards, combined with their own solid white shirts and khaki pants or skirts. Girl Scouts in high school can also wear a scarf that unites their look with the sisterhood of Girl Scouts around the world. Girl Scouts at the Daisy and Brownie levels will continue to have a full uniform ensemble available.

For adult members the unifying look of the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf, or tie for the men, worn with the official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue business attire.

Conflict Resolution/Dispute

The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. The policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. All volunteers may use the conflict resolution procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. Informal counseling by volunteer and staff personal is the first step in resolving a situation involving a conflict or dispute. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking immediate and appropriate action with respect to the volunteer. The procedure is as follows:

Step 1. If an informal resolution is not possible and a further hearing is desired, the person filing the complaint must do so in writing, citing the issue. The signed and dated document must be specifically titled "Conflict Resolution/Dispute Request", identify the person with whom the conflict is registered, and cite the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied. A copy should be sent to the identified person's supervisor. Within ten (10) working days, the supervisor will call a conference of all parties involved in the dispute and attempt to resolve the conflict. A written summary of the conference will be distributed to all parties.

Step 2. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the disposition of the conflict resolution, the council staff member or the council staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within ten (10) working days following her or his initial conference.

Step 3. In the event that the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations, and sends a copy to the chief operating officer/chief executive officer.

Or

Step 4. The chief operating officer/ chief executive officer will appoint a dispute/complaint resolution review team. (The review team will be comprised of a management representative, an employee not involved in the conflict resolution process, and a council volunteer selected by the complainant.) The dispute review team will review the documentation on file and meet with the individuals involved. The review team may seek additional information, if necessary, to aid it in making a final decision. The team will provide the chief operating officer/chief executive officer with a written report of its findings and recommendations within ten (10) working days of the review hearing. Copies will also be issued to the volunteer and immediate supervisor.

If the recommended resolution is not acceptable to the volunteer or any of the supervisors involved, a request to submit the recommended resolution to the chief operating officer/chief executive officer for a final and binding decision will be made. The chief operating officer/chief executive officer may exercise the following:

1. Accept the Dispute Resolution Team's recommended solution.

2. Provide an alternative final and binding decision.

This is the council's final decision. It is the responsibility of the chief operating officer/chief executive officer to implement the decision.

Recognition

The Council's formal recognition system will be consistent with the GSUSA publication *Adult Recognition in Girl Scouting*. (Cat. No. 26-458).

Release

Either the council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with the Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

Harassment

The council 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.

The Council expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, ~~or~~ disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran's status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has 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 to a supervisor or to the chief operating officer/chief executive officer. The supervisor, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the chief operating officer/chief executive officer, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions.

Sexual Harassment

It is against the council's policies for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or

suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, sexually harasses another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, abusing the dignity of another through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct and threats or suggestions that a volunteer's status is conditioned upon toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances. Some examples of sexual harassment that could create a hostile work environment include telling of sexual jokes, or stories; the presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials; touching of another person's clothing, hair or body; making sexual comments about another person's body; making sexual comments or innuendoes; asking personal questions about another person's social or sexual life; staring; leering; and making sexual gestures. Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been sexually harassed should promptly report such behavior to a supervisor or the chief operating officer/chief executive officer. Upon receiving a complaint, a supervisor will report the matter to the chief operating officer/chief executive officer. The chief operating officer/chief executive officer will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective action.

Child Abuse

The Council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts and it is against the council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, mentally, emotionally, or verbally abuse or neglect any girl member.

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

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Safety

Policy All guide lines, and program standards are outlined in the Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Check Points.

Procedure

Volunteers will be directed to the council web site during Orientation where they can have access to the Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Check Points so that all safety policies and procedures are followed. Orientation will be conducted by the Service Unit Manager or Membership Executive prior to meeting with girls.

In addition to these Volunteer Policies, all volunteers should also adhere to the Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Check Points.

Council Addendum

Council Discretion Procedure

In reference to Council Addendum in Volunteer Policies:

Troop Account Funds

After bank account is set up, funds received are to be deposited into established account. For example: funds received from Fall Sales, Cookie Sales, donations, etc., will be deposited into Troop Account Funds as a whole and the account will not be itemized per girl participation.

Transfer between Troops vs. Removed from Troop

If a troop is no longer convenient for a girl scout and her family, the scout may request a transfer to another troop. At this time, troop funds *will not* follow the Girl Scout to her new troop regardless of the amount she contributed to the current troop account fund and she is subject to new troop requirements.

Note: We understand issues may arise, and encourage all troop participants to attempt resolving issues before requesting a transfer from one troop to another because again funds will not follow the girl to her new troop.

If a girl is removed from her current troop, a letter of explanation stating why she's being removed must be submitted to the Membership Executive. Troop proceeds will only then be divided by the current number of girls in the troop at the time of removal. Once the proceeds have been divided by the council, a check from that troop account will be issued to the new troop in the amount the girl is due.

Disbanded Troop

In the event a troop disbands and the girls are placed in other troops, the troop funds will be divided among the troops. If the troop disbands and the girls are not placed in other troops, the girls will be given the opportunity to decide how the troop funds should be distributed. Examples include: camperships, girl assistance, or council support. If no decision is made by the girls then all troop funds will be turned over to the council to be held in the Disbanded Troop Funds Account. If reorganization does not occur within one year, the council will use the funds in the interest of Girl Scouting.

Adopted by the Board of Directors, July 17, 2012

Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2015

I am aware & acknowledge the funds deposited in the troop bank account are for the entire troop, therefore TROOP FUNDS are not for a specific girl and the account will not be itemized per girl. If I choose to transfer my girl scout to another troop, I understand funds will not follow her to the new troop she joins and is subject to new troop requirements. If the troop disbands, options have been provided by the council which I may contact for further assistance.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Please print name _____

Date



8-6-2016