

# Creating a Troop Agreement

## What is a troop agreement?

Troop agreements are a way to create a common set of expectations for all the members in a troop, girls, parents/ caregivers, and volunteers. We call it an *agreement* because it should be co-created by all of the members together to help create buy-in and common ground. This activity encourages girls to be accountable to themselves and each other. If all the girls participate in making it, then it is girl-led and inclusive.

If the girls can be coached to enforce it positively, then the troop agreement can also tool for practicing relationship and communication skills. Troop agreements are part of how we establish the Girl Scout meeting as a safe emotional space. The troop agreement also offers adults opportunity to practice asking questions to help moderate girl's behavior, such as "Are we including everyone?" or "Are we acting like good friends right now?" based on what is in the troop agreement. Using this type of questioning allows the girls to pick up on the habit and learn positive ways of discussing behavior.

## When should we create a troop agreement?

It's generally a good idea to create a troop agreement fairly soon after establishing your Girl Scout troop or if you see that everyone could use a little clarity on what's expected. Since all the members of the group will be expected to follow the guidelines of the agreement, they should all have a voice in the creation of it. Inviting parents/caregivers to participate in the process helps them feel comfortable with what is being asked of them, let's them see a girl-led activity in person, and will allow the leader to call on them to help remind the girls what they agreed to do in the future.

## How is a troop agreement created?

1. Talk to the girls and adults in your troop about why you're going to create a troop agreement.
2. Ask prompting questions for what should be expected of girls, parents / caregivers, and volunteers. These could include:
  - What does a good friend do?
  - What is a good friend like?
  - Breaking apart the Girl Scout Law-
    - How can we show that we are friendly and helpful?
    - What does it mean to be considerate and caring?
3. For adults, the prompting questions could be things such as:
  - What do you want most out of your daughter's Girl Scout experience?
  - How can volunteers in this troop make sure we have good communication with families?
4. Have someone write down all of the suggested ideas. If a girl gives a negatively phrased suggestion (a good friend ISN'T mean) help her to rephrase it in a positive way (a good friend IS nice). This is another good chance to model positive ways to discuss behavior for the girls.

Troop agreements are frequently made into posters by the girls and displayed in the troop meeting place. Your troop agreement can be simple or elaborate depending on your troop's needs, but it should be developed by the girls and flexible enough to grow and change with them.