girl scouts of northeast texas

GSNETX
Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Last Updated: Fall 2026

Introduction

The Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas (GSNETX) Volunteer Policies and Procedures serves as the main governing document to guide volunteers and staff, ensuring that the Girl Scout program is delivered in a safe, consistent manner for girls across our council. The policies and procedures listed below pertain to all volunteers regardless of position or role and supersede all previous versions. Changes made from the previous version are explained in the Summary of Revisions section at the end of this document.

A **policy** is an established, binding course of action to be followed. A policy states what must be done and is binding on those whom it affects. A **procedure** is a step or method used to carry out established policies.

By the terms of its charter, Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and all its members are required to adhere to the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) policies as stated in the Blue Book of Basic Documents and adhere to standards and guidelines Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints.

For any questions regarding these policies and procedures, please email customercare@gsnetx.org to create a Case for staff follow up.

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Part 1: Girl Scout Members and Volunteers

I. Adult Volunteers & Youth Members

Policy: GSNETX is committed to an environment in which relationships between volunteers, staff, parents / caregivers and Girl Scouts are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect and equitable treatment. Because volunteers serve as role models, their attitudes, appearance, and behavior directly influence girls.

Adults who take responsibility for children outside their own family or handle Girl Scout funds must register as adult members and pass a background check to become a Girl Scout volunteer. Adults who attend events only as parents/caregivers and are responsible solely for their own child do not need to complete this process.

Every Girl Scout troop, meeting, or activity must have at least two unrelated adults, including at least one woman. Specific guidelines regarding the suggested adult-to-youth ratios can be found in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Men are encouraged to participate as GSNETX volunteers. All policies and procedures concerning men are designed to protect both volunteers and youth members. Men are not permitted to take youth members on overnights without at least two volunteers who are women.

Procedures:

Definition of Volunteer
A GSNETX volunteer is any adult member (18 years of age or older) who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of the council. A volunteer should be appointed before performing the task. Unless specifically stated in writing by the council, volunteers shall not be considered employees of the council.

Membership Registration
All adults and youth participating in the Girl Scout Movement must register as members with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), except those adults who are working in a temporary advisory capacity.

Volunteer Background Checks
Adults serving in official GSNETX volunteer positions, including but not limited to troop leader, troop treasurer, troop cookie manager, service unit team members, First Aider, and camp trained volunteer, must complete a volunteer background check every three years. Day/twilight camp volunteers must complete an annual volunteer background check.

GSNETX volunteers are those who:

- Take responsibility for Girl Scout members
- Serve in count for adult-to-youth supervision ratios
- Drive Girl Scout members
- Handle Girl Scout funds
- Host or hold Girl Scout events or meetings

GSNETX background checks are run through Sterling Volunteers and typically take 3 business days to complete. GSNETX covers the full cost of the background check, though volunteers may choose to contribute during the process. Results classify members as either "eligible" or "ineligible" to serve as volunteers.

An individual may be found ineligible if they fail to provide accurate information, have been convicted of or plead guilty to certain crimes, have pending charges for certain crimes, have pled "no contest" to or have been charged with and received deferred adjudication for certain crimes, or if there is any other status that prevents or delays background check processing.

If an individual has pending criminal charges or an active investigation for an offense that would lead to an ineligible status if confirmed, the individual will be considered ineligible to volunteer until the matter is resolved.

Volunteer Acceptance and Agreement
The decision to accept and retain volunteers is made on an individual basis. GSNETX does not discriminate against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, physical or developmental ability, nor any other category protected by applicable state, federal, or local law.

Volunteers are responsible for following all guidelines, policies, and procedures set forth by GSNETX. Volunteers should complete a GSNETX Volunteer Agreement every two years. This agreement ensures that volunteers have acknowledged their acceptance of GSNETX volunteer terms and conditions. Volunteers must also follow all guidelines set forth by the description of the volunteer role they accept.

Representing Girl Scouts
When any Girl Scout member is representing Girl Scouts, they must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that fairly represents the Girl Scout movement.

Suspension or Termination of Volunteer Appointment or Membership
In some situations, GSNETX may need to suspend or end a volunteer's appointment or a member's participation before the end of the term or membership year. These decisions are made with careful review and consideration.

A volunteer appointment or membership, adult or youth, may be suspended or terminated for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Failure or refusal to follow GSNETX or GSUSA policies or procedures, especially those related to girl safety
- Behavior inconsistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Inability to perform the responsibilities of the volunteer position
- Continuing to not meet expectations after receiving coaching, guidance, or corrective action
- Failure or refusal to follow GSNETX financial guidelines
- Pending criminal charges or an active investigation that, if confirmed, would result in an ineligible background check status or involve crimes incompatible with volunteer service
- Registered sex offender status or crimes against a child

Registered sex offenders are not eligible for Girl Scouts of the USA membership and may not participate in Girl Scout activities in any capacity. Volunteers must not knowingly hold Girl Scout

activities in the home of a registered sex offender or in any location where a registered sex offender is present.

Volunteer 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, preferably a minimum of two weeks. Volunteers should submit resignations to the GSNETX staff member or volunteer who supports them in writing. If notice of resignation has not been submitted and a GSNETX representative has attempted to reach out to a volunteer on at least three documented occasions without success, the volunteer may be considered to have resigned.

Volunteer Role Reappointment
Volunteers with roles that require action steps before reappointment will be guided through this process by the GSNETX staff member who supports their position. All other volunteers should renew their roles during membership renewal each year.

Dress Code
Uniforms are not required to participate in Girl Scouts, however, girl and adult Girl Scout uniforms can provide a sense of belonging. Volunteer and youth member attire must reflect both modesty and appropriateness for their position and situation. GSNETX reserves the right to discuss inappropriate attire choices with individuals.

Parent / Caregiver Participation
Parents and caregivers are encouraged to be actively involved in their Girl Scout's experience. However, not all parents/caregivers are required to become a volunteer or complete a background check to attend Girl Scout meetings or activities unless the event is limited to registered Girl Scout volunteers only. Volunteers are responsible for girl supervision and should clearly identify themselves in settings where both volunteers and non-volunteer adults are present. Troops may set additional expectations if needed so long as a welcoming and inclusive environment is maintained and all families are treated consistently.

Public Displays of Affection
Girl Scout members must refrain from public displays of affection, romantic interactions or inappropriate intimacy when representing the organization or at a Girl Scout event or activity.

II. Volunteer Terms

Policy: Girl Scouts is not only the premiere leadership development organization for girls but also a vehicle through which adult volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their leadership skills. Volunteers shall be appointed for a period not to exceed one year. A volunteer may, however, be released at any time due to failure to fulfill the requirements of the position, support overall GSNETX goals, or comply with policies and procedures.

Volunteers serving on Girl Scout service unit teams, council-level committees, and day/twilight camp teams are encouraged to adopt a succession plan. This affords each volunteer time to learn the responsibilities of the role, to refine those skills, to carry out the role responsibilities, and to begin mentoring others. Rotating terms allow for mentoring and

sharing of knowledge and gives volunteers the opportunity to broaden knowledge and skills into new areas.

III. Volunteer Learning

Policy: A great 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 their role, they may also be required to complete additional training within a specified time frame. Volunteers should continue to engage in learning to gain more knowledge and practice skills so that they can grow and be successful in their endeavors.

Procedures:

Volunteer Training and Equipping
All volunteers are required to review GSNETX governing documents on an annual basis, including:

- GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures (www.gsnetx.org/volunteerpolicies)
- GSNETX Safety Activity Checkpoints (www.gsnetx.org/safetycheckpoints)
- Volunteer Essentials (www.gsnetx.org/volunteeressentials)

All volunteers are required to complete GSUSA Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention for the State of Texas every two years. Prior versions of this training, including TR402: Protecting Our Girls, are still valid until their expiration date or April 4, 2027, whichever comes first.

Unless otherwise specified below, all other GSNETX volunteer training is generally considered to be valid for 3 years after completion.

Girl Scout Troop Leaders
All new troop leaders should participate in required new leader training within 90 days of accepting their volunteer role. This includes the 597 New Leader Training learning pathway for their appropriate program grade level, which includes the GSUSA Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention for the State of Texas. New leaders should also review resources at www.gsnetx.org/newleader and become a member of the GSNETX New Leader Academy Facebook group.

A variety of troop leader learning and enrichment opportunities can be found at www.gsnetx.org/training.

Troop Cookie Managers
Troop Cookie Managers are required to submit the Troop Cookie Manager Position Agreement and fulfill all additional requirements as outlined in the Troop Cookie Manager Guide and/or by the GSNETX Product Program team.

First Aiders
A First Aider is an adult with a current First Aid/CPR/AED certification from an accepted Girl Scout provider. While Girl Scouts recommends having a First Aider at all gatherings, GSNETX only requires one for high-adventure or high-risk activities that need council approval, as outlined in the Safety Activity Checkpoints and as part of the Activity Approval process and form. Many locations or third-

party providers may already have other qualified First Aiders on site. First Aiders should be present continuously at required activities.

Camp Trained Volunteers
Camp Trained Volunteers are individuals who have completed GSNETX outdoor leadership training and keep their certification current at the required level.

When camping at a GSNETX camp without a campfire or outdoor cooking, groups must meet the Girl Scout adult-to-youth supervision ratio, including at least one adult who has completed Level 1: Camp Ready online training and at least one adult who is a First Aider. These may be the same person.

When camping at a GSNETX camp with a campfire, camping at a non-council site, or holding any day camp activities involving a campfire or outdoor cooking, groups must meet the Girl Scout adult-to-youth supervision ratio, including at least one adult who has completed Level 2: S'mores and More on the Road! in-person training and at least one adult who is a First Aider. These may be the same person.

Level 1 certification is valid for 3 years. If a volunteer completes Level 2 before their Level 1 expires, their outdoor camping certification is extended for an additional 3 years (up to 6 years total from their original Level 1 completion date.) An online recertification course will be released during the 2026 – 2027 membership year.

Some activities are not considered "camping" for training purposes. These include indoor sleepovers like lock-ins or zoo overnights, single-night backyard campouts in a fenced yard within 25 yards of a residence with no fires or grills, and single-day outdoor outings that do not involve staying overnight or using a fire.

Girl Scout Service Unit Team Members
Service unit team members are required to take TR601: Service Unit Team Overview every three years. In addition, many service unit team positions have role-specific training that must also be completed. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description.

Day/Twilight Camp Volunteers
Day/Twilight camp administrative team members are required to attend training annually for their administrative role. Details of role-specific training are defined in each appropriate role description. In addition, all day/twilight camp volunteers must complete GSUSA Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention for the State of Texas every two years.

Council-Level Volunteers
Council-level volunteers support various GSNETX functions, including volunteer learning and council-level adult recognition. These volunteers are required to complete the council-level volunteer agreement annually and complete training as described by their position descriptions.

Short-Term Volunteers
Volunteers who participate in a one-time or short-term opportunity will receive an orientation specific to their volunteer activity. These volunteers may not count toward adult-to-youth supervision ratios, nor may they be responsible for youth safety. Examples of this may include program providers and corporate volunteers.

Other Volunteer Roles
For roles not listed above, the volunteer should complete appropriate training as defined by a GSNETX staff member or within the volunteer position description.

IV. Conflict Escalation and Resolution

Policy: GSNETX encourages volunteers and staff to resolve conflicts quickly and respectfully. Despite best intentions, disagreements may still happen. All parties involved should try to settle issues informally before escalating conflicts.

GSNETX volunteers do not have the authority to end another member's Girl Scout membership or participation in Girl Scouts. Membership and participation status can be changed only by following the processes outlined in this section.

Procedures:

Conflict Resolution
Recognizing that each individual has both a personal interest in and a share of the responsibility for resolving conflicts in which they are involved, GSNETX favors a collaborative conflict resolution process.

GSNETX staff must be consulted when issues arise that involve an adult or youth's participation in a troop or that involve an adult member's volunteer role. There may be times where staff recommend a pause in meetings or activities if a conflict is so elevated that it needs resolution in order to maintain a safe and productive Girl Scout environment.

Conflict Escalation
All individuals are encouraged to try to resolve the matter informally among themselves before involving others not directly involved in the situation.

The most effective way of resolving complaints and concerns is usually by calm, open discussion between the individuals involved by telephone or in person. Email, text, and social media exchanges are generally not conducive to effective resolution of conflict and should be avoided as a means of addressing issues.

If the individuals involved cannot resolve the conflict on their own, the situation should be brought to the attention of the appropriate volunteer or staff member who supports the individuals involved, such as the service unit manager, committee chair, or the appropriate membership staff team member so they can attempt to help resolve the situation.

If the conflict remains unresolved, any of the involved parties may request to escalate the situation to the GSNETX Volunteer Relations Team. The Volunteer Relations team will investigate and gather more information about the matter, evaluate the conflict to determine further action, and make recommendations or take next steps as needed.

In the event the conflict involves finances, all records including bank statements, receipts, the most recent Annual Troop/SU Financial Report and any other financial records may be requested, and a review of these materials may be conducted.

If an escalated conflict is unable to be brought to resolution a resolution, it may be taken to the next level of staff supervision as necessary and appropriate.

V. Equal Opportunity and Belonging

Policy: The GSNETX Board of Directors reaffirms its support of GSUSA policies that ensures full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization. Non-discrimination policies and procedures shall be used in the recruitment, selection, training, placement and recognition of volunteers. All Girl Scout councils shall be responsible for seeing that membership is reflective of the pluralistic nature of their populations, and that membership is extended to all girls in all population segments and geographic areas in their jurisdictions.

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas values diversity and access for all and does not discriminate or recruit on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, physical or developmental ability, nor any other category protected by applicable state, federal, or local law. Through our programming, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls develop skills to advance belonging and promote tolerance. We are committed to understanding similarities and differences, building relationships and promoting a dialogue of acceptance and respect. Each individual involved must uphold the tenant that Girl Scouting is for all girls.

Procedures:

GSNETX volunteers are expected to carry out the duties of their role while abiding by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. We require that all Girl Scout leaders and volunteers abide by our Equal Opportunity and Belonging policy and thus are prohibited from excluding or discriminating against other potential, current, or former members. Volunteers are held accountable for following volunteer policies as stated in GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents, Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints and GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

VI. Child Custody Parental Arrangements

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

Procedures:

Membership Management
The GSUSA membership data system provides the ability for one person (parent/caregiver) to

primarily manage the membership data for girl members online. When a youth member is first registered, that relationship is established by the person completing the registration.

The family manager/guardian is ultimately responsible for decisions regarding a youth member's participation in Girl Scouts, including troop membership, activities, and the cookie program.

In order for the family manager/guardian be changed, GSNETX requires the current family manager/guardian to submit a written request to customercare@gsnetx.org.

Part 2: Risk Management and Safety

VII. Risk Management

Policy: The council recognizes that, through its varied activities, there is substantial exposure to various risks associated with its operations. 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 that includes, but may not be limited to, maintenance of a comprehensive liability insurance program, compliance with all regulatory requirements, and organizational standards, continuing education of employees and volunteer personnel, and regularly scheduled review and assessment of the program's effectiveness.

All eligible adult volunteers have responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellness of girls, individually or collectively, while they participate in Girl Scout activities. They must be registered adult members with a designated volunteer role and have completed a background check. Specific guidelines regarding the suggested adult-to-youth ratios can be found in Volunteer Essentials.

Procedures:

Child Safety
All state child safety laws and regulations must be followed. Girls should be accompanied by volunteers according to adult-to-youth safety ratios, particularly when in the presence of program providers or activity certified individuals who are not Girl Scout members.

Food Handling
All state, county, and city food handling regulations must be followed. Children will be supervised by an adult while cleaning supplies are in use.

GSNETX Emergency Procedures
In the event of an emergency:

1. Assess the scene and provide appropriate care for the ill/injured individuals.
2. Call 9-1-1/emergency medical care.
3. If a child is injured, notify the parent/caregiver.

4. One adult must stay at the scene. Do not disturb person(s) or surroundings until emergency assistance arrives.
5. Speak only to the police or proper authorities. Follow all emergency responder instructions and guidance.
6. Do not contact the media and do not make statements of any kind to them. Refer all media inquiries to the GSNETX Vice President of Marketing at 972-349-2448.
7. Report non-emergency incidents (such as minor injury or accident, damaged property, etc.) using the GSNETX Incident Report form. For emergencies during regular business hours, contact the GSNETX Vice President of Operations at 972-349-2457. For after-hours emergencies, call 214-353-4071. Use the after-hours emergency phone line for emergencies ONLY such as a fatality, serious illness or accident, lost child, natural disaster, fire, chemical spills, etc.
8. Secure all permission forms and medical records to submit to GSNETX through the GSNETX Incident Report form within 48 hours of the incident.

Safety Activity Checkpoints
Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers detailed information concerning safety preparation and requirements to ensure safety for the girls participating in that activity. For more information see www.gsnetx.org/safetycheckpoints.

Privacy Policy for Volunteers
Volunteers should treat all privileged Girl Scout information with respect and maintain its confidentiality. This includes any and all information related the organization, its members, its volunteers, and its staff, in any format including voice, paper, and electronic

Health History Forms
Health History forms should be reviewed and/or updated every 12 months. Health History forms gathered for the purpose of a specific event should not be kept past the final date of the event.

Credit Card Safety
GSNETX uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology to protect the security of credit card information as it is transmitted. GSNETX does not retain or store credit card numbers on its computers or servers.

Social Media and Online Safety
Any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of youth and adults should not be disclosed on a website or social media platform. An individual's contact information should be considered private, including full first and last name, email address, physical address, phone number, or school.

Photos of youth or adults should not be shared without permission. Never tag an individual youth member and only tag their parent/caregiver if you have their consent. Photo opt-in information can be found in MY GS.

Never post any disparaging material that contains inappropriate language, name-calling, personal attacks and/or personal issues that are more appropriately addressed offline.

GSNETX Council Privacy Policy
GSNETX is dedicated to safeguarding any personal information collected online and to helping parents/caregivers and children have positive experiences on the Internet. Consistent with the

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, GSNETX will never knowingly request personally identifiable information from anyone under the age of 13 without prior verifiable parent/caregiver consent.

Parents/caregivers may revoke their consent and ask that information about their household members be deleted from Girl Scout databases by contacting GSNETX offices by phone at 972-349-2400 or by email at customercare@gsnetx.org.. To do this or to review personal information collected from a child, GSNETX must verify the identity of the requesting parent/caregiver. When a parent/caregiver revokes consent, GSNETX will stop collecting, using, or disclosing information from that child. To respect the privacy of families, information collected and used for the sole purpose of obtaining verifiable parent/caregiver consent or providing notice is not maintained in retrievable form by the site if consent is not obtained after a reasonable time. For additional information on Girl Scout privacy policies, see https://www.girlscouts.org/en/help/help/privacy-policy.html.

Forms Retention
All forms, not listed under the Privacy section, that show personal contact information or troop financial information, such as copies of registration forms, financial reports, event reports, and membership rosters, should be kept for one membership year past the membership year for which they apply.

VIII. Health Issues

Policy: Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas recognizes that health issues may arise and encourages programs that enhance the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our membership. In support of this goal, the presence of an adult with a current First Aid/CPR/AED certification is necessary when required by Safety Activity Checkpoints. This training must include information on allergies and the proper response to allergic reactions.

Procedures:

Illness and In-Person Activity Participation
In order to provide the best possible protection and experience to all members, members should refrain from participating in any in-person activities if they feel sick or ill. Members should only return to in-person activities once they feel well enough to participate, including remaining fever-free (99.5°F or less) without the use of fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours.

Incident Reports
All GSNETX Incident Reports are maintained by GSNETX in compliance with privacy regulations.

Medication
Medication must be in the original container, prescribed for the person who is to receive the medication, and cannot be expired. A volunteer must have written permission from the parent/caregiver to dispense the medication to a Girl Scout youth member or individual under the age of 18 who is participating at a Girl Scout event or activity.

Confidentiality
All health-related information will be maintained in a confidential manner in accordance with state and federal laws.

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

IX. Child Protection

Policy: The council provides an environment that is free of child abuse and that safeguards the health and well-being of all youth members of GSUSA, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The following is therefore prohibited by all adults and youth in the program: physical punishment, including restraining, spanking, or using any other physical engagement to punish a child; physical abuse, including any action that causes harm or injury to a child, such as hitting, hazing, kicking, and other inappropriate behavior; sexual misconduct, including any inappropriate sexual physical contact, grooming behaviors, lewdness or communication in words, print or images; physical neglect, including failure to give supervision, failure to provide for safety during activities or time of danger, or failure to meet medical needs; emotional abuse, including verbal attacks, anger outbursts, hostility, humiliation, hazing or socially inappropriate language such as cursing. Additionally, private one-on-one communication or contact between a Girl Scout adult and youth is not permitted, including through social media.

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

Procedures:

Reporting
In the state of Texas, all adults are considered mandatory reporters of abuse. The Texas Family Code, Chapter 261, Subchapter B "Report of Abuse or Neglect", Section 261.101 states: "Persons Required to Report; Time to Report": "(a) A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall immediately make a report as provided by this subchapter." Definitions of abuse and neglect may be found in Texas Family Code 261.001.

Reports of abuse or neglect must be made within 24 hours of learning of the abuse, either at **www.txabusehotline.org** or by calling the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. If you have reason to suspect abuse, but are not sure, report it. If you have any doubts about whether it is abuse, call the hotline. They can advise you on whether the signs you observed are abuse.

Council Notification
Notify a Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas senior leadership team member of any reports of suspected abuse or neglect involving either adults or youth in Girl Scouts. This includes any reports made to your local Child Protection Services Agency or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. If a report is made, also complete the GSNETX Incident Report form within 24 hours.

Membership and/or volunteer roles of any Girl Scout member under investigation will be suspended until the matter is resolved, at which time a decision about further participation will be made. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer or member who is found responsible for or guilty of child abuse and/or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse and/or neglect

Confidentiality
Do not share this information with anyone other than the local Child Protection Services Agency and the GSNETX senior leadership team member unless instructed by law enforcement. GSNETX senior leadership staff will be responsible for notifying additional parties as necessary.

X. Harassment

Policy: GSNETX 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 reserves the right to refuse membership or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, while conducting Girl Scout program, harasses another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member.

Procedures:

Reporting Harassment
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 to their appropriate Girl Scout service unit team member or appropriate staff member. The individual contacted will take measures to follow up on all incidents in an expeditious manner following the GSNETX Conflict Escalation and Resolution policy and procedures.

XI. Firearms and Fireworks

Policy: Possession of firearms and ammunition shall not be permitted at Girl Scout activities or on Girl Scout properties, with these exceptions: for a council-approved program activity for youth, conducted by an adult who is a certified NRA range safety officer and an adult who is an USA Shooting Sports instructor or certified in the specific discipline they are teaching; by council staff for use in wildlife control at camps; by law enforcement officials legally required to carry weapons.

Firearms can be used for program activities only with council approval through the GSNETX Activity Approval form and only as described in the most current version of Safety-Activity Checkpoints.

Fireworks are only allowed on council properties when managed by paid council staff and cannot be used for program activities elsewhere.

Part 3: The Girl Scout Program

XII. Program

Policy: 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. It is carried out with the support of adult leadership and provides a wide-range of progressive activities developed around the interests and needs of today's girl. Programs are designed to foster courage, confidence, and character, with an ultimate goal of helping girls discover their full potential, connect with others, and take action to improve their lives and their communities. Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints must be consulted and guidelines followed when planning Girl Scout programs. A GSNETX Activity Approval form must be submitted and approved, when appropriate.

Procedures:

GSNETX Activity Approval
Depending on the nature, length and extent of an activity or trip, council approval may be required in advance. The GSNETX Activity Approval form outlines its use and additional detailed information is in the GSNETX Safety Activity Checkpoints. The GSNETX Activity Approval decision tree may be referenced to decide if approval is necessary.

Site Agreement, Contracts, and Charters
All contracts, including facility-use contracts and transportation charters, must be signed by a GSNETX senior leadership team member. Any volunteer who enters into a contract will assume personal liability and responsibility. All contracts and certificate of liability insurance requests must be submitted through the GSNETX Activity Approval form.

Overnight Sleeping Arrangements
When planning for overnight sleeping arrangements, volunteers should take into consideration the ages, comfort levels, experience, and maturity of the Girl Scouts in their care to determine whether adults and youth should be in the same sleeping area or whether girls are going to sleep in a dedicated sleeping area. Volunteers should also consider the facility and environment.

If adults are going to share a sleeping area with girls, there must always be a minimum of two unrelated adults who are women present and the Girl Scout adult-to-youth supervision ratio must be met. No adult may sleep alone in a room, or in the same bed, with a youth member that is not their own child.

Girls may sleep in a separate area, building, or tent from adults but should be within sight and hearing distance. If girls are sleeping by themselves, they should be in the same or adjacent program grade levels. In order to sleep in a separate hotel room away from adults, all girls must be a Junior or older.

Girls should not share a bed without parent/caregiver permission. A shared bed must be a full-sized bed or larger.

Generally, men must have separate sleeping quarters and restrooms located apart from youth members and women; a separate room, tent, or sleeping area must be provided. However, family members may all sleep in the same area, room, or tent together away from other members and are not expected to maintain supervision ratios. Not all venues or partner locations have separate sleeping areas for men. In facilities where separate sleeping areas are not available, event organizers should follow event-specific guidelines as available or use their best judgment to determine appropriate sleeping arrangements that prioritize youth protection, privacy, safety, and the comfort level of all participants.

Drivers
Individuals operating motor vehicles transporting youth members must be a registered adult volunteer, at least 21 years of age, and be properly licensed and insured for the vehicle. All volunteers coordinating activities when adults are transporting youth not under their guardianship must verify that each adult driving a registered Girl Scout member with a current background check, a valid driver's license, and a safe driving record. This verification may be verbal and does not require documentation. The vehicle must also meet the legal insurance, licensing and registration requirements. Drivers should not drive more than 12 hours in any one 24-hour period. Cell phones should not be used while driving youth to and from Girl Scout events.

Private Transportation
The number of passengers must not exceed the intended number of passengers for the vehicle. Each person must have and use a specific seatbelt. All vehicles transporting youth members and/or Girl Scout equipment must be properly registered, adequately insured and operated according to state statutes.

If a group of Girl Scouts is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in that vehicle, one of whom is a woman, and the adult-to-youth ratios in Safety Activity Checkpoints must be followed. If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is a woman, and the adult to-youth ratios must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time. Each vehicle shall carry passenger Health Histories and Permission Slips.

Vehicle 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. Drivers need to be experienced in driving the type of vehicle being rented.

The driver's insurance is the primary insurance; the rented vehicle replaces the driver's personal vehicle. 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.

Volunteers are discouraged from using 15-passenger vans due to safety concerns. School buses, minibuses, and minivans are preferred. For atypical circumstances, when another option is impossible, make sure to follow the guidelines in Safety Activity Checkpoints before driving Girl Scout members in a van designed for 15 passengers.

Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas non-owned automobile coverage is secondary coverage after the driver's personal insurance. To meet the council insurance requirements, the council must be notified

of the vehicle rental at least one week before the rental through submission and approval of the GSNETX Activity Approval form**.**

XIII. Girl Scout Troop Formation

Policy: To foster a collaborative and enriching learning environment, it is recommended that each Girl Scout troop consists of approximately 12 youth members. At minimum, a troop should begin with two unrelated adult volunteers and two youth members and ultimately grow to include at least five youth participants. Exceptions may include troops actively recruiting additional youth members, troops located in sparsely populated rural areas, troops serving youth who require individualized attention or have special needs, or troops composed primarily of high school-aged members.

Procedures:

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 should be submitted to the service unit team or appropriate GSNETX staff member before the second meeting as a Girl Scout troop. For the purposes of activities or events, registration is effective when the completed membership forms are received by an employee.

Renewal
Renewing Girl Scout troops should register the youth and adult members using the online registration system or paper registration forms. This should take place during spring registration or by October 1 of each year.

Additional Members
Additional youth or adult members may be added to a Girl Scout troop at any time during the year.

XIV. Outdoor Program

Policy: Outdoor programming is an integral and fun part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Because it is important to protect the safety of the youth members in the program, volunteers must follow the requirements for the ratio of adult-to-youth members and follow all guidelines that are appropriate to their activities as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints while camping. Volunteers must also follow all camp training, certification, and First Aid requirements as described in the Volunteer Learning and Program sections of this document.

Procedures:

Camping Formats
There are different types of Girl Scout camping that require different types of training and ratios**:**

- **Family Camping:** Youth member(s) camping with a parent/caregiver and potentially other family members, including He and Me or She and Me events. No training is required.
- **Troop Camping:** A single troop/group of youth members camping with least one Camp Trained Volunteer who has completed the appropriate level of camp training and one registered First Aider. It is strongly encouraged, but not required, for this to be two different individuals.
- **Large Group Camping:** Multiple troops/groups of youth members camping together, such as during a service unit campout, with least one Camp Trained Volunteer who has completed the appropriate level of camp training per 50 participants and one registered First Aider per 50 participants. For large groups of more than 200, please see Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Girl Scout Adult-to-Youth Ratios
Refer to the guidelines Safety Activity Checkpoints for supervision ratios for event, travel, and camping. Camp Trained Volunteers and First Aiders can be counted as part of the required number of volunteers.

Visiting Animals or Pets
Visitors may not bring animals to camp, except for certified service animals that support a person with a disability.

Men at Camp
Any man participating in Girl Scout camping should be an active GSNETX volunteer unless solely participating in family camping.

Limited housing spaces for men are available at GSNETX properties. These spaces can be reserved in the camp reservation system when the campout reservation is made, pending availability. For non-council camp facilities, a separate sleeping area apart from youth members must be designated for men.

A minimum of two unrelated volunteers who are women must always participate in overnight activities. During established nighttime sleeping hours, volunteers who are men should not enter the sleeping area designated for youth members or volunteers who are women and are generally expected to be in the separate sleeping area for men.

Men may serve as a Camp Trained Volunteer and/or First Aider. If serving in either of these roles requires that he enter sleeping quarters designated for youth or women for any reason, a volunteer who is a woman must be present.

Vehicles at Camp
All vehicles must park in designated parking areas. If you have special needs such as medical, physical, and ADA accessibility, speak directly with the camp organizer before arrival. Posted speed limits must be followed at all times.

Personal Property
Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas is not responsible for property damage such as loss, theft, vandalism, acts of nature to personal vehicles and effects brought to camp property for programs, events, training, special events, and sleepaway camp.

Camp Emergency Procedures
Girl Scouts will be provided a copy of the camp emergency procedures before they arrive at camp.

Reservations of GSNETX camp facilities
Visit www.gsnetx.org/camp for current processes.

Camping on Non-Council Sites
All sites must meet all Safety Activity Checkpoints standards and pre-approval must given through the GSNETX Activity Approval form process.

Burn Bans
Burn bans are occasionally implemented by the Texas Forest Service for the protection of life and property. Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas follows the forest service's recommendations. Information will be posted online. During burn bans, solar and indoor cooking is permitted.

XV. Public Relations

Policy: The public impression of Girl Scouts is affected by the activities of everyone in the Girl Scout Movement. Keeping positive, consistent messages before the public is primarily the function of the council's marketing department. By coordinating communications, Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas will provide strong, consistent messages to external and internal audiences. The marketing department will handle all broadcast media, television, and radio and The Dallas Morning News, as well as collaborate with the Girl Scout Service Unit PR Specialists to promote Girl Scouts with print media within the GSNETX jurisdiction.

Procedures:

Girl Scout Service Unit Public Relations
When a newsworthy event or happening in a Girl Scout service unit occurs, Girl Scout volunteers must contact their Public Relations (PR) Specialist. The PR Specialist will then draft a press release and contact the appropriate local print media (newspapers, newsletters, etc.) in their Girl Scout service unit.

National Public Relations
National media should never be contacted by members of Girl Scout councils; GSUSA's PR staff handles all national media contact. If a Girl Scout volunteer thinks that an event or happening has national appeal, they should contact the GSNETX marketing department. If it is determined that the event or happening has national appeal, appropriate GSNETX staff will contact GSUSA's staff.

Emergency Situations
If an emergency occurs, Girl Scouts members and volunteers must follow the GSNETX Emergency Procedures that include making no statement of any kind to the media. Do not give out any names or information. Ask the media to contact GSNETX directly at 972-349-2400.

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 such newspaper, magazine, television, radio, and billboards, are coordinated by the GSNETX marketing department. A single Girl Scout troop, service unit, or individual may not contact the media nor list contact information in an advertisement, commercial, or public service announcement without written approval. Individuals who violate this policy may lose the privilege of participating in the GSNETX Cookie Program.

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

XVI. Technology

Policy: Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas 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. Email sent to Girl Scout volunteer lists is never to be used to send solicitations of any kind, inappropriate jokes or political information.

Procedures:

Email Confidentiality
Most emails are not necessarily sent through secure channels and should not email content that could be considered confidential or libelous. Individuals using email should not blanket mail an email from someone else to a list or anyone else, 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.

Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule
Girl Scout volunteers must be aware of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Rule ("COPPA") and comply with its provisions.

Part 4: Girl Scout Finances and Money Earning

XVII. Girl Scout Finances

Policy: All volunteers who are responsible for Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas finances, fund raising and associated collections must be registered Girl Scouts with an eligible volunteer security status and be in good standing. This includes volunteers responsible for any GSNETX group finances, including those of troops, clubs, day/twilight camps, and service units.

All money collected, earned or deposited in the name of Girl Scouts must be used to meet the purpose of Girl Scouts in Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. Such money becomes the property of GSNETX and is not the property of individuals. Girl Scout funds are not to be credited or given to individuals. Girl Scout funds are not to be commingled with an individual's personal or business accounts.

To safeguard Girl Scout funds, all Girl Scout troops, clubs, groups, and service units should open and maintain a bank account.

All Girl Scout bank accounts are subject to review by GSNETX at any time. Girl Scout bank accounts must be reconciled monthly and must maintain a positive balance.

When all of the members in a disbanding Girl Scout troop are not continuing in Girl Scouting, the youth members of the disbanding Girl Scout troop will decide fund placement. When the troop is disbanding and some youth members are continuing in another Girl Scout troop(s), the funds will follow these members to the new Girl Scout troop(s). All undesignated funds will be returned to GSNETX and be placed in the council fund for financial assistance. Since all funds raised through Girl Scouts are for that sole purpose, when a youth member chooses to end their participation in Girl Scouts, they will not receive any fund disbursement.

Procedures:

Opening or Changing a Girl Scout Bank Account
Volunteers must use the GSNETX Bank Account form to request to open or make changes to a Girl Scout bank account.

Banking Partner
GSNETX's preferred banking partner is Crowded. GSNETX will continue to allow groups to maintain bank accounts at other institutions so long as they are linked to a Crowded account as part of registering their bank account with GSNETX.

Bank Account Access
There must be at least two unrelated people who are not members of the same family and who do not reside in the same household on each bank account. Anyone on a Girl Scout account should take the appropriate financial training and is responsible for and should actively monitor account activities. They are also all responsible following all GSNETX policies and procedures regarding the use and protection of Girl Scout funds. Anyone found to be mishandling funds may lose their ability to serve as a volunteer and potentially have collection, civil, or criminal action taken against them.

Managing Girl Scout Finances
Troops, clubs, groups and service units should only reimburse expenses that were approved in advance and that directly relate to that group's activity. Expenses that exceed the amount approved may not be reimbursed.

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, club, group or service unit may elect not to reimburse items submitted after this date. No expenses will be reimbursed if submitted beyond six months of when the expenses were incurred.

Mileage will not be reimbursed unless the group leadership elects to do so under special circumstances.

Checks issued by a troop, club, group or service unit for reimbursement of expenses must be deposited within 90 days. The troop, group or service unit will not be obligated to honor, reissue or replace checks still outstanding beyond this 90-day period.

Expenses should be reported in detail, including the name of the vendor, store or other location, the purpose of expense, the date the purchase was made, and amount to be reimbursed. Itemized receipts should be provided whenever possible.

Cash or checks should be deposited in a Girl Scout bank account within 10 days of receipt.

Tax exemption forms provided by GSNETX should be used when purchasing goods and services for Girl Scout activities.

Private Benefit
Money raised by a GSNETX troop, club, group or service unit is only permitted to be used to further the Girl Scout program. Per the IRS, 501(c)(3) organization must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests. No part of net earnings may be used to benefit any individual. No separate accounts, ledgers, or points system can be established for individual girls. Additionally, Girl Scout funds should not be used to purchase gift cards or to provide any type of educational scholarships at the individual, troop, club, group or service unit level.

Tax Deductions and Pass-Through Donations
Troops, clubs, groups and service units may not receive donations totaling more than a given amount over the course of a single Family Partnership year. If a group has fewer than 20 members, the max for the year is $1000. If a group has more than 20 members, the max is $2000.

Any donations of $250 or more or donations of any amount that need a tax receipt must be made payable to GSNETX and be approved by submitting the Activity Approval form, selecting the Pass-Through Donation option. For funds to be passed through to a service unit, the service unit must have first reached their Family Partnership goal.

After approval, funds will be sent to the designated group and the donating entity will receive an official tax receipt.

Since only Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas holds non-profit status as a 501(c)(3) with the IRS, any donations or proceeds from fundraising or money-earning events conducted by troops or service units are not eligible for tax receipts unless they are submitted to GSNETX for processing.

All funds over the max amount for the year will go to the service unit's current Family Partnership Campaign. The donor agrees that acceptance and use of this donation is left to the discretion of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas, Inc. (GSNETX).

Donations that will not be considered or included as pass-through donations include those made through United Way, connected to the Women of Distinction Luncheon, given on North Texas or East Texas Giving Day, corporate matching gifts, and capital donations.

XVIII. Financial Assistance

Policy: Financial assistance is available to youth and adults based on multiple factors, including financial need. It is the intent of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas that financial consideration is not a barrier to participation in the Girl Scout program.

Procedures:

Eligibility
Applicants must be registered Girl Scouts and actively participate in Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas activities before funds can be allocated, unless applying for membership dues. All applicants will be considered, unless an applicant has an outstanding account with the council. If there is an

outstanding account, no financial assistance will be considered until the outstanding balance is paid.

Application Process
Financial assistance will only be granted once per category per member each year. Category descriptions and details about how to apply may be found on the GSNETX website's Financial Assistance page.

XIX. Girl Scout Money-Earning and Philanthropic Activities

Policy: Girl Scout money-earning activities are valuable program activities and should be suitable to the age and ability of the participating members. Girl Scout money-earning activities must be consistent with the goals and principles of the Girl Scout program.

The cookie program is an approved money-earning activity. Permission must be obtained in writing from a youth member's parent/caregiver before they may participate in Girl Scout money-earning projects or the cookie program.

In GSNETX, girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money or fundraising except girls may fundraise for Girl Scout Silver Award and Girl Scout Gold Award projects.

Additional money-earning projects and Highest Award fundraising must not take place from the first day official day of the cookie program (typically in mid-January) through the last official day of the cookie program (typically late February or early March.)

Additional money-earning projects and Highest Award fundraising must be approved in writing through the GSNETX Activity Approval form before being undertaken. Girl Scout participation in the most recent cookie program or commitment to participate in the upcoming program is required for approval of additional money-earning and Highest Award fundraising projects. For a troop, this means at least 20% of registered troop members are signed up to participate as of the first official day of the cookie program. For an individual girl, this means selling at least 12 packages (1 case) of Girl Scout cookies during the program.

The determination of how proceeds from Girl Scout money-earning activities are used must be a decision made by the youth members.

Procedures:

Definitions

- **Money-earning projects:** Activities that raise funds such as the Girl Scout cookie program, bake sales, or garage sales. Allowed for all troops and groups. Additional money-earning projects may not take place during the annual dates of the Girl Scout cookie program. Requires approval through the GSNETX Activity Approval form.
- **Highest Award fundraising:** Asking for cash or money. Only allowed for girls related to Girl Scout Silver Award and Girl Scout Gold Award. May not take place during the annual dates of

the Girl Scout cookie program. Requires approval through the GSNETX Activity Approval form.

- **In-kind donations:** Asking for donated goods or services to benefit Girl Scouts. Requires approval through the GSNETX Activity Approval form.

Money-Earning Compliance
Money-earning activities must be managed in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. All money-earning activities must be with organizations that are aligned with the mission of Girl Scouts. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers organizing and executing money-earning activities to ensure they are in compliance. Service units may only engage in additional money-earning activities after reaching their Family Partnership goals.

Girl Scout Cookie Program
The primary money-earning activity for Girl Scout troops, groups, and clubs is the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Participation in the Cookie Program and the submission of a financial report within the most recent 12 months may be reviewed when approval is requested for an additional Girl Scout troop money-earning project.

Youth members can never ask for donations during the cookie program, including having a tip jar present at a Girl Scout cookie booth. Troops are permitted, however, to collect funds for the specific purpose of purchasing Girl Scout cookies for GSNETX's Community Cookie donation program. If a customer gives an unsolicited donation, the troop is allowed to keep the donation.

Girl Scout Events as Money-Earning Activities
When hosting Girl Scout events as an additional money-earning activity, groups must advertise that they are planning to make a profit.

Permitted Money-Earning Activities
The following types of activities are allowed for GSNETX groups:

- Restaurant nights when a share of proceeds is donated.
- Bake sales or craft sales when the items are made by girls, in compliance with any local ordinances regarding food handling.
- Garage sales
- Concession stands (when specifically designated for non-profit participation)
- Partnering with a small local business for donations of up to $1000 to local activities
- Small program grants up to $500
- Babysitting for a special event
- Services like raking leaves, walking pets, cutting grass
- Silent auctions

Prohibited Money-Earning Activities
The following activities are not permitted for GSNETX groups:

- Raffles, bingo, scratch cards or any game of chance
- Auctions, live and online
- Selling of gift cards (scrip)
- Selling of coupon books or discount cards

- Direct selling of any non-Girl Scout products by youth members or parents/caregivers (such as Avon, Scentsy, or Pampered Chef)
- Soliciting non-local businesses
- Working as car hops
- Activities that take a paying job from someone (including concession stands that are paying jobs not specifically designated for non-profit participation)
- Grants from corporations or foundations except as noted in this section above
- Use of any external online fundraising sites that are not promoted directly by GSNETX.

Highest Award Fundraising
While Girl Scouts are permitted to fundraise for Girl Scout Silver and Girl Scout Gold Award projects, the majority of time dedicated to Highest Awards should be focused on the project outcomes and not raising money.

Any donations that need a tax receipt must be made payable to GSNETX and be approved by submitting the Activity Approval form, selecting the Pass-Through Donation option. Donations are only eligible for a tax receipt if they are $25 or more.

Girl Scout Silver Award project fundraising is limited to no more than $300.

Girl Scout Gold Award project fundraising does not have a limit but it is recommended to not spend more than three project hours on raising money.

While Girl Scouts are not permitted to fundraise for Girl Scout Bronze Award projects, they can complete money-earning projects and in-kind donations can support these projects.

In-Kind Donations
Examples include meeting supplies, snacks, event space, printing services, craft materials, or equipment. All in-kind donations must be with organizations that are aligned with the mission of Girl Scouts. Groups should not accept in-kind donations that dictate specifically how items must be used or that are large-value donations of more than $1000.

Approval Process
For any non-council money-earning activity (meaning the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Fall Product Program), Highest Award fundraising, or in-kind donations, the group must complete the GSNETX Activity Approval form, ideally 4-6 weeks ahead of their planned activity. Approval requires participation in the most recent or upcoming Girl Scout cookie program and good financial standing.

If approved, the Girl Scout troop, group, or service unit may proceed with the money-earning project. If not initially approved, the group will be contacted to see if adjustments may be made. Activity Approval forms are not required for unsolicited donations.

XX. Girl Scout Troop, Group and Club Budgeting and Reporting

Policy: Money raised by girls in a group setting, meaning a Girl Scout troop, group, or club, is the property of that group, and as such, these funds are for the benefit of all girls in the group. It is important to note that the funds belong to the group, not to any individual girl or adult. With the help of their leaders, girls will decide how to spend their group money.

Regular reporting of Girl Scout troop, group, and club finances is essential. Every Girl Scout

group must report at least three times a year to the families of Girl Scout group members on the troop financial status and how its funds are being earned and spent.

Procedures:

Group Budgeting

It is recommended that Girl Scout troop, group or club funds should be spent as follows:

- 65% for the direct benefit of the youth members active in the group
- 25% may be maintained for a long-term activity planned by the youth members of the group
- 10% may be used to recognize volunteer contributions to the Girl Scout group

Direct benefit for youth members could include but is not limited to renewal costs for youth members, Girl Scout activities open to all group members, Girl Scout badges and/or patches, Girl Scout uniform components, Girl Scout program books or a donation to a cause the youth members decide upon.

A long-term girl-planned activity must be based on the youth members' decision and could include 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 summer camp

Recognition of volunteer contributions could include but is not limited to renewal costs for adult volunteers, Girl Scout patches, Girl Scout adult uniform components, Girl Scout program books or a small appreciation gift for the volunteers, such as flowers for the troop leadership team members.

Group Financial Reporting
GSNETX requires that all troops, groups and clubs complete an annual financial report This report is due to GSNETX by June 15 each year, recapping the entire troop fiscal year from June 1 to May 31. A copy of this report should be retained by the leadership team for their records. It is recommended to share the report with parents/caregivers in the troop, group or club.

Parents/caregivers of the girls in the Girl Scout group always have the right to review the income and expenses.

Keeping Girl Scout group income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings with girls and their parents/caregivers about the use of Girl Scout troop funds.

GSNETX may opt to not disburse funds to a Girl Scout troop, group or club that has not submitted a financial report within the most recent 12 months.

Disbanding and Graduating Girl Scout Troops
A troop disbands when all the youth members in the troop decide to leave the troop. As soon as a troop decides that it will disband, the troop leader should contact GSNETX staff and follow any instructions they provide. At that point, the disbanding troop number is retired, and the troop is no longer considered active.

A troop graduates when all members of the troop have graduated high school. During the final year of the troop, the troop leader should contact GSNETX staff and follow any instructions they provide.

When a troop is disbanding or graduating, the troop members should decide how to use any remaining troop funds. It is recommended this is voted on or decided in whatever manner the troop has typically made any troop decisions. Troops may decide to use all remaining funds before the end of the current membership year; opt to donate the funds to another GSNETX troop, their service unit,

Family Partnership, or directly to the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas; decide to donate the funds to another nonprofit or charity; or purchase lifetime memberships for graduating seniors. It is important to remember that money and gift cards cannot be given to individual girls or adults.

The troop should consider donating any remaining troop supplies, equipment, and books to another troop or their service unit.

In the event that a troop disbanded previously and troop members are not available to decide how funds should be used, any remaining funds should be returned to Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas.

The Girl Scout troop leader must submit final troop financial information within 30 days of disbanding the troop or the troop graduating.

Youth members transferring to another active Girl Scout troop or becoming an individual member

Troop funds may follow a girl if her Girl Scout troop participation changes within the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas. In the case of a youth member deciding to become an individual member, the appropriate share of funds would go to a GSNETX service unit to be held for their participation in Girl Scout activities. It is up to the girl's new troop leader or parent/ caregiver to request these funds to follow. Girls must be registered Girl Scout members to receive these funds.

The decision to transfer funds may not be based on a youth member's specific participation in any money-earning activity. However, individual circumstances can be taken into consideration, in consultation with and when approved by GSNETX staff. Troop supplies and equipment should remain with the original troop.

The troop leader should use the following formula to determine the amount of troop money to be transferred to the new troop or service unit:

Current full balance of the troop bank account at the time of the transfer*	÷	Total number of youth members in the troop	×	Number of youth members transferring	=	Amount that goes to the new troop or the service unit
Example: $200 in troop bank account	÷	10 youth members are in the troop	×	3 youth members transferring to a new troop	=	$60 is transferred to the new troop

*This includes any money allocated for future activities unless a specific troop funds agreement is in place.

To be considered for a share of the troop funds, a youth member's parent/caregiver must be in good financial standing, meaning they do not have an outstanding debt due to the troop or GSNETX. In the instance that the amount owed is less than the amount to be transferred, what is owed should be subtracted from the transferred amount. (For example, if the amount to be transferred to the new troop is $100 but the parent/caregiver owes $25 to the troop than only $75 needs to be transferred to the new troop/SU.)

The troop leader/troop treasurer should make a check out to the troop/SU the youth member(s) will move into within 30 days. Money does not ever go directly to a youth member or parent/caregiver. If

the troop leader does not know the new troop number or where to send funds, they should contact GSNETX staff for assistance.

Youth members may not transfer during the course of the GSNETX Cookie Program after the initial order has been placed by the troop and before all cookie rewards have been distributed. In the event that a member transfers before rewards have been dispersed, the troop leader needs to provide the member with all earned rewards as soon as they are received.

If an agreement cannot be reached, refer to the Conflict Resolution section of GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

XXI. Individually-Registered Members Money-Earning

Policy: Money earned by individually-registered members, also known as Juliettes, participating in the cookie program will be retained by the council. Registered Girl Scouts participating in the cookie program may receive Girl Scout Bucks and rewards.

Procedure: Individually-registered members may participate in the cookie program through the participation guidelines provided in cookie guidelines provided for that membership year.

XXII. Girl Scout Service Unit Funding

Policy: The Family Partnership Campaign is an adult-generated fundraising campaign that enables families of Girl Scouts to tangibly express their belief in the value of Girl Scouting through the financial support of their local Girl Scout council. Funds from the Family Partnership Campaign are a key component of the operational budget, helping the council to achieve Girl Scouts' mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

One of the ways that service units earn funds is through the Family Partnership Campaign. Depending on the amount of their annual goal achieved, service units may receive a Family Partnership rebate. GSNETX determines annually the rebate to Girl Scout service units derived from each Girl Scout service unit's participation in the Family Partnership Campaign and the GSNETX Cookie Program. These funds are to be used for operations of the Girl Scout service unit and the guidelines in this section should be followed. Since these funds are available through the efforts of Girl Scout troops, every effort should be made to use the funds within two years of being collected.

After reaching Family Partnership goals, service units may engage in other additional permitted money-earning activities as detailed in the procedures in this section and retain those funds directly.

Procedures:
Money-earning activities must be managed in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations. All money-earning activities must be with organizations that are aligned with the

mission of Girl Scouts. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteers organizing and executing money-earning activities for the service unit to ensure the service unit is in compliance.

Source of Funds
Service units may receive funds from the GSNETX Cookie Program, the Family Partnership Campaign, Girl Scout service unit events, and through additional money-earning activities. The per package amount for cookie rebates and Family Partnership rebate requirements are approved annually. Money collected from service unit events should balance out with expenditures.

Service units are encouraged to limit the amount of time spent on external fundraising activities so they can spend time on youth programming and adult development and recognition. Service units are not allowed to conduct any money raising activities (excluding individual Family Partnership donations) from the first day of cookie pick-up to the last day of council organized booth sales. Service units must also follow their local United Way guidelines in scheduling dates for money-earning activities.

Receiving Funds
Service units may receive funds directly only if the previous Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report is on file with the council and if they have a registered bank account with two eligible current volunteers listed as signers. Funds for Girl Scout service units that have not filed a Girl Scout Service Unit Financial Report, that do not have an established bank account, or that do not have two current eligible volunteers on their bank account are held in a custodial account. Written requests to release or use custodial funds must be approved in advance by GSNETX.

XXIII. Girl Scout Service Unit Budgeting and Reporting

Policy: Money raised by the service unit is the property of the service unit as a whole, and as such, these funds are for the benefit of all girls in the service unit. It is important to note that the funds belong to the service unit, not to any individual girl, adult, or troop. Regular reporting of Girl Scout service unit funds is essential. Every Girl Scout service unit must report at least three times a year to the volunteers in the service unit on the SU financial status and how its funds are being earned and spent.

Procedures:

Managing Girl Scout Service Unit Funds
The Girl Scout Service Unit manager is accountable for the management of Girl Scout service unit funds, even if another volunteer is appointed to help manage the funds. The Girl Scout service unit manager may appoint another volunteer to be responsible for managing the Girl Scout service unit bank account. The volunteer must be a registered member of GSUSA, complete the background check process, and support the principles of Girl Scouting and the goals and objectives of Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and GSUSA.

Service Unit Budgeting

It is recommended that Girl Scout troop, group or club funds should be spent as follows:

- 75% for activities that provide direct benefit to youth members
- 15% operational expenses

- 10% adult recognition

Girl Scout service unit funds may be used in a number of ways to support these goals, including but not limited to postage, postcards, office supplies, copies, Girl Scout leader appreciation gifts or events, reduction of service unit event fees, service unit equipment, resource materials such as handbooks or songbooks, annual meeting attendance for delegates, Girl Scout troop start-up funds, and membership recruitment events.

Service Unit Financial Reporting
GSNETX requires that service units complete an annual financial report. This report is due to GSNETX by June 15 each year, recapping the entire service unit fiscal year from June 1 to May 31. A copy of this report should be retained by the leadership team for their records. It is recommended to share the report with all volunteers in the service unit.

Volunteers in the service unit always have the right to review the income and expenses. Keeping service unit income and expense records up-to-date will reduce misunderstandings with volunteers about the use of service unit funds.

GSNETX may opt to not disburse funds to a Girl Scout service unit that has not submitted a financial report within the most recent 12 months.

Service Unit Realignment
Any combination, dissolution or realignment of service units must be guided and approved by GSNETX mission delivery staff, including any funds allocations.

XXIV. Financial Reimbursement for Designated Council Operational Volunteers

Policy: The concept of volunteer service, time and talent given without remuneration, is essential to the future of the members who want and need Girl Scouting. Within this concept, it is recognized that special situations will warrant meeting some out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers whose needed skills and services would not otherwise be available.

Officers of the council, board members, certified volunteer trainers, and other council-level volunteers may from time to time incur expenses related to carrying out their responsibilities. Volunteer expenses may be itemized as IRS expenses, or may be reimbursed all, or in part, by the council in accordance with council procedures.

Procedures:

Designated Council Operational Volunteers
Designated council operational volunteers include council task group volunteers and council trainers. Designation of volunteers at this level is defined at the time of volunteer appointment.

Reimbursable Expenses
Expenses that will be reimbursed may include, but are not limited to, the following: reimbursement for gasoline, postage, rental fees, mileage, parking fees, toll charges, airport transportation, business meals, overnight lodging, airfare, and meeting supplies.

Making a Request
To request council reimbursed funds for the expenses, the volunteer must, obtain preapproval, forward a completed expense report with receipts to the lead staff member assigned to the task group responsible for the activity, and allow at least three weeks for processing and disbursing.

Reimbursement Process
The appropriate budget manager reviews and approves the request and sends it to the GSNETX Finance Team for processing.

Sales Tax Exemption
Sales Tax Exemption forms provided by GSNETX should be used only when purchasing goods and services for Girl Scout activities. These forms allow volunteers to avoid paying state and local sales taxes, which are not reimbursable.

Remaining Funds
Receipts and money remaining from any advancement of funds must be returned to Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas within two weeks following the activity or event.

XXV. Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts

Policy: All voluntary contributions intended to benefit the Girl Scout program in the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas jurisdiction, regardless of value, form or designated use will 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 can 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 youth members as money-earning program activities, they must be considered separately. Once volunteer hour matching gift funds are received by GSNETX, 100% can be returned to the Girl Scout troop or service unit if GSNETX Activity Approval form was received regarding the volunteer hours. Otherwise, the funds will be applied to the service unit's Family Partnership Campaign.

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

Procedures: Any volunteer hour matching gifts must be made payable to GSNETX and be approved by submitting the Activity Approval form, selecting the Pass-Through Donation option and indicating Volunteer Hours Matching.

Any funds received as matching gifts will be counted toward the maximum amount of funds a troop or service unit may receive in donations throughout the year as described in the Tax Deductions for Donated Funds procedure above.

XXVI. Collection of Outstanding Funds

Policy: To help protect the integrity of council-approved Girl Scout troop money-earning activities, every effort should be made to ensure that all outstanding balances are paid.

Troops, groups, and clubs are not responsible for covering any individual's debt.

If a person has an unpaid balance with Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas for more than 90 days, they will not be allowed to serve in any volunteer role until the balance is paid in full. Youth members whose parents or caregivers have overdue or unpaid balances may not take part in council-sponsored money-earning activities until the balance is paid in full.

Procedures:

Program Participation
Youth members may continue to take part in their Girl Scout troop and service unit activities even if their parents or caregivers have outstanding balances with the council. However, youth whose parents or caregivers have delinquent or unpaid funds may not participate in council sponsored money earning activities until the balance has been resolved.

Girl Scout Troop Outstanding Funds
Girl Scout troop outstanding funds will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the debt should be assigned to an individual or volunteer. As appropriate, eligibility for the troop to participate in additional money-earning activities or events that require activity approval may be withheld.

Course of Action
All avenues available to the council, including use of collection agencies and legal action, will be pursued regarding outstanding debt or delinquencies.

Resigned or Terminated Volunteers
If a volunteer resigns her or his position or is terminated, any balances owed the council are still considered outstanding until paid in full.

XXVII. Other Financial Situations

Policy:

- Adult members acting in a Girl Scout capacity may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouts. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by GSNETX in which the council is the beneficiary (such as United Way). Girls may not engage in any direct solicitation for money aside from Highest Awards, as described above.

- Any permission for endorsements, individual testimonials or authorization of books, plays, promotion pictures, radio programs, and television programs about Girl Scouts shall be first referred to the GSNETX chief executive officer for further action in keeping with the policies of GSUSA.

- For safety and security reasons, sales and marketing on the Internet for any Girl Scout troop/group money-earning activities may not be conducted by individual youth members, parents/caregivers, or other adults except as provided for in the Girl Scouts of the USA Product Sale Guidelines and with appropriate parental permission. (The Blue Book of Basic Documents – Internet Sales.)

- Sales on the Internet of Girl Scout merchandise, such as uniforms, insignia, 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.)

- Day/twilight camps will follow similar procedures to Girl Scout troops and service units for the management of camp monies. Day/twilight camp training materials will address specifics for this situation.

- No soliciting of funds using any external online fundraising sites that are not specifically promoted or approved by GSNETX is permitted. Prohibited sites include, but are not limited to: gofundme.com, kickstarter.com, giveforward.com and crowdrise.com. Any money solicited in this manner will be retained by Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas.

Part 5: GSNETX Policies and Procedures

XXVIII. GSNETX Policy and Procedures Revisions

Policy: Any staff member, volunteer, or board member may propose a new policy or revision. GSNETX policy changes are approved by the GSNETX Board of Directors. GSNETX procedure changes are approved by GSNETX senior leadership.

Procedures: GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures are reviewed and updated on a continuous basis, with changes going into effect the following membership year. A more thorough review is conducted every three years following GSUSA National Council Sessions. After any changes are made, the updated document will be published on the GSNETX website. Volunteers are responsible for reviewing them annually and adhering to any changes.

As outlined in this section, GSNETX teams are responsible for reviewing designated sections of the policies:

Part 1: Girl Scout Members and Volunteers - Mission Delivery, Operations

Part 2: Risk Management and Safety - Mission Delivery, Operations

Part 3: The Girl Scout Program - Marketing, Mission Delivery, Operations

Part 4: Girl Scout Finances and Money-Earning - Finance, Fund Development, Mission Delivery, Operations

Part 5: GSNETX Volunteer Policies and Procedures - Operations

Summary of Revisions

Language clarification and modernization throughout the document. Policy and procedure updates specifically include:

I. Adult Volunteers & Youth Members

- **Policy update:** Rewritten and reorganized to emphasize a culture of dignity, respect, and equitable treatment. More clearly defines volunteer requirements and responsibilities. Simplifies and modernizes language regarding male volunteers while maintaining restrictions on overnight participation with girls.

  Procedure updates:

  - Adds a significantly expanded **Volunteer Background Check procedure** defining who must complete screening and note of annual screening for day/twilight camp volunteers. Includes a list of specific activities that constitute a GSNETX volunteer role.
  - Adds new **Parent/Caregiver Participation procedure** clarifying parents may attend activities without becoming volunteers in many situations, volunteers retain responsibility for supervision and should identify themselves, and that troops may establish participation expectations if applied consistently.
  - Streamlined volunteer acceptance, role reappointment, and resignation language. Updated public displays of affection language.

III. Volunteer Learning

Procedure updates:

- Updates **Volunteer Training and Equipping procedure** to replace TR402 training requirement with GSUSA Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention for the State of Texas.
- Expands **First Aiders procedure,** clarifying when First Aiders are required versus recommended and that qualified First Aiders may already be present at third-party locations.
- Reflects the new outdoor training structure in **Camp Trained Volunteers procedure**.
- Clarified role-specific training requirements.

IV. Conflict Escalation and Resolution

- **Policy update:** Moved information about authority to end membership from Policy I to Policy IV.

V. Equal Opportunity and Belonging

- **Policy update:** Renamed and reframed from Inclusivity to Equal Opportunity and Belonging. Reframed around access, belonging, acceptance, and respect. Updates non-discrimination language to align more closely with current practices.

  Procedure updates: Better aligns procedural expectations with GSUSA governing documents and current processes.

VII. Risk Management

- **Policy update:** Removal of reference to “Safety-Wise adult.”

  Procedure update: Updates reference to **GSNETX Incident Report form.**

IX. Child Protection

- **Policy updates:** Explicitly adds grooming behaviors to prohibited conduct. Adds that private one-on-one communication or contact between adults and youth, including via social media, is not permitted.

XI. Firearms and Fireworks

- **Policy update:** New policy language clarifies fireworks use is limited to council properties and staff.

XII. Program

Procedure updates:

- Updates to **Overnight Sleeping Arrangements procedure** including that Juniors and older may stay in separate hotel rooms from adults, shared beds must be full-size or larger, and note about partner locations and sleeping arrangements for men.

XIV. Outdoor Program

Procedure updates:

- Reorganizes **Camping Formats procedure** into Family Camping, Troop Camping and Large Group Camping. Clarifies ratio requirements and training requirements by camping type.
- Updates to **Men at Camp procedure** adds specifically allows men to serve as primary Camp Trained Volunteers and First Aiders while establishing safeguards around sleeping areas.

XVII. Girl Scout Finances

Procedure updates:

- Introduces **Crowded** as GSNETX's preferred in **Banking Partner procedure**. Establishes registration/linkage requirements for non-Crowded bank accounts.
- Updates **Tax Deduction and Pass-Through Donations procedure.** Creates donation thresholds, clarifies pass-through donation procedures and reiterates IRS compliance guidance private benefit restrictions.

XIX. Girl Scout Money-Earning and Philanthropic Activities

- **Policy updates:** Section broadened to include philanthropy in addition to money-earning activities. Clearly defines Highest Award fundraising in GSNETX for Girl Scout Silver and Girl Scout Gold Award projects, following a national vote at GSUSA's 2026 National Council Session. Clarifies cookie program timeline in relation to money-earning projects and Highest Award fundraising, as well as cookie program participation.

  Procedure updates:

  - Significant expansion of procedures.
  - Adds formal **Definitions procedure** for clarifying Money-Earning Projects, Highest Award Fundraising and In-Kind Donations.
  - Creates new **Highest Award Fundraising procedure,** including guidance and fundraising limits for Silver and Gold Awards.
  - Creates new **In-Kind Donations procedure.**
  - Updates **Approval Process procedure** to be inclusive of all philanthropic activities in this section.

XX. Girl Scout Troop, Group and Club Budgeting and Reporting

- **Policy update:** Expanded language beyond just troops for operational alignment.

XXI. Individually-Registered Members Money-Earning

- **Policy update**: Simplified language and terminology

XXIII. Girl Scout Service Unit Budgeting and Reporting

- **Policy update:** Sets expectations for financial transparency through regular reporting to volunteers.

  Procedure update: Adds formal **Service Unit Realignment procedure**.

XXIV. Volunteer Hour Matching Gifts

- **Policy update:** Clarifies current process for operational alignment.

XXVII. Other Financial Situations

- **Policy update:** Aligns with the newly created Highest Award fundraising provisions.

XXVIII. GSNETX Policy and Procedures Revisions

- **Policy update:** Updated and simplified language.

  Procedure updates:

  - Updates document review cycle and section responsibility assignments by department.
  - Clarifies ongoing policy maintenance process.