

# Volunteer Management Policies

## Welcome

The Girl Scouts of Northern California serves approximately 55,000 girls and 32,000 adult members in 19 counties in Northern California which include: Alameda, Butte, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Tehama, and Trinity Counties.

The strength of the Girl Scout Movement (as defined in GSUSA's *Blue Book of Basic Documents*) and the ultimate responsibility for the success of its program rests in the volunteer leadership of its adult members. The Girl Scouts of Northern California (GSNC/the council) values the thousands of adult volunteers who commit their time, talent, skills, and resources to the Girl Scout movement.

In order to promote job satisfaction for volunteers, to effectively employ their talents, to enhance the safety of the girls and to minimize the potential for volunteers' liability as council agents, the GSNC maintains personnel policies for all GSNC volunteers.

## Mission of GSUSA

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

## Girl Scouts of Northern California Vision Statement

We create opportunities girls want and experiences that change lives.

*Girl Scouts of Northern California is governed by the policies of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) as stated in the Blue Book of Basic Documents, 2003 edition and the Volunteer Management Policies stated below. The goal of the Girl Scouts of Northern California is to provide beneficial and safe program for girls.*

## The Girl Scouts of Northern California Board of Directors has adopted the following as policy:

### Safety-Wise

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

### Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

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

opportunity and equal consideration to all applicants. In most cases, a written agreement will be completed at the time of appointment, which will include a term of appointment, specific expectations for tasks, and signatures of the volunteer and her/his supervisor.

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

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

### Harassment

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

### Volunteer Conduct

Standards outlining acceptable conduct of volunteers are important for the orderly operation of any organization and for the benefit and protection of the rights and

safety of all the members. Volunteers are expected to abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law and all policies, standards and practices established by Girl Scouts of Northern California and GSUSA. Inappropriate conduct may result in revoking volunteer status. Some examples of unacceptable conduct are identified below:

Possession of alcohol or any controlled substance at a Girl Scout event where girls are present, or while on Girl Scouts of Northern California premises (unless at an adult event) or participation in Girl Scout activities under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance, unless as prescribed by a personal physician.

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

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

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

Failure to comply with California State Law regarding the use of car seats for children, and the use of cell phones or other electronic devices without a hands-free device while driving.

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

Falsifying or making material omissions in Council records.

Misappropriation of any Girl Scout funds.

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

Soliciting or accepting gratuities for personal gain or benefit.

Violation of federal, state, or local laws.

Girl Scouts of Northern California reserves the right to release any volunteer from service if, in the sole discretion of the Girl Scouts of Northern California,

the volunteer's actions are inconsistent with Girl Scout policies, principles, or procedures.

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

### **Grievance Process**

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

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

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

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

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

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

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

- Physically abused
- Sexually molested
- Emotionally starved
- Under constant verbal attack or torment
- Without proper food, clothing, or shelter
- Left alone for long periods of time

### **Volunteer Suspected/Accused of Abusing Children**

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

A volunteer so accused is required to:

Suspend all Girl Scout activities and duties until the matter has been resolved.

Turn over all monies, materials, and records to a designated representative of the council until the matter is resolved.

The accused is considered innocent until proven guilty.

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

Registered sex offenders or those living in households with registered sex offenders are expressly prohibited from serving as Girl Scout volunteers.

### **Adult Screening**

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

### **Adult Education/Training**

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

### **Drivers**

Drivers for Girl Scout activities must be at least 21 years of age, have a valid driver's license, carry the minimum insurance required by law and have completed screening procedures for drivers established by the council. Under limited circumstances, drivers between the ages of 18 and 21 may receive a written exception to this requirement from the council and must comply with all conditions specified for such exception.