

# Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.

## Policies and Procedures

Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc., (GSSA) a nonprofit corporation, is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) to serve girls, ages five to 17, within its jurisdiction. These are the Volunteer Policies and Procedures of the Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc., which, along with other policy documents, *Blue Book of Basic Documents, Safety-Wise* (current edition), *Safety Management at Girl Scout Sites and Facilities, Safety and Risk Management in Girl Scouting*, and other accreditation authority documents, comprise the council's policies and shall be followed.

We recognize that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the voluntary leadership of its adult members. Professional objective and democratic policies are established to ensure the effective utilization of all volunteers regardless of position. The Council Policies and Procedures are established upon the principle that successful accomplishment of Council goals and objectives is based upon qualified and trained volunteers.

Volunteers found to be violating council policies will be dismissed.

Policies apply to all persons accompanying or participating with individual members, troops or groups. Individual members, troops or groups will collectively be referred to herein as "troops."

### Accident Insurance Policy

**Policy:** All registered members are protected under Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance when participating in approved Girl Scout activities. This plan provides coverage for accidental medical expenses to registered members traveling to and from and participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities, such as troop camping, trips two or fewer nights, not including a federal holiday, and regular troop meetings. Any trip or activity that is three or more nights (not including a federal holiday) will require purchase of additional Accident and/or Accident & Sickness insurance.

Only registered Girl Scouts and registered Adult Members are covered. It is expected that Non-member parents and others will be involved from time to time in Girl Scout activities just as they usually do in PTAs, community services, school events, etc., in providing transportation, chaperoning, decorating, visiting or just lending a hand. These activities are done without expectation of reimbursement for medical expenses in case of accidental injury. NOTE: Non-members who become more than sporadically involved should possibly become members.

If a tagalong is a registered member of a different troop, but is not the proper age for the activity and is not participating as a service project, she will not be covered under the basic Girl Scout policy.

Optional coverage is available for groups of unregistered participants at approved Girl Scout activities, such as nursery units at day camp, a special community group invited to join a Council-sponsored event, boys who are active registered participants in a co-ed activity. Optional Plans are available at the Council's discretion and at additional costs.

Any serious accident or fatality shall be reported immediately to the CEO.

## Procedures:

1. A person is considered to be registered when her/his registration form and membership fee is received. Basic Accident Insurance is provided and coverage is effective for the duration of the current membership year.
2. The Council's emergency procedures for a serious accident, emergency, or fatality must be followed. The emergency procedures can be found in the *Leader Notebook*.
3. Troops needing to purchase additional Accident and/or Accident & Sickness insurance for Girl Scout trips or activities lasting three or more nights must submit required forms and payment to Council Service Centers at least four weeks in advance.
4. Claims must be turned in to the Council for processing.

## Adult Volunteer Selection, Placement, Appointment, Training and Orientation Policy

**Selection:** Adult volunteers (age 19 and over as defined by Alabama law) are selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to participate in training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout movement. Each volunteer will also be required to complete an application, provide references, and undergo a background check prior to selection. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer on the basis of disability, age, race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other considerations protected by federal, state or local law. Volunteers in leader, co-leader or assistant leader and other designated positions will participate in a face-to-face interview prior to selection.

## Procedures:

1. A volunteer application, including the listing of three personal references, must be completed.
2. Favorable reports on a background check and motor vehicle records check are necessary for all volunteers. Additionally, all family members 14 years of age and older who live in a home where troop meetings or other Girl Scout events are taking place must complete and return an Authorization to Release Information Form to the Council.

In the event an unfavorable report is received, the candidate will be contacted to discuss the report with a Council representative in a confidential manner. A determination will be made as to the volunteer status of that individual.

The candidate, appropriate council staff person, Service Area Manager and Leader and Co-leaders will be notified of any stipulation or restriction that affects the volunteer's status. The candidate will be notified in writing of any unfavorable reports. If the candidate is to be removed as a volunteer, a letter will be sent to the candidate with a copy placed in the candidate's confidential file.

Volunteers who do not comply with the Volunteer Application process will be refused appointment.

3. A face-to-face interview will be held with the prospective leaders, co-leaders and assistant leaders to discuss the purpose of the Girl Scout Movement and the responsibilities, skills, training and other requirements for the position.

**Membership:** All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall adhere to GSUSA membership standards, be registered through the Council as members of the Girl Scout Movement and pay the national membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity. Volunteers must also agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scout Council.

**Placement:** Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the Council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the Council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions. Volunteers may also request reassignment, or be reassigned if it is deemed in the best interest of the Council.

**Appointment:** Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one year.

1. Upon selection and placement, a volunteer shall receive a copy of her/his written position description that defines specific responsibilities and schedules, clarifies expectations and, in conjunction with performance goals, forms the basis for assessment of volunteer performance, reappointment, rotation to another position, and termination.
2. Approved volunteers must sign and return the appropriate position description and Statement of Receipt of the Girl Scout Council Policies and Procedures prior to beginning volunteer work. Volunteers will be provided with an updated copy of the current position description at the time of their reappointment. Copies of these documents will be kept secure in each volunteer's file.

**Adult Learning Opportunities:** All volunteers in leadership, service team, product sale or learning facilitator positions will complete required courses for their position within a specified time frame. These courses will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her/his work.

**Procedures:**

1. At least one troop leader (a person registered in the 01 or 02 position) for each troop is required to have New Leader Orientation given by authorized Council personnel before meeting with the troop for the first time.
2. At least one troop leader (a person registered in the 01 or 02 position) for each troop must complete Basic Leadership and Age-Level courses within three months of completion of New Leader Orientation.

3. Each volunteer is responsible for maintaining her/his own Volunteer Development (aka Training Card) Record. The Council maintains a record on each volunteer, which includes dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work and awards received. Volunteers and staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Council in a timely and accurate fashion. Volunteer personnel records shall be accorded a confidential status.
4. The appropriate Council staff may authorize volunteer trainers to provide New Leader Orientation, Basic Leadership and Age-Level courses. Guidelines for GSSA Learning Facilitator certification have been established and are available from the Volunteer Services Department.

### Advantages Policy

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

### Camping Policy

**Policy:** Troops going camping must use *Safety-Wise* Planning and Supervision guidelines, follow *Safety-Wise* Camping requirements, and adhere to Council Troop Trip Policies.  
(Reference: *Safety-Wise*)

#### Procedures:

1. It is recommended that Daisy Girl Scout troops only participate in overnight family camping when an adult member of each Daisy Girl Scout's family and a certified troop camper accompanies the troop. (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)
2. A copy of current certification(s) required for the troop activity must be attached to the Overnight Trip/Camping Application, or camp reservation form.
3. Troops may camp at Council and non-council locations upon approval from the Council. (Reference: Activity Notification/Approval Guidelines in the *Leader Notebook*)

### Child Abuse Policy

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

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

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

**Procedures:**

1. While we believe a person is innocent until proven otherwise, we do require that any person implementing the Girl Scout program be suspended from all Girl Scout activities if suspected of child abuse or neglect until the matter is resolved. We cooperate fully with investigating authorities and provide all possible support to the affected girls and their families.
2. Any volunteer who resides with a convicted child sex offender shall not allow the offender to be in attendance at any Girl Scout activity or allow any girl members to be alone in the presence of the offender. This includes any residence and any vehicle being used for any Girl Scout activity.
3. In Alabama, the Department of Human Resources is mandated by law to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse. Girl Scouts are required to report child abuse or neglect when reasonable grounds exist to suspect it. These concerns should be documented and reported immediately to the CEO and the local county Alabama Department of Human Resources office.

### Co-Ed Policy

**Policy:** Adult chaperones accompanying or transporting troops must be both a registered adult member of the Girl Scout Movement and an approved volunteer.

**Procedures:**

1. Adults accompanying troops on overnight activities are required to be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and approved volunteers. (Reference: Adult Volunteer Selection Policy)
2. All people who are 14 years of age and older who live in a home where any Girl Scout activity or event takes place or where a girl is present must successfully complete a background check. (Reference: *Leader Notebook*)
3. To ensure privacy, all males accompanying troops on overnight activities shall be placed in a separate sleeping area from the females (girls and adults). An exception to this policy could be made for pre-school age male children. A request for this exception must be made in advance with the volunteer in charge of the activity. If separate bath facilities are not available, an adult female will restrict use of common facilities when males are using it.

4. Troops may from time to time designate an activity as an all-female activity (i.e. a mother/daughter event), as long as this arrangement does not exclude any girl from participation, e.g. a daughter whose father has full or shared custody. The proper girl/adult ratio designated in *Safety-Wise* must be maintained for all activities. (Reference: *Safety-Wise* current edition)
5. During father/daughter overnight events, the male participants will stay in units separated from the girls/females. Female adult volunteers will be available to provide overnight supervision of girls housed in separate units from males. Male participants who wish to stay with their daughters may do so in a designated camping area provided that the Council receives a release form signed by the girl's legal guardian.

### Conflict of Interest Policy

**Policy:** Volunteers and members of their families (a family member may include but is not limited to father, mother, child, brother, sister, wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, in-law or any individual who makes her/his home with a volunteer), whether acting individually or in representative capacities, are prohibited from using the volunteer's Girl Scouting position, knowledge or information to obtain personal, professional, political, or financial gain or advantage for the volunteer or others. Volunteers or their family member(s) may discuss their situation with a council staff representative if there is a question of conflict of interest.

### Conflict Resolution Policy

**Policy:** A grievance is a complaint stating that policies and/or procedures relating to a volunteer's position or performance are not being administered properly as applied to her/him. The grievance procedure is a systematic process to ensure the objective hearing and orderly handling of volunteer grievances.

The grievance procedure may be used by all operational volunteers. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her/his grievance without fear of jeopardizing her/his volunteer status. The Council also maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns.

It is hoped that most, if not all, conflicts and problems can and will be resolved through informal conferences and communications, the goals of which are to eliminate the cause of a grievance. The most effective way of resolving complaints and concerns is usually by calm, open discussion between the persons involved. For this reason, prior to utilizing the formal grievance procedure, the aggrieved person(s) is (are) encouraged to try to resolve the matter informally among themselves.

#### Procedure:

**Step 1.** The volunteer requests a conference with her/his supervisor to take place within 10 working days. The volunteer cites the policy or procedure that has allegedly been

misapplied, misinterpreted or violated and briefly explains the subject matter and the facts surrounding the grievance in writing.

If the supervisor is not a Council staff member, the staff member responsible for supervising that volunteer (for example, Service Area Manager) is informed of the complaint and the date of the conference meeting in writing by the supervisor within five working days of receipt of the grievance. The council employee chain of command will be followed to insure notification to the CEO of the situation prior to the conference.

**Step 2.** If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome of the conference with her/his supervisor, the Council staff member or, if appropriate, the Council staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within 10 working days following her/his initial conference. The Council staff member's supervisor informs the CEO.

**Step 3.** In the event that the grievance is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations for her/his supervisor and sends a copy to the CEO.

**Step 4.** The supervisor and the CEO decide on what additional action to take, including, but not limited to, using one or more of the following options:

- Accept the staff member's report and recommendations.
- Meet with the volunteer and hear the grievance complaint.
- Appoint a review team to meet with the volunteer.

**Step 5.** Should the grievance still not be resolved after completion of Step 4, the CEO will make the final decision as to the resolution of the case and see that this decision is implemented. The volunteer shall be notified of the CEO's decision.

## Debt Policy

**Policy:** A person owing a debt to GSSA for more than 60 days will be removed immediately from any adult volunteer position currently held. Only if the debt is repaid within three months from the date it was incurred may the individual be reinstated in a volunteer position. Any person incurring a second debt to the Council will be removed immediately from any adult volunteer position and permanently banned from any volunteer position.

### Procedures:

1. The Council will notify the debtor via mail that there is a debt and provide options for payment. The debtor will be given 10 business days from the date the first letter is mailed to pay the debt in full or sign a contract to pay off the debt within three months.
2. If the debtor does not make arrangements or pay within the 10 business day period the debtor will be notified via certified letter that she/he is removed as a volunteer. A copy of the letter will be maintained in the volunteer's confidential folder. Reinstatement as a volunteer will occur after all payments have been made in full.

3. If a second debt occurs, the Council will notify the debtor via certified mail that she/he is immediately and permanently removed from any adult volunteer position. The volunteer's confidential folder will be marked with a permanent ban from any volunteer position. Charges will be filed with the local authorities and legal action will be taken immediately.
4. If one payment is missed after a contract has been executed, the debtor will be notified via certified letter that she/he is permanently removed as a volunteer and that the funds are due at once, and charges will be filed with the local authorities and immediate legal action will be taken. A copy of the letter will be maintained in the volunteer's confidential folder.
5. In the case of product sales bad debt, the Merchandising Director will be available to counsel with troop leaders concerning funds due from parents of troop members. Troop leaders should remember that the Council is to be paid with the first funds that become available from the debtor.
6. At no time will the Council accept or hold a check to be deposited at a later date. All insufficient funds/closed account checks will be submitted to a collection agency. They will electronically redeposit returned checks to collect the face value of the check plus a service charge. Any checks deemed uncollectible will be turned over to the District Attorney's Bad Check Unit.
7. If it becomes necessary to remove a volunteer from a position the Service Area Manager and other appropriate individuals will be notified.
8. Please refer to the Council-Sponsored Product Sales Policy for more information regarding debt.

## Finance Policy

**Policy:** Each troop is responsible for financing its own troop program and shall maintain a checking account in an insured financial institution in the name of: Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. Troop # \_\_\_\_\_. All accounts shall have at least three signatures, one of whom must be a member of the Service Team (as designated by the Service Area Manager). All checks require two signatures.

### Procedures:

1. Within one month of organization or re-organization of a troop, a troop bank account must be established.
2. The Troop Leader must complete the Troop Bank Account Form and submit it to the Council immediately after opening an account.
3. In June, a Troop Financial Statement shall be completed and given to the Service Area Manager. This form is submitted to the Membership Department and maintained in the troop files. (Reference: Troop Financial Statement, *Leader Notebook*)
4. All troop funds remaining at the end of the school year must be maintained in the troop bank account if the troop intends to reregister for the upcoming membership year.

5. All funds held in the troop treasury are to be used only for the purpose of delivering Girl Scout programs and service to the girls. Not doing so will subject the volunteer to the Release of Operational Volunteer Policy and Procedures, up to and including dismissal from any and all volunteer positions with the Council, and may result in personal civil or criminal liability to a volunteer.
6. Please refer to the Treasuries Policy for more information about bridging girls and disbanded troop funds.

## Financial Assistance Policy

**Policy:** Based on available funds, financial assistance is available to help girls and adults with expenses for membership, authorized Girl Scout events or activities. (Reference: Council Financial Assistance information/guidelines) Applications and additional information are available.

### Procedures:

1. A completed written application form must be submitted by a parent/guardian, leader, or volunteer.
2. If re-registering, applicant must have been active in the Girl Scout program during the previous membership year.
3. Applications for assistance for events and trainings must be received at the Council by the registration deadline as outlined in the event and training descriptions.
4. Applications for assistance for resident camp must be received at the Council by the application deadlines as specified for each camp.
5. Requests shall be reviewed and notification of approval, or disapproval, shall be sent directly to the applicant.
6. Girls may receive financial assistance for:
  - GSUSA membership fee
  - Membership Pins
  - Grade level Journey book
  - Resident Camp
  - Council Events and Activities, including Destinations

### Adults may receive financial assistance for:

- GSUSA membership fee
  - Membership Pins
  - One Facilitator Guide
  - Fees for Adult Learning courses required by their Girl Scout position
7. Financial Assistance will not be considered for any leader/adult if the number of adults per troop required by *Safety-Wise* (current edition) has already been met.

## Harassment and Hostility Policy

**Policy:** The Council is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers and staff with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment and hostility, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

The Council expressly prohibits any form of harassment or hostility on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. This policy is considered to include physical violence as well as intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about harassment or hostility whether in person or through some other means of communications such as writing, telephone, voice mail or electronic mail.

### Procedures:

1. Any volunteer or staff member who feels that she/he has been subjected to harassment or hostility of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a supervisor or to the CEO. The supervisor, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the CEO who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions. Law enforcement authorities will be involved as needed.
2. Retaliation against anyone who has reported a possible or actual violation of this policy is strictly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal as a volunteer or employee.

## Troop Money-Earning Project Policy

Permission to conduct an approved Money-Earning Project, other than the Council Cookie Sale or the Fall Product Sale, must be obtained by completing and submitting the Money-Earning Application Form to the Director of Advancement for approval at least two weeks prior to the project.

A written report of the activity should be turned in to the Advancement Department within two weeks of the activity's completion.

*Safety-Wise* (current edition) and the *Leader Notebook* will provide guidance and other details of money earning.

During the membership year (October 1 - September 30), Girl Scout troops may conduct an "approved money-earning project" if they have participated in the Council Cookie Sale and/or Fall Product Sale:

Program Grade Level	# of Additional Money Earning Projects per Membership Year
Daisy	None

Brownie	One
Junior	Two
Cadette, Senior, Ambassador	Three

Troops may not engage in any additional money-earning activities during United Way Campaigns and Council-sponsored product sales.

*Destination* participants or troops planning large scale trips may conduct money-earning activities in addition to the Council Sponsored sale. The proceeds from these money-earning activities may not exceed the amount of money needed to offset the cost of the opportunity.

No resale of commercially manufactured products by any Girl Scout troop is permitted other than the Council Cookie and Fall Product Sale.

### Performance Appraisal Policy

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

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

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the responsibilities of the position, measurable indicators of whether responsibilities were accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of responsibilities. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the position, and a copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer along with a copy of the position description at the beginning of her/his assignment.

#### Procedures:

1. Volunteer performance reviews will be completed in the spring of the current year prior to the volunteer being reappointed and/or beginning volunteer work for the new membership year. Troop volunteer reviews are conducted with the Service Area Manager. Service Area volunteer reviews are conducted with Council personnel.

2. Volunteers who are unable to maintain appropriate personal conduct and attitude that exemplifies the best in Girl Scouting, whether that behavior is internal or external to the organization, shall be removed from their position as a volunteer with the Council.

## Product Sales Policy

**Policy:** The purpose of product sale programs is to teach Girl Scouts lifelong skills and provide funds for troops and the Council to use to support Girl Scout programs and activities.

Leaders of troops, Troop Cookie Chair or Troop Fall Product Chair who signed the Position Description will be held responsible for (1) the prompt deposit of sales monies in the appropriate accounts, (2) the completion of all paperwork pertaining to the sale and (3) the reporting of delinquent accounts. If monies due to the Council are not deposited by the deadline, actions will be taken to initiate necessary legal action to secure outstanding debts.

### Procedures:

1. The Delinquent Account Form must be completed with appropriate required documentation and submitted to the Council if a troop has any outstanding debt when the final post-sale paperwork is due to the Council. This form provides the Merchandising Director with all pertinent information about an outstanding debt.
  - Any parent debt not reported to the Council on the Delinquent Account Form submitted with the troop's final paperwork will become the sole responsibility of the troop to collect.
  - All Council and troop monies must be accounted for and documentation provided. The troop is required to submit reports on all (debt or deposits) to the Council.
2. Procedures to handle debt may be found in the Debt Policy.
3. If the parent of a Juliette/Individual Member has not paid her Product Sale money owed to the Council, resolution of the situation will be handled between the parent and the Council.
4. If the Council has proof that a troop began their Council-sponsored product sale before the published start date, the troop will lose 20% of their proceeds.
5. The Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc. does not wish to deny participation in Council-sponsored product sales to any girl. However, if a girl's family owes money to a troop or the Girl Scout Council or has any outstanding NSF (non-sufficient funds) checks from any previous product sales activities, the girl and members of the household where the girl resides may not participate in any handling of the troop's money, which includes taking orders for products and any delivery and collecting of money. The girl, with family support, may participate in Council product sales through troop sponsored cookie booth sales, troop goal setting, poster making and marketing training for the troop.

## Property Policy

**Policy:** Each troop is responsible for the site, structures and equipment during their stay on Council property and shall be held responsible for any loss or damage. Council property also includes, but is not limited to, loaned or rented equipment such as audio-visuals, library books, flags, program boxes and troop camp equipment.

Pets, other than trained service animals, are not permitted on Council properties, except as authorized by the CEO.

No hunting is allowed on Council-owned or operated properties at any time.

Fishing on Council-owned or operated properties is limited to program activities in which troops may participate. Fishing by individuals is strictly limited and may only be done with a fishing permit issued by the Council's CEO. An Alabama State Fishing License is required to fish at Lake Martin, adjoining Kamp Kiwanis.

Use of Council or privately owned small crafts for Girl Scout activities shall be approved by the Council. Council-owned small crafts may be approved for use by:

- a. Registered Girl Scouts who are participating in a Girl Scout program.
- b. Qualified personnel helping with a Girl Scout program.
- c. Other groups with proof of their own insurance, naming the Council as an additional insured, at the discretion of the Council.

Prior Council permission shall be secured for any activity not detailed in *Safety-Wise*, which requires special skills, safety precautions, certification or equipment. (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)

A council program/activity center (including camp properties) may be used by other organizations with Council approval and on a fee paid basis. Organizations using the program/activity centers shall provide evidence of liability insurance and shall be responsible for the care of or any damage to the site, structures and equipment. Use shall comply with all policies of GSUSA and GSSA.

### Procedures:

1. Schedules for use of Council properties for Council-sponsored events, adult learning courses, and camporees will be set annually.
2. Reservations for individual troop use of Council property will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis, following the guidelines for use of individual properties or equipment.
3. Requests for use of available program/activity centers, by groups not affiliated with Girl Scouts must be submitted at least four weeks before proposed use dates.

## Public Relations Policy

**Policy:** Girl Scout publicity shall be focused on interpretation of the objectives and accomplishments of the Girl Scout Movement. A photo release, which reads, "The Council may reproduce and use any slides/photographs, videos, or moving pictures taken of girls for publicity purposes," will be included on each parent permission form for Girl Scout activities.

## Procedures:

1. All press releases and media appearances shall be cleared through the council Public Relations and Marketing department.
2. The purchase of advertising in any media by a troop, Service Area, or Council must be approved by the Council Public Relations and Marketing department.

## Reappointment to Volunteer Positions

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

## Procedures:

1. In the spring of each membership year re-appointment letters and current position descriptions will be distributed, signed and returned by mid-summer or prior to beginning volunteer appointment for the new membership year.

## Recognition Policy

**Policy:** GSSA shall, on an annual basis, give recognition and appreciation for service through a system that is consistent with the GSUSA publication *Adult Recognitions in Girl Scouting*. The Council's adult recognitions committee provides complete guidelines and procedures for recognitions beyond the troop level.

## Release of Operational Volunteer Policy

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

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The Council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, misappropriations of funds, excessive absence or tardiness from required meetings, inappropriate conduct, inappropriate sexual language or conduct, any form of discrimination, any form of harassment or the refusal to comply with council or GSUSA policies.

Release from the position does not cancel membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she/he is unable to meet the membership requirement related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or to support the mission and values of the organization. When this is the case, her/his Girl Scout membership will not be renewed.

**Procedures:** Documented reason(s) for involuntary release of an operational volunteer should be decided by a member of the Council executive staff and discussed with the CEO prior to making a final decision.

1. Upon reaching a decision to involuntarily release a volunteer, written notification must be given to the volunteer as soon as possible.
2. Any resignation or involuntary release of a volunteer will be acknowledged by the immediate supervisor.
3. In the event of a resignation, exit interviews, when possible, should be conducted with the volunteer. The interviewer should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position, and solicit suggestions the volunteer may have to improving the position.

### Service Area Funding Policy

**Policy:** As part of our council's commitment to the community, Service Areas may not engage in any additional money-earning activities during United Way campaigns. Money-earning activities are also prohibited during the Council sponsored product sales.

**Procedures:**

1. Service Areas will maintain a checking account in a financially insured institution in the name of "Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc., Service Area #\_\_\_\_." All accounts shall have at least three signatures, all of whom must be members of the Service Team (as designated by the Service Area Manager). All checks require two signatures. Should this information change during the course of a membership year, the Service Area Manager shall ensure that an updated Service Area Financial Report is sent to the Council immediately (Reference: Service Area Financial Report).
2. A report of Service Area financial activity will be given at each regular meeting of the Service Area. It is recommended that this report be presented to the Service Area in both written and verbal formats.
3. The Service Area Manager shall ensure that the Service Area Financial Report is sent to the council office by June 15 of each year.
4. If a Service Area wishes to complete a money-earning activity, the Service Area Manager must complete a Money-Earning Activity Application and send it to the Advancement Department for approval at least two weeks in advance of their activity. Failure to meet deadlines may result in activity being unapproved.
5. If approved, a written report of the activity should be turned in to the Advancement Department within 14 days of the activity's completion.

6. Please refer to the Money-Earning Policy for more information.

## Sexual Harassment Policy

**Policy:** It is against the Council's policies for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. The Council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the Council any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, sexually harasses another volunteer, employee or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Requests for sexual acts or favors
- Abusing the dignity of another through insulting or degrading sexual remarks
- Conduct and threats or suggestions that a volunteer's status is conditioned upon toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances

Some examples of sexual harassment that could create a hostile work environment:

- Include telling of sexual jokes or stories
- The presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials
- Touching of another person's clothing, hair or body
- Making sexual comments about another person's body
- Making sexual comments or innuendoes
- Asking personal questions about another person's social or sexual life
- Staring
- Leering
- Making sexual gestures

**Procedure:**

1. Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been sexually harassed should promptly report such behavior to a supervisor or the CEO on the Incident Report Form. Upon receiving a complaint, a supervisor will report the matter to the CEO. The CEO will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective action up to and including dismissal.

## Specialized Certification Policy

**Policy:** GSSA may assume the costs for approved adult volunteers to receive water activity, archery, ropes course and other specialized certifications. In return, these volunteers will agree to provide services to the Council to the extent that they have reimbursed the Council for the cost of their certification.

## Procedures:

1. Volunteers should inform Council Staff if they wish to be a lifeguard, watercraft, archery, ropes course or other specialized instructor who will be available to the Council, Service Areas, and troops. Reimbursement may be available for this certification based upon demand and availability of funding. Reimbursement will require submission to the Council of proof of successful completion of the course. Recertification may also be paid by the Council, using the same procedures.
2. All specialized instructors whose certification expenses have been subsidized by the Council will agree to provide their specialized services to the Council, to the extent that they have reimbursed the Council for the amount the Council paid toward their certification. Specialized instructors will make reasonable attempts to be available to provide these services. After such time, the Council will pay specialized instructors for their services to the Council. The Council will maintain a contact list of persons with current specialized certifications and may assist with finding an instructor for service. Groups, other than Council (including troops and Service Areas), that need the services of a specialized instructor must make arrangements with a specialized instructor and will pay an hourly rate for using their services.
3. Specialized instructors can receive compensation from groups outside of Girl Scouts.
4. These procedures also apply to any other specialized certifications that the Council may coordinate.

## Sponsorship Policy

**Policy:** Community organizations, businesses or individuals can be sponsors and may provide meeting places, volunteer time, activity materials, equipment or financial support for Girl Scout troops or Service Areas.

Current tax laws mandate that financial contributions be made payable to Girl Scout councils if the sponsor wants an acknowledgement for tax deduction purposes. Monetary donations should be sent to the Council. The Council will acknowledge the contribution as a tax-deductible donation and forward that amount along with donor information to the designated troop or Service Area.

All sponsors must be approved by the Director of Advancement prior to signing an agreement. The proper Sponsorship Agreement must be completed and submitted to the Service Area Manager. The Service Area shall maintain accurate, current files of all troop/Service Area sponsors.

## Procedures:

1. No matter what type of support is given to a troop from a sponsor, the troop who receives the funds should send a thank you letter to the donor and present a certificate of appreciation to the donor.

2. Since the Council is a non-profit organization, it can receive funds for its troops. Troop sponsorships should be receipted into the shop at the service center with proper documentation. A check from the Council will be mailed to the troop within two weeks.
3. Sponsors should be those entities that are seen by the public and the Girl Scout community as having a positive influence on girls' lives and who operate consistent with the policies of the GSSA.
4. Each troop is limited to a maximum of \$500.00 per membership year in sponsorships. Donations over \$500 will have the remaining balance deposited into the Council's financial assistance fund to benefit other Girl Scouts within Southern Alabama. Donations over \$500 for Girl Scout Silver and Gold Award projects can be submitted for review.

### Substance Abuse Policy

**Policy:** Use or possession of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, except for use in religious services, shall not be permitted during any activity when girls are present.

Use or possession of controlled substances, except legally prescribed medication, shall not be permitted.

#### **Procedures:**

1. The use or possession of alcoholic beverages, tobacco or illegal substances during a girl activity of the troop, Service Area, or Council-sponsored event is prohibited. Any adult volunteer, leader or parent, who consumes any alcoholic beverage or uses illegal substances during a girl event or allows the consumption or use of alcoholic beverage, tobacco or illegal substances, will be permanently removed as a volunteer.
2. No prescription medication will be given to a girl without written permission from a parent or legal guardian. Medication for volunteers and girls should be in the original prescription container, clearly labeled with the patient's name, doctor, the name of the medication and dosage so there is no question that it is the proper medication. No more medication than the amount needed during the activity should be brought to the activity in the event that the medications are not able to be kept in a secure location.
3. Over-the-counter medication may only be given with written permission from a parent or legal guardian listing the specific medication and dosage.
4. The use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances are not permitted on Council property or in the proximity of girls before, during or after girl events.

## Tax Exempt Number Policy

**Policy:** Registered, approved volunteers of GSSA are allowed to use the Council's tax exempt number for the purchase of items or services that are directly related to the Girl Scout program. Any other use of this number is strictly forbidden.

### Procedures:

1. On July 26, 1984, the Internal Revenue Service notified Girl Scouts of the USA that it is appropriate for local troops of Girl Scout councils that do not have a separate tax-exempt status or a tax identification number, but are subordinate troops or units of Girl Scout councils, to furnish banks (payers of interest), on form W-9, the tax identification number of the Girl Scout council of which they are a part. Each form W-9 should show the name of the council, troop number, name of the troop leader, home address of the troop leader, and bank account number. In Part I of the form, the council employer identification number should be entered – not a Social Security number. Part II should also be checked "not subject to backup withholding." The troop leader is responsible for signing and dating the form and submitting it to the bank.
2. The Council will expedite this procedure by supplying approved and registered leaders with W-9 forms preprinted with the council's employer identification number so that the troop may open their Girl Scout checking account.
3. Tax exempt status comes from the IRS and can only be used for Girl Scout programs and services. This number can be used for food and program supplies for large events and projects. Small purchases by troops should not use this number unless they are prepared for a possible audit by the IRS.

## Transportation Policy

### Policy:

**Use of Private Vehicles:** Drivers of vehicles for Girl Scout trips shall be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and approved adult volunteers (age 19, as required by Alabama law) and have a valid driver's license with at least one year of driving experience in the type of driving anticipated for the occasion (such as city driving, driving in hazardous weather, and long distance driving). Each driver must provide evidence of current insurance coverage to the troop leader before the trip. Licensed minors shall operate vehicles carrying Girl Scouts **only in emergencies**.

The Council may prohibit from driving, any person who has been charged with a serious traffic violation or has exhibited reckless driving while transporting Girl Scouts.

**Use of Rented, Leased, Chartered, or Borrowed Vehicles:** All contracts and agreements for renting, leasing, chartering, or borrowing vehicles shall be approved by the Program Department.

Contracts must be accompanied by proof of insurance of at least:

*Liability*

Automobile	\$1,000,000
Van (7 passenger)	\$2,000,000
Bus	\$5,000,000

*Collision*

Minimum coverage required by law for all types of vehicles

**Procedures:**

1. Any motor vehicle used to transport Girl Scouts must be duly licensed, insured, and operated by a responsible person with a valid driver's license.
2. State liability insurance requirements must be met on the vehicle in which Girl Scouts are transported.
3. Borrowed vehicles must comply with the stated proof of insurance.
4. The rental of 15-passenger vans by troops is strictly prohibited due to safety reasons.
5. Guidelines for rented, leased, chartered or borrowed vehicles and insurance coverage:
  - a. Troops are required to request permission from the council to rent, lease, charter or borrow a vehicle.
  - b. Submit a copy to the council of the contract and rental/leasing/chartering company's liability and comprehensive/collision insurance coverage, if available.
  - c. In the event the rental/leasing/chartering company's insurance minimums do not meet the council's minimum required amounts, or if insurance is not available, supplemental insurance must be purchased through the council.
6. When riding in any vehicle, each girl must be in a seat designed for passengers and must use an age-appropriate safety restraint. Girls should not ride in cargo areas or on the floor (i.e. in the bed of pick-up trucks). (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)

**Treasury Policy  
for Disbanded Troops**

**Policy:** In the event of girls bridging or transferring to a different troop as a result of their troop disbanding, troop monies should be divided proportionately according to the number of girls moving to new or existing troops. The Service Area Manager or appropriate Council staff member shall be consulted in this matter.

In the event a troop disbands, the troop treasury balance shall be placed in a council escrow account (custodial account) for a period of six months, pending reorganization of the troop.

The transfer of any monies must be noted in the annual Troop Financial Statement.

## Procedures:

1. In the case of a disbanded troop, all remaining troop funds shall be divided by the number of girls registered in that troop. If a girl is transferring to a new troop, the leader shall send a check equal to the girl's pro rata share of the remaining troop funds to the new troop. A copy of the check(s) being sent to new troops for the girl(s) portion of the funds available should be kept by the troop leader. The form and check(s) should be attached to the annual Troop Financial Statement.
2. In the case of a girl bridging to a different troop, all remaining troop funds shall be divided by the number of girls registered in that troop. The leader shall send a check equal to the girl's pro rata share of the remaining troop funds to the new troop. A copy of the check(s) being sent to new troops for the girl(s) portion of the funds available should be kept by the troop leader. The form and check(s) should be attached to the annual Troop Financial Statement.
3. In the case of a girl transferring to a new troop for any other reason, troop funds will not be disbursed.
4. If the troop fails to reorganize within the six month period, the money shall be divided evenly between the Service Area and the Council's girl financial assistance fund.

## Trip Policy

**Policy:** Troops planning trips must receive permission from the Program Department.

All trips require adherence to *Safety-Wise*, especially with regards to permission slips. Permission Forms and Health History forms must be completed and available to responsible parties for the duration of the trip. (Reference: Permission Form, Health History Form, *Leader Notebook*)

Trips lasting three or more nights (not including a federal holiday) require the troop to purchase additional GSUSA insurance from the Council.

## Procedures:

1. There is a clear progression system in Girl Scouting that helps a girl gain travel experience and confidence in herself and others that she will be safe and secure. (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)
2. Follow the Activity Notification/Approval Guidelines in the *Leader Notebook*.
3. All troops planning overnight trips should complete and submit the Overnight Trip/Camping Application. (Reference: Overnight Trip/Camping Application)
4. No hotel, campsite or transportation arrangements should be finalized until the Overnight Trip/Camping Application is approved by the Program Department.

5. The Service Area Manager and/or Council staff will verify that the driver's licenses, insurance cards, and necessary trainings and certifications are current for any trip. Copies should be attached to the application form. Persons concerned with identity theft should block out their Social Security number, if listed on their license, to protect their privacy. These forms will be held in the strictest confidence. Failure to include all requested information may jeopardize the approval of the trip.
6. When riding in any vehicle each girl must be in a seat designed for passengers and must use an age-appropriate safety restraint. Girls should not ride in cargo areas or on the floor (i.e. in the bed of pick-up trucks). (Reference: *Safety-Wise* and Transportation policy)

### Uniforms Policy

**Policy:** A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense and is encouraged. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin when they are not in uniform.

### Water Activities Policy

**Policy:** Troops participating in water activities (swimming, canoeing, sailing, etc.) must be accompanied by adults with the required certification for each activity, as defined in *Safety-Wise*. (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)

A copy of the current certification must be attached to all applications to participate in water activities on council-owned or operated properties.

#### Procedures:

1. Requests by troops to participate in water activities on council-owned or operated properties must include a copy of the current certification for the adult providing water safety services. (Reference: *Leader Notebook*)
2. Fishing on council-owned or operated properties is limited to program activities in which troops may participate. Fishing by individuals is strictly limited and may only be done with a fishing permit issued by the CEO. An Alabama State Fishing License is required to fish at Lake Martin, adjoining Kamp Kiwanis. (Reference: Property Policy)

### Waiting List Policy

**Policy:** The council will make all efforts to accommodate all girls who want to become Girl Scout members. If there is not a troop in their area, their names will be maintained on an active waiting list and efforts will be made to establish a troop. Each girl will be given the opportunity to register as an individual member while waiting to be placed in a troop.

## Procedures:

1. Volunteers and Council membership staff work together to place girls in troops. Possibilities include forming new troops and placing girls in current troops. Volunteers and membership staff will examine troop sizes to see where girls can be added to current troops to meet the troop size recommendations. (Reference: *Safety-Wise*)
2. Troop leaders will not unreasonably deny any girl membership into their troops.
3. When no troop leaders can be found for a girl on a waiting list, she will be offered the opportunity to register as a Juliette. Girl Scout Leadership Development provides for individual work on programs; she is also encouraged and welcome to attend Council and Service Area events. It is recommended that Service Areas have a Juliette Coordinator for Juliettes in their area to contact for local information. Juliettes may contact the council for information.
4. The Council will continue to work to find a troop for each girl, unless she wants to remain a registered Juliette.

## Weapons Policy

**Policy:** GSSA strictly prohibits volunteers from being in possession of weapons at any time in any facility occupied or vehicle in use by the Council, including personally owned vehicles that are parked in any area provided for Council use or activities, regardless of whether the volunteer is licensed to carry the weapon or not. Volunteers are further prohibited from being in possession of weapons off Council premises if involved in any Girl Scout activities, including the transportation of girls. Under the policy, prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive that is restricted by local, state or federal law. This includes all firearms, even if licensed, illegal knives, or other weapons covered by the law.

## Procedures:

1. Any employee or volunteer who knows, or reasonably believes, that a volunteer is in possession of a weapon in violation of this policy should immediately notify the supervisor or CEO. If a volunteer is found to have violated this policy, immediate and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including the involvement of appropriate law enforcement authorities, as needed.
2. Exceptions to this policy may be made for certain positions and then only in performance of specific responsibilities for the council. Any such exception will be made in advance and in writing by the CEO only.

**Statement of Receipt of Girl Scouts of Southern Alabama, Inc.  
Volunteer Policies and Procedures**

I have received, read (or promise to read), and understand the Girl Scouts of the Southern Alabama, Inc.'s Policies and Procedures and fully understand the facts regarding any possible question of violation. I will be responsible for adhering to these Policies and Procedures.

Volunteer Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer's Service Area \_\_\_\_\_ Troop Number (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return this signature page to the Council Service Center nearest you.  
It will be retained in the Volunteer's Confidential Folder.*