

# girl scouts of black diamond

## 2022 - 2024 Handbook Policies for Girl Scout Volunteers



Dear Troop Leader,

In December 2017 our GSBDC Board of Directors approved the new Policies for Girl Scout Volunteers Handbook. The policies within this handbook will officially be implemented on April 1, 2018.

The Volunteer Policy Committee began work in September 2016 to minimize the risk to the council, staff, volunteers and members by ensuring that our policies for Girl Scout volunteers:

- Communicate the values and expectations of the organization.
- Keep the organization in compliance with legislation.
- Support consistent treatment of volunteers.
- Help management within the organization to make decisions that are consistent, uniform and predictable.
- Protect the individuals and the organization from the pressures of making decisions based on convenience.

To do this, the committee:

- Analyzed the effectiveness and risks associated with the current volunteer policies.
- Examined Federal, state and organizational policy and law that impacts volunteer policies within our council's jurisdiction.
- Made recommendations for policy revisions and additions, to be approved by the council's board of directors.

For a period of 10 months the committee actively spent a great deal of time exploring hot topics such as background check reports, driving records, volunteer debt, etc. The committee also targeted common policy violations to better determine policies requiring alteration in order to increase information clarity and lessen risk.

The representation of skills and experience of the committee members has been instrumental in the analysis of the existing policies and the development of new 2018 policies. This committee was made up of board, law, business, risk management, finance, human resources and Girl Scout volunteer backgrounds.

You'll notice that this handbook does not include any of the forms and documents relevant to our operational policies and procedures. In order to ensure that our volunteers have the most current version of forms and docs, we are providing them electronically. If you are viewing the handbook electronically, you can access forms via the links provided through the document. If you are unable to access the online forms for any reason, we will be happy to email or mail one to you. You can contact our customer care team to make a request at [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

Lastly, you'll find a volunteer agreement in the back of this handbook. This document should be signed and returned. You can either send a hard copy or complete it electronically using our online web form. Our risk and yours is lowered as you become familiar with our policies and girls have a safer, better experience as well. Please, read the handbook, initially, and then revisit this tool as an on-demand reference, when needed.

Thank you for your service to Girl Scouts and we hope to see you back for the 2023 membership year for more exciting Girl Scout adventures!

Sincerely,

Jess Richards  
Chief Operating Officer  
Dear Girl Scout Volunteer,

Welcome to Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council!

We are excited to have you as part of the Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council (GSBDC) team. You have been selected because we believe you share a commitment to our mission and can contribute to the achievement of the organization's goals.

As part of the GSBDC team, you will discover that the pursuit of excellence is truly a rewarding aspect of volunteerism within the council. As a team member, you are responsible for the results you produce. The success of the council is determined by our ability to operate as a unified team.

Creative, productive volunteers who are empowered to embrace challenges while thinking “outside the box” help ensure our success. GSBDC's primary goal is to live our mission: “To build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.” We achieve this through dedicated hard work and commitment from every adult who provides service to the movement.

We are honored by your choice to serve your community through the Girl Scouts and we're committed to supporting you in ways that ensure a positive impact. The council's reach and impression on girls are reliant on the thousands of adults who give their time, talents and special skills each year.

This handbook contains the key policies, goals, benefits, and expectations of GSBDC and other information you will need as part of our team. You should use it as a planning and on-demand reference as you pursue volunteerism within the council. This handbook is also a resource to help provide good management and fair treatment of all volunteers. At Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, we strive to create an environment in which all volunteers can contribute their best.

Welcome aboard. We look forward to your contributions!

Sincerely,

Beth Casey  
Chief Executive Officer

# How to use this Document

This handbook contains the key information and expectations of GSBDC that you will need to be a successful volunteer. Our risk and yours is lowered as you become familiar with our policies and girls have a safer, better experience as well. Please, read the handbook, initially, upon assignment and then revisit this tool as an on-demand reference, when needed. In the back of this handbook, you'll find an appendix of terms that have been defined to better support you. You'll also find an agreement of these terms, which needs to be signed. You can either print and send or complete it electronically.

Below are a few common abbreviations that will be helpful for you to know in advance.

**GSBDC** – Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council

**GSUSA** – Girl Scouts of the United States of America

**CBC** – Criminal Background Check

Procedural forms are linked throughout this document. If you are unable to access and print forms online, we'd be happy to mail the necessary form to you by email or USPS. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to make a request.

## Volunteer Definition

At Girl Scouts of Black Diamond, a volunteer is an individual 18 years or older, beyond high school years, who willingly gives of one's service without concern for monetary compensation and strengthens the council. Roles range from operational support to policy and decision-making. Volunteers are appointed before performing the duties associated with the voluntary assignment and are the lifeblood of the organization!

Operational volunteers (e.g. service unit teams, troop volunteer members, event planning committees, etc.) are those involved in carrying out the specific, measurable objectives of GSBDC, which have been developed within the framework of the organization's goals, as adopted by the Board of Directors.

Policy-making volunteers are ultimately accountable to the Chief Executive Officer and include officers, board members, board committee members and board nominating and development committee members.

## Volunteer Philosophy

The strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the volunteer leadership of its adult members. It's through this volunteer leadership that the Movement serves girls.

While volunteers are not employees of GSBDC, they are key contributors to the success of the Girl Scout mission and are also obligated to comply with and acclimate to all GSBDC and GSUSA policies pertaining to volunteer service.

## Volunteer Satisfaction and Longevity

Volunteer service can entail many different opportunities and commitments. Enthusiasm, energy and positive attitudes are essential to providing girls and adults with worthwhile and enjoyable leadership experiences.

To this end, it's vital that adult volunteers do not overextend themselves by volunteering for too many overlapping roles. Building a broader base of adult support by encouraging others to participate

increases and expands the opportunities for everyone to grow and share. Together, we can encourage and inspire other mission-driven adults to serve their communities by volunteering at Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council.

GSBDC is committed to providing enriching quality experiences to both girls and adults.

## **The Girl Scout Promise and Law**

The Girl Scout Promise and Law express the basic beliefs of Girl Scouting and provide the foundation for individuals and groups. The Girl Scout Movement is open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. A volunteer's acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law is one of the primary qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement, as it has been since 1912.

It's imperative that each volunteer has a basic belief in Girl Scouting principles, maintains the highest standards of conduct and demonstrates her or his ability to perform the requirements of a volunteer position. Conduct that is not in line with the values of the organization may be used in the screening process for appointment, reappointment and release process of Girl Scout volunteers.

### **The Girl Scout Promise:**

*On my honor, I will try:*

To serve God\* and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

### **The Girl Scout Law:**

*I will do my best to be*

honest and fair, friendly and helpful,  
considerate and caring,  
courageous and strong,  
and responsible for what I say and do,  
*and to*

respect myself and others, respect authority,  
use resources wisely,  
make the world a better place, and  
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

\*The word "God" can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on one's spiritual beliefs. When reciting the Girl Scout Promise, Girl Scout members may replace the word "God" with a word that more closely expresses their spiritual beliefs.

### **The Girl Scout Mission**

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

# Page Numbers by Section

## **Section 1— Ethics Polices**

- 8 Anti-bullying
- 8 Anti-hostility
- 8 Child Protection
- 8 Diversity
- 8 Girl Scout Values
- 8 Inclusiveness
- 9 Public Display of Affection
- 9 Respectfulness
- 9 Whistleblower

## **Section 2 — Risk Management and Safety**

- 9 Accidents
- 9 Allergies
- 10 Fireworks
- 10 Health Emergencies
- 10 Health Records
- 10 Medication
- 10 Pets and Animals on Properties
- 11 Rental Vehicles
- 11 Substance Abuse and Alcohol Use
- 11 Tobacco Free Zone 10 Transportation
- 11 Weapons

## **Section 3 — Volunteer Management**

- 12 Acceptable Conduct
- 12 Appointment
- 13 Child Abuse Reporting
- 13 Conflict of Interest
- 13 Conflict Resolution
- 14 Contest of Criminal History
- 14 Driving Girl Scouts
- 15 Evaluation and Reappointment
- 15 Men in Girl Scouts
- 15 Returned Criminal Reports
- 15 Recognitions
- 15 Resignation from Volunteer Position
- 16 Role Clarity
- 16 Termination or Release from Volunteer Position
- 16 Troop/Group Leadership
- 16 Uniforms/Appropriate Attire
- 17 Volunteer Appeal
- 17 Volunteer Development
- 17 Volunteer Grievance
- 17 Volunteer Screening and Criminal Background Checks
- 18 Volunteer Selection

## **Section 4 — Financial Accountability**

- 18 Abandoned Troop Funds
- 18 Bank Account
- 19 Control of Cash

- 19 Debit Cards and Debit Card Purchases
- 19 Debts Incurred by Volunteers
- 19 Disbanded Troop Funds
- 19 Family Solicitation
- 20 Financial Record Keeping
- 20 Financial Reporting Obligations
- 20 Fiscal Accountability
- 20 IRS Reporting
- 20 Solicitation and Fund Development
- 20 Tax Exemption
- 21 Troop Purchases
- 21 Volunteer's Role in Troop and Service Unit Financing
- 21 Year-End Balance in Troop Bank Account

### **Section 5 — Money Earning**

- 21 Money Earning
- 22 Product Sales Delinquencies and Debt Collection
- 23 Product Chain of Custody
- 23 Troop Monies
- 23 Troop Sponsorship

### **Section 6 — Girl Program**

- 23 Council Sponsored Event Deadlines
- 23 Financial Assistance
- 24 Insurance
- 24 Meeting Place
- 25 Membership Registration
- 25 Overnight Sleeping Arrangements
- 25 Safety Ratios
- 26 Sensitive Issues
- 26 Swimming in Hotels and Pools on Personal Property
- 26 Troop Formation
- 27 Troop Trips

### **Section 7 — Communications**

- 27 Brand Protection
- 27 Confidentiality
- 27 Electronic Communication
- 27 Member Information Protection
- 27 Public Relations
- 28 Public Relations Crisis Communication
- 28 Representation of Girl Scouts
- 28 Technology

# Ethics Policies

## Anti-bullying

All members will treat each other in a civil manner, as clearly identified in the Girl Scout Promise and Law. GSBDC is committed to providing all members with a safe environment that is free from bullying and cyberbullying.

## Anti-hostility

GSBDC strictly prohibits hostility, in any form, against members, parents, volunteers, staff, visitors or any other individual who is involved with the Council. Hostility is considered to include, but not be limited to, physical violence as well as harassment, intimidation, stalking, coercion, bullying, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about hostility. Whether in person or through some other means of communication, including, but not limited to writing, telephone, voicemail, email, social media or other digital communications, this behavior does not fit with Girl Scout values, including the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

## Child Protection

GSBDC provides an environment that is free of child abuse and that safeguards the health and well-being of all members of GSUSA, as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. The following is therefore prohibited by all adults and girls in the program:

1. **Physical Punishment:** Adults cannot restrain, spank or use any other physical engagement to punish a child.
2. **Physical Abuse:** Any action that causes harm or injury to a girl, such as hitting, hazing, kicking, and other inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated.
3. **Sexual Misconduct:** This includes any inappropriate sexual physical contact, lewdness or communication in words, print or images.
4. **Physical Neglect:** This includes failure to give supervision, failure to provide for safety during activities or time of danger, or failure to meet medical needs.
5. **Emotional Abuse:** This includes verbal attacks, anger outbursts, hostility, humiliation, hazing or socially inappropriate language such as cursing.

## Diversity

GSBDC is committed to recruitment, selection, placement, development and recognition of diversity throughout the organization, to reflect the needs of our membership and objectives of the council.

## Girl Scout Values

The Girl Scout Promise and Law express the basic beliefs of Girl Scouting and provide a foundation for individuals and groups. An individual's acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law is one of the primary qualifications for membership in the Movement. It's imperative that each member have a basic belief in Girl Scouting principles and maintain the highest standards of conduct. Girl Scout values, such as the Girl Scout Promise and Law will be used as a guidepost for decision making.

## Inclusiveness

There will be no discrimination against a member or potential member by reason of disability, age, race, color, ethnicity, gender, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status or socioeconomic status. For the purpose of this document, girls will be reflective of all youth members of GSBDC.



## **Public Display of Affection**

Physical display of affection between spouses or partners should remain a private matter. Girl Scout volunteers and staff must, at all times, serve as appropriate role models for girls. GSBDC does not endorse any particular lifestyle. The advocacy or promotion of a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation is not permitted.

## **Respectfulness**

GSBDC 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 and unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

## **Whistleblower Policy**

A whistleblower, as defined in this policy, is a member or volunteer who reports an activity that she/he considers to be illegal or dishonest. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials are charged with these responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of all members and volunteers to report legal, policy and ethical violations or suspected violations in accordance with this policy. No volunteer or Girl Scout member who in good faith reports suspected violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequence.

***Whistleblower Procedure:*** Reports of suspected violations should be made using the [Volunteer Grievance Form](#). This process is set up for handling grievances in an orderly and fair manner.

# **Risk Management and Safety**

## **Accidents**

In the event of an accident that has happened while volunteering for or participating in Girl Scout programming, GSBDC should be notified within 24 hours. Incident report forms will be maintained by GSBDC in compliance with HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations.

***Accidents Procedure:*** Accidents can be reported using the online web form or by completing and submitting a paper copy.

Complete the [online form](#) to report an accident.  
Print and complete a [paper form](#) to report an accident.

## **Allergies**

Allergies requiring any accommodations must be disclosed in advance, in writing, to the appropriate volunteer or staff member. Adults should educate parents on this policy. Volunteers and staff should educate themselves on any allergies of girls in their responsibility, to ensure a safe, dynamic Girl Scout experience for girls.

***Allergies Procedure:*** Known allergies can be documented and provided using the [Health History Form](#). This should be provided to the volunteer most responsible for the troop or program the participant is attending. In most cases, this will be the Girl Scout troop leader or first-aider.

## **Fireworks**

Fireworks are not permitted on council properties and may not be used for program activities. This includes, but is not limited to ground, hand-held and aerial fireworks.

## **Health Emergencies**

Individuals needing to report an accident or health emergency should follow the council crisis plan. If you are first on the scene of a medical emergency, you should ensure that the scene is safe, assist if possible and call for help.

In the event of a health emergency that warrants public and media attention, the public relations crisis communications policy should be followed.

### **Crisis Communication Procedure:**

1. Call 911 if necessary. Make sure all emergency services are notified first.
2. Assign one or more persons to calm the girls and adults present & lead them to a safe location. Assign another person to serve as the contact person with the council.
3. Notify the council:
  1. From 8:30am- 4:30pm Monday-Friday, call (304) 345-7722 or 1-800-756-7616
  2. After normal office hours and on the weekend, call Beth Casey (304) 767-1175, Jessica Richards (304) 634-9477, Roberta Richmond (304) 545-4992
4. Assign someone to receive any media people who may have picked up the alert on the police or other emergency radio. Please do not issue any statements or speak informally to reporters. Simply indicate to reporters that a statement will be issued as soon as accurate information is available. Be courteous, but state firmly that the adults on hand have a responsibility to care for the girls present.
5. Collect names, addresses, and phone numbers of witnesses and parents or guardians, if necessary.

## **Health Records**

For the safety of girls and other members, it's important for leaders, trip chaperones and camp volunteers to retain Girl Scout health history forms during the time of any meeting or program. This information should be kept secure and confidential. At the end of the event, participants may collect their forms.

***Health Records Procedure:*** A Health History Form should be provided to the volunteer most responsible for the troop or program the participant is attending. In most cases, this will be the Girl Scout troop leader or first-aider. Healthy History forms should be kept in a confidential and secure location and returned to the individual or shredded at the end of the activity or year.

## **Medication**

All 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/guardian to dispense the medication to a Girl Scout or individual under the age of 18 who is participating at a Girl Scout event or activity.

***Medication Procedure:*** A Health History Form and a Medicine Form should be provided to the volunteer most responsible for the troop or program the participant is attending. In most cases, this will be the Girl Scout troop leader or first-aider.

## **Pets and Animals on Properties**

Pets and other non-wildlife animals aren't permitted on council properties. Service animals may be permitted with prior approval.

Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to make a formal request.

### **Rental Vehicles**

Rental cars used to transport girl members must carry the additional renter and passenger insurance provided by the rental car company. Adults driving rental vehicles in the name of Girl Scouts are expected to abide by age minimums set by the rental company.

### **Substance Abuse and Alcohol Use**

GSBDC has an obligation to its girl members, their families, its volunteers and staff to maintain a drug-free and alcohol-free environment. Alcohol may be used with the approval of the Board of Directors for adult-only events, where no girls are present. In addition, staff persons and volunteers with drug-related convictions must notify GSBDC immediately following conviction. Anyone with knowledge of related convictions should notify GSBDC.

Alcohol at Adult Events Approval Procedure: Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to make a formal request for alcohol to be used at an adult-only event. Approvals must go before the GSBDC Board of Directors, a policy and decision-making group of volunteers, who meet quarterly. Requests should be made 4-6 months in advance of the event.

### **Tobacco-Free Zone**

To promote good health and safety, there will be no smoking or use of any tobacco products in the presence of girls or in areas and vehicles where girls can be exposed to secondhand smoke. Smoking and other use of tobacco is prohibited inside all council facilities. Girl Scout properties and functions should have a designated smoking area with safe, eco-friendly cigarette disposal.

In the case of activities held at public locations, smokers shall follow smoking policies of the facility. If there is no safe and eco-friendly way to dispose of cigarettes, there will be no designated smoking location and smokers will be required to refrain from smoking on the property during the Girl Scout event.

This policy includes, but is not limited to smoking pipes, cigarettes and cigars; chewing tobacco; use of electronic cigarettes; and vape pens.

### **Transportation**

Transportation of any member to and from Council-approved activities is done in accordance with applicable law and as outlined in Volunteer Essentials. Drivers are required to have a valid driver's license, auto liability insurance, and a properly registered vehicle and be at least 21 years of age to transport girls.

### **Weapons**

Possession of firearms, weapons and ammunition shall not be permitted at GSBDC activities or on GSBDC properties, with these exceptions:

- For council-approved program for girls, by approved, trained and certified council staff or professionals. Parent pre-approval is necessary.

- For use in legal wildlife control at camps — must be pre-approved by Council management. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to seek approval.
- By law enforcement officials are legally required to carry weapons.

## **Volunteer Management Policies**

### **Acceptable Conduct**

Standards outlining acceptable behaviors of volunteers are important for the orderly operation of the organization and for the benefit and protection of the rights and safety of all members. Volunteers are expected to abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law and all policies, standards and procedures established by GSBDC, GSUSA, as well as local, state and federal laws. Inappropriate conduct may result in disqualification, volunteer status restrictions or release of volunteer assignment. Legal action may be taken if necessary.

Violation of any of the policies and procedures, including, but not limited to the below points may be grounds for disqualification, volunteer restrictions or release from volunteer assignment:

- Refusal to provide an approved criminal background check
- Registered sex offender status
- Any felony offense
- Crimes against a child
- Crimes involving the use of weapons
- Crimes of violence
- Crimes involving arson
- Crimes involving public indecency
- Falsifying or making material omissions on Council records
- Misappropriation of any Girl Scout funds, which includes unpaid volunteer debt for Product Sales Programs
- Misdemeanors involving DUI, DWI or possession of any controlled substance within the last five years
- Shoplifting, fraud, false pretense, embezzlement, theft, forgery and worthless checks
- Theft or inappropriate removal of property that belongs to or is in the possession of GSBDC, Council employees, girl or adult members, vendors, partners, visitors and/or malicious or willful destruction or damage to such
- Failure to maintain a drug and alcohol-free environment
- Suspension of driving privileges
- Conviction of reckless driving
- Other misdemeanors as the council may determine, including, but not limited to traffic violations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis

GSBDC reserves the right to disqualify and/or release any volunteer from service if the volunteer or prospective volunteer's actions are inconsistent with Girl Scout values, principles, policies, or procedures. The addition of up to three references may be necessary in some cases.

### **Appointment**

All volunteer appointments are made at the sole discretion of GSBDC. Only adults who have become registered members of GSUSA for the current membership year and have successfully completed a criminal background check may be eligible to be appointed to volunteer positions that involve:

- Serving as a volunteer to meet adult-to-girl supervision ratios, as further defined in [Safety-Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials](#)

- Responsible for the handling of Girl Scout monies and products, including the GSBDC Fall Product Sale and the Cookie Sale
- Participating in overnights when girls attend without adults from their family
- Driving girls not in their family
- Taking responsibility for the safety of girls not in their family
- Handling confidential member information

The decision to exclude or limit an applicant's participation as a volunteer is solely within the discretion of GSBDC.

## **Child Abuse Reporting**

If a volunteer has knowledge of or reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred, he/she should make a report to a local social service agency or police authority. Persons making “good faith” or “reasonable cause” reports can be anonymous. After making a report, the incident should be reported to the Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council.

If a volunteer witnesses or suspects that a girl member is intentionally hurting herself, the volunteer should report the incident or reason for belief to the parent/guardian and complete and submit an incident report form to GSBDC or submit an online web form. If a child is in danger, parents and emergency personnel should be notified immediately.

Child Abuse Reporting Procedure: Each state's laws are different in regard to mandated reporting of suspected child abuse and/or neglect. Below is a brief overview of the requirements for volunteers. Some professions are required to report. For greater detail by profession, specific report requirements and the most up to date information, please visit the [DHHR Child Welfare Information Gateway site](#).

- Maryland — Maryland law states that any person who has reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect must report it.
- Ohio — Ohio law states that any person who suspects that a child has suffered or faces a threat of suffering from abuse or neglect may report.
- Virginia — Persons age 18 or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody, or control of children are required to report.
- West Virginia — Youth camp administrators, counselors, employees, coaches, or volunteers of entities that provide organized activities for children are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Individuals who fail to report suspected child abuse and neglect or those who make false reports may face penalties. Consequences for not following the law vary by state.

## **Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any volunteer, any member of their family or party, group, or organization in which the volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with or actually conflicts with the interests or concerns of GSBDC.

No individual connected with GSBDC will use her/his affiliation with the council for any personal or family gain, for benefit of another individual or organization of which a member is affiliated or for any personal, professional, political or monetary gain without proper disclosure and council consent. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

## **Conflict Resolution**

GSBDC encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to promptly and efficiently resolve conflict. Despite the best intentions of all Girl Scout stakeholders, it may be necessary at times to address conflicts that arise. All involved parties should attempt to bring any disputes to resolution

informally, before the conflict escalates. The Girl Scout Promise and Law should be used as the standard for all we do, including personal behavior when working with other adults.

A third uninvolved party should be present during any efforts at formal conflict resolution, to act as a mediator.

### **Conflict Resolution Procedure:**

**Step 1:** If a volunteer has a concern or conflict, they should take it to the person involved first, and negotiate for a mutually beneficial resolution.

**Step 2:** If informal communications fail, the people involved should meet with their report-to supervisor and/or their regional staff representative. The parties should attempt to resolve the conflict and specify the steps necessary to move forward. A grievance form should be submitted to GSBDC. You can either print and mail/email or complete the online form. This activates a formal support system at the service unit and/or council level.

**Step 3:** If step two doesn't solve the problem, the volunteer resource manager should be contacted to provide further guidance, investigation and mediation. The volunteer resource manager will work with a volunteer grievance management team to respond within 10 days of a filed grievance.

### **Contest of Criminal History**

GSBDC will provide the applicant with a copy of the report upon request. Any applicant who disputes the accuracy of a returned report of a criminal background check must file a written notice within 10 days of receiving the initial notification from GSBDC. The individual must take all steps necessary to challenge the report and provide GSBDC with an updated report from the screening provider. All costs associated with clearing a report are to be paid by the applicant, not GSBDC or the screening provider.

GSBDC does not control the information that is contained in the criminal history reports and shall have no liability to any applicant or individual for the information contained in such report or for its actions in reliance upon such reports.

### **Contest of Criminal History Procedures:**

Prospective Girl Scout volunteers who complete a criminal background check report may request a copy of their report and submit written notice by emailing [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

If a potential volunteer is denied volunteer acceptance or requires status limitations, a letter of explanation and a copy of the report used to make the decision will be provided to the applicant with instructions for how to make a formal dispute with GSBDC's criminal background check screening provider.

### **Driving Girl Scouts**

Any volunteer driving Girl Scout passengers and/or driving vehicles owned/rented by GSBDC must have a valid driver's license for a minimum of two years and be at least 21 years of age and carry the minimum insurance required by law. All vehicle inspections and licenses must be current.

Any adults driving Girl Scouts beyond their own immediate family must obtain membership registration with GSUSA and successfully complete a criminal background check. Criminal background checks that return with reports of driving violations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be cause for disqualification from the position of a volunteer driver. GSBDC screens for the seriousness of offenses, frequency and trends as well as timeframe since the last incident.

## **Evaluation and Reappointment**

Volunteers holding the positions of, but not limited to Girl Scout leaders, co-leaders, assistant leaders, product chairs and service unit team positions are evaluated on an annual basis. Evaluation is based on the volunteer position description, compliance with policies and procedures as well as the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Volunteers are eligible for annual reappointment after membership and screening accountabilities are met as well as mutual acceptance of the accountabilities of the volunteer position.

### **Reappointment Procedure:**

1. Fulfill the duties within the volunteer description for your specific position(s).
2. Complete any end-of-year paperwork necessary for your position(s).
3. Troop leaders are required to include a matching troop bank statement with their end-of-year paperwork
4. Log in to your member profile and renew your membership.
5. Have an up-to-date criminal background check, which requires rescreening once every three years.
6. Volunteers are notified by GSBDC before criminal background checks expire.

For assistance, contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

## **Men in Girl Scouting**

Male volunteers are welcomed to the organization to serve in accordance with standards established in the safety activity checkpoints and are subject to all volunteer policies. Men who serve in troop/group leadership roles must have an unrelated female leader and/or co-leader, who make up the girl to adult safety ratio. This includes significant others and those who live under the same roof.

## **Returned Criminal Reports**

Volunteer candidates whose records indicate a history of child abuse, violent crimes or sexual crimes will be denied a position.

At the discretion of GSBDC, volunteer candidates may be denied a position due to financial irresponsibility, drug and alcohol-related offenses, or other serious offenses or history that is not conducive to the values of the organization or the safety and well-being of girls.

## **Recognitions**

GSBDC will maintain the integrity of all adult volunteer awards and recognitions by a system of recommendation, documentation and presentation that is clearly defined and in compliance with guidelines established by GSBDC and GSUSA.

Official council level award recipients are to be vetted by a volunteer committee and approved by the council's Board of Directors.

## **Resignation from Volunteer Position**

An operational volunteer has the right to resign from her/his position. Out of respect for the council's strategic priorities and girl members, volunteer resignations should be received at least one month in advance of departure, if not sooner. A recommended successor is appreciated.

Upon resignation, volunteers are required to turn over all Girl Scout materials, including monies and supplies.

Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to inform GSBDC of a resignation.

## **Role Clarity**

GSBDC will provide [volunteer position descriptions](#) and a staff point person to provide role clarity and guidance during the volunteer term.

## **Termination or Release from Volunteer Position**

GSBDC reserves the right to terminate a volunteer relationship, release a volunteer from their voluntary duties and/or reassign a volunteer to a different position. These actions are all based on carefully assessed volunteer performance, accountabilities of the volunteer position, volunteer policies, interests of the volunteer and the needs of the council.

A volunteer may have their appointment terminated because of, but not limited to:

- Refusal to comply with policies and procedures
- Conduct inconsistent with the beliefs and principles of the Girl Scout Movement, as indicated in the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Inability to perform or fulfill the duties of the position as outlined in the volunteer position description
- Failure to achieve the objectives of corrective action, in regard to the volunteer role
- Failure to adhere to financial guidelines
- Crimes against children
- Failure to renew a criminal background check
- Returned records on a criminal background check that are too risky for girls, volunteers and the council, as outlined in Policies for Girl Scout Volunteers

Any action to terminate a volunteer relationship will receive careful, detailed and confidential consideration. Upon termination, volunteers are required to turn over all Girl Scout materials, including monies and supplies.

## **Troop/Group Leadership**

Troops/Groups being led by multiple members of a family require an additional non-related adult as part of the leadership committee.

At a minimum, troops should have at least one leader and one assistant leader. Girl-to-adult ratios should always be met and can be found in [Volunteer Essentials](#).

## **Uniforms / Appropriate Attire**

Official adult uniform pieces and guidelines can be found in Volunteer Essentials. The [Girl Scout Shop](#) carries both professional and casual adult uniform pieces for purchase.

A uniform is not required to participate or volunteer with the Girl Scouts, but may be required at official events such as GSBDC's Annual Meeting and National Sessions and conferences. In such cases, participants will be notified. Volunteers are asked to dress conservatively when in the presence of girl members.

**Uniform Procedure:** For the adult member uniform, the unifying look is an official Girl Scout scarf (or tie for men) worn with official membership pins and combined with their own navy blue business attire.

## **Volunteer Appeal**



For all decisions related to volunteer screening, selection and placement, a written letter/email of appeal may be sent to [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) within 30 days of notification from GSBDC. GSBDC's Chief Executive Officer has 30 days to make a final determination regarding the written appeal. All appeal decisions are final.

## **Volunteer Development**

The strength of the Girl Scout movement rests in the voluntary leadership of trained adult members. To ensure ongoing improvement of Girl Scout Programming, volunteers should take advantage of volunteer development opportunities.

All volunteers will receive basic training for their role. Depending upon the role, they may also be required to complete additional training within a specific time frame. These trainings ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in their leadership endeavors.

***Volunteer Development Procedure:*** GSBDC provides both online and traditional classroom learning opportunities through the service units and at the council level. Volunteer training expectations are identified in the [volunteer position descriptions](#).

On-demand Online Training — Online, troop leaders and many other volunteer positions will find [required trainings](#) that are available at your convenience! Our on-demand trainings are our most popular format, due to the “your space, your pace” flexibility.

In-person classes — Whether you learn best in a classroom or by a campfire, we can provide a first-class Girl Scout education to guide and elevate your experience. Check our website for the most [in-person classroom volunteer training schedule](#).

Live broadcasts — Live broadcasts are the latest way to have live interaction without leaving the comfort of your home. Check our website for the most up-to-date [webinar schedule](#).

Local service units — Contact your local service unit administrator volunteer and attend service unit meetings to receive ongoing guidance and support from experienced volunteers, grow with new volunteers just like yourself and connect with GSBDC regional staff. If you are uncertain of who to contact or would like to request additional training, reach out to [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

## **Volunteer Grievance**

If a volunteer is suspected of policy violation, a [volunteer grievance form](#) should be filed with the council. The individual filing the grievance is not responsible for the investigation. Council management and staff-appointed service unit team volunteers will oversee the investigation, when necessary.

## **Volunteer Screening and Criminal Background Checks**

Any adults seeking an appointment to a volunteer position with GSBDC in the following capacities must obtain [membership registration](#) with GSUSA annually and successfully complete a criminal background check once every three years:

- Serving as a volunteer to meet adult-to-girl supervision ratios, as further defined in [Safety-Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials](#)
- Responsibility for the handling of Girl Scout monies and products, including the GSBDC Fall Product Sale and the Cookie Sale

- Participating in overnights when girls attend without adults from their family
- Driving girls not in their family
- Taking responsibility for the safety of girls not in their family
- Handling confidential member information
- Parent of an iGirl (an individually registered Girl Scout not associated with a troop) who is planning to participate in either the Fall Product Sale or the Cookie Sale

If the group meeting or activity is being held in a private residence, all persons 18 years or older who reside there must successfully complete a criminal background check prior to the meeting or activity. The exemptions below do not apply to Girl Scout functions being held at private residences.

Individuals who meet ALL the requirements under the sections below will be exempt from these requirements:

An individual who: (must meet all three)

- Serves as a one-time advisor or consultant, e.g., a speaker or presenter
- Is never left alone with girls, AND
- Is not counted when considering girl/adult supervision ratio

A parent/guardian who: (must meet both)

- Attends a group family function e.g., court of awards, family picnic, etc. AND
- Is not counted when considering girl/adult safety ratio

It is recommended that any adults who are part of a troop leadership committee successfully complete a criminal background check.

## **Volunteer Selection**

In addition to volunteer selection based on the values of the organization, volunteers are selected on the basis of qualification for membership, ability to perform the position's requirements, willingness and ability to successfully complete the necessary training and successful criminal background screening.

GSBDC may request additional references to make informed decisions on volunteer selection and appointment.

# **Financial Accountability**

## **Abandoned Troop Funds**

Abandoned troop accounts will be closed by the council. Any remaining funds will be used by GSBDC for member assistance.

## **Bank Account**

All funds held on behalf of a troop must be deposited in a bank account with the troop number, under the umbrella of GSBDC.

Troops must open a bank account as soon as they have the minimum amount of money needed to open a new account; usually between \$50 and \$100.

Four signatures are required for a troop bank account. Signatures need to include the troop leader or troop treasurer, another non-related approved troop volunteer, the service unit administrator or treasurer and an authorized staff member.

***Bank Account Procedure:*** Upon registration to Girl Scouts of the USA and volunteer application and screening, new troop leaders will receive an initial orientation that includes the necessary information and forms for setting up a bank account. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) with any questions.

### **Control of Cash**

A limited amount of troop monies may be kept on hand to use as petty cash for things such as parking, tolls and postage. This amount should not exceed \$50.00

### **Debit Cards and Debit Card Purchases**

Troops are permitted to obtain debit cards. All debit card transactions must be pre-approved by the two troop volunteers whose names are on the account. Debit card transactions should never be used to reimburse another adult for supplies, snacks or other troop or non-troop purchases. All reimbursements should be handled through check writing and receipts should be kept as part of the reimbursement documentation process.

### **Debts Incurred by Volunteers**

Debt is defined as a check written for insufficient funds, unpaid product sale funds to the organization or the troop, non-payment of fees promised, and any other amounts owed to the organization for products or services. Debts to GSBDC or debts incurred in the name of the troop to vendors, banks or for services rendered that become past due will be processed for collection by GSBDC.

### **Disbanded Troop Funds**

Money earned or received by a Girl Scout troop becomes property of the troop and is not the property of individual members; girl or adult. This also includes earned funds through the product sales programs.

In the event that a troop disbands and the girls remaining in Girl Scouts are placed into new troops, the money left in the disbanded troop treasury will be divided among those new troops, based on the number of girls who move into the new troop(s).

If the troop disbands and no girls remain in Girl Scouts, the money will be put into a council bank account for one year. If the troop renews within that year, the money can be redeemed. If the former troop does not renew, the money will be provided to the local service unit after one year, to use for a new troop start-up.

In the event that an individual girl transfers to a different troop, monies won't be transferred to the new troop account. Funds don't belong to individual girls; they belong to the troop.

### **Family Solicitation**

The financial support of the council is derived from the broader community. The families of girl members will be solicited for voluntary financial support as one part of the overall fund-raising campaign. Family contributions are voluntary and are not a prerequisite for membership and shouldn't be considered a fee for a service.

## **Financial Record Keeping**

All troops will keep appropriate financial records that may include but aren't limited to copies of all receipts/purchases. The use of an expense register or spreadsheet is recommended and may be requested during future account audits.

An audit of financial records may be conducted by GSBDC at any time. All troops must submit a finance report to the council annually.

## **Financial Reporting Obligations**

GSBDC staff and authorized volunteers have the right to conduct a financial audit at any time to ensure that accounts are in good standing and being used properly. In addition, each troop and service unit is required to submit an end-of-year finance report and a copy of the most recent bank statement. GSBDC has the right to request and receive more frequent financial reports if needed.

## **Fiscal Accountability**

Those assuming responsibility or oversight of any Girl Scout monies within GSBDC are accountable to GSBDC for those funds. All adults handling money must be registered, screened with a criminal background check and appointed as a volunteer.

Volunteers are responsible for complying with all financial and money earning policies and procedures including those related to, but not limited to:

- Money handling
- Banking
- Record keeping
- Timely reporting
- Money earning activities

Financial carelessness, negligence of duties and/or theft of Girl Scout property may be cause for the release of a volunteer from their position.

## **IRS reporting**

The Internal Revenue Service requires GSBDC to acknowledge single donations of services, goods, materials, equipment or money with a value of \$250 or more. Troops, service units and volunteers must report all donations with a \$250 value or greater to GSBDC within 30 days of receipt. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

## **Solicitation and Fund Development**

Girl Scouts may not solicit money for other organizations in the name of Girl Scouts. Girls may not engage in direct solicitation for money. Adults may only engage in the council's coordinated fund development efforts to create reliable and sustainable sources of funding to meet the needs of girls throughout the council's 61 county jurisdiction, both now and in the future.

## **Tax Exemption**

Volunteers may use the GSBDC sales tax exemption number when purchasing supplies for use in Girl Scout events/activities. When using the tax exemption number, individuals may need to provide a sales exemption certificate for the supplier from whom a purchase is being made. Tax exemption certificates

are unique to each state and Girl Scout Council and are available on the council's [website](#). Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) with any questions.

## **Troop Purchases**

All troop monies spent must be pre-approved by the two troop volunteers whose names are on the troop bank account. Troop funds must be spent on Girl Scout programming. This includes products or services for the girls in the troop, volunteer training, program experiences and membership renewal. The use of an expense register or spreadsheet is recommended.

## **Volunteer's Role in Troop and Service Unit Financing**

### ***Troop***

The account signers must periodically inform parents and girls of the group's financial status. All registered adults in the group have the responsibility and right to review the financial records to ensure accuracy in accounting. All registered adults in the group should ensure appropriate spending and accurate records of income and expenditures are maintained and reported regularly at meetings.

### ***Service Unit***

The account signers must periodically inform the service unit team and members of the financial status of the service unit bank account. All registered adults in the group have the responsibility and right to review the financial records to ensure accuracy in accounting. All registered adults in the group should ensure appropriate spending and accurate records of income and expenditures are maintained and reported regularly at meetings.

***Procedure:*** This information should be provided to parents and volunteers or the troop or service unit on a monthly basis via newsletter, monthly report or meeting or the group's other preferred method of communication. Open lines are important to the well-being of the group and rapport among adults in the group.

## **Year-End Balance in Troop Bank Account**

Troops are only permitted to carry over small account balances from one year to the next unless they are planning a trip or large expenditure. Funds from the group account should never be spent down without the purpose of girl programming and support or given directly to girls. Monies should benefit the entire group and are not owned or tracked for individual girl use.

## **Money Earning**

### ***Troops***

Money earning activities must be approved by the service unit administrator, treasurer, or council staff.

It is expected that the bulk of troop money-earning will come from participation in the GSBDC Fall Product Sale Program as well as GSBDC winter/spring Cookie Sale Program. Troops are required to participate in both product sales programs as their primary money-earning activity if they wish to do additional money-earning activities throughout the year.

The number of money-earning activities should be limited and should reflect the types of troop activities that need to be funded. Money earning must involve a product or a service. The product can't involve an outside vendor.

No money-earning activity or timeframe should compete with either of GSBDC's product sales programs or local United Way annual campaigns. All girl troop members must have parent permission and be registered members of GSUSA prior to participating in product sales and/or any additional money earning opportunity.

- Fall Product Sale — September and October
- Cookie Sale — January — April
- United Way Campaign Season — Fall, Annually

### ***iGirls***

iGirls are only permitted to sell products that are Council approved. This includes Girl Scout cookies and fall product sales items. Funds earned during these programs are held by the council for each individual girl. Girls or parents may contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) to obtain the Black Diamond Dollars balance when the iGirl is ready to take a trip, attend an event or are working on your Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. See the iGirl Guidebook for more detailed information.

### ***Service Units***

Service units may raise money through program events to support additional service unit level girl programs and volunteer support. All money-raising efforts at the service unit level must be approved through the regional council representative.

Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) for money-earning project pre-approval.

### **Product Sales Delinquencies and Debt Collection**

To protect the integrity of the council-approved Girl Scout troop money-earning activities, all efforts will be made to ensure that outstanding balances are paid in full.

### ***Volunteer/Troop***

The Girl Scout troop will not assume debt responsibility for any individual. Unpaid Fall Product Sale and Cookie Sale Program accounts are considered mishandled funds if not received by the communicated due dates. When a debt is incurred, individuals may be released from volunteer positions and/or subject to legal action, including but not limited to potential criminal prosecution.

Volunteers with an outstanding amount due to Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council beyond 60 days will not be allowed to serve in any capacity for the council until the account is paid in full. A volunteer who has repaid a severely delinquent debt of 180 days or more may be eligible for reappointment as a volunteer but may not be permitted to hold a position with money handling responsibilities.

### ***Parent***

Troop leaders and Product chairs are required to report unpaid parents to the council after each sale. Parents who do not pay for the products that their Girl Scout sold during either the Fall Product Sale or the Cookie Sale will be held accountable for payment, even if a girl member's participation becomes inactive.

All delinquent accounts are sent to a collection agency for further processing. Legal action will be taken if no other measures of collection resolve the issue.

Girls whose parents are delinquent on payment of products may not receive their rewards and will not be permitted to participate in council-sponsored money-earning activities until the debt is cleared.

## **Product Chain of Custody**

Once volunteers and parents have the product in hand for distribution, it's important to maintain accurate chain of custody records until the entire product inventory is sold.

Example:

- Service unit product chair signs at pick-up from the delivery agent
- Troop product chair/troop leader signs when products are picked up from the service unit chair
- Parent/guardian signs when he/she picks up their daughter's products from the troop product chair/troop leader.

## **Troop Monies**

Money earned or received by a Girl Scout troop becomes property of the troop and is not the property of individual members, girl or adult. This also includes earned funds through the product sales programs.

## **Troop Sponsorship**

Troop sponsorship is a voluntary agreement between a Girl Scout troop and a local entity such as a local business, school, place of worship, community group or person. Sponsorship is open to supporters whose aims and objectives are compatible with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The primary purpose of securing a sponsor is to gain support for the Girl Scout program within the community.

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Troops, groups, or other entities are not included under this nonprofit status and, therefore, are not in a position to accept cash donations of 5250 or above, unless coordinated with the Fund Development Department. Contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) for information on obtaining approval. Direct donations of any amount to troops, groups or other entities are not tax-deductible.

Troop sponsors may:

- Provide appropriate meeting space
- Consult and/or assist troops with program activities
- Help troops find necessary adult leadership
- Provide resources for troop activities and events
- Provide or suggest service project opportunities for the troop
- Offer other means of support, including supplies, equipment, membership fees, dues or in-kind materials

# **Girl Scout Program**

## **Council Sponsored Event Deadlines**

GSBDC relies on registration deadlines to plan for girl programs, adult trainings and meetings. Minimum and maximum attendance rates are based on budgetary needs and facility limitations. If participation does not meet minimum requirements at the close of a registration deadline, GSBDC reserves the right to cancel. In the event of a cancellation, GSBDC will notify the persons who submitted registrations for the event. Registration fees will be reimbursed.

## **Financial Assistance**

GSBDC designates funds for financial assistance for girls and volunteers, based on need. Council financial assistance will be administered so that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in a Girl Scout program, activity or event, within GSBDC's budget limitations. Troops should designate earnings each year from the product sales program to support the renewal of annual Girl Scouts of the USA membership.

## **Insurance**

As part of the Girl Scout membership for girls and adults, members receive supplemental Girl Scout activity insurance. Extra insurance must be taken out for any non-registered participants that you might allow to participate in your Girl Scout activity and events that last for more than 2 nights.

***Insurance Procedure:*** Submit the completed enrollment form to GSBDC for approval. Mail to PO Box 507, Charleston, WV 25302, fax to (304) 345-6427 or email to [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org). Coverage must be purchased prior to the event. Forms must be submitted no later than 1 week before the event takes place.

Plan Options:

Plan 2 - Accident Only

- Plan 2 has been designed for: 1) Members — During activities/events lasting more than two nights (three nights when one of the nights is an official federal holiday). 2) Nonmembers — It covers nonmembers as participants regardless of the length of the activity/event.
- They cover travel to and from the covered activity. They are easy to administer — covers both Members and Non-members with the completion of a single enrollment.

Plan 3E and 3P - Accident and Sickness

- Plans 3E and 3P are the same as Plan 2 except it also covers sickness.

## **Meeting Place**

GSBDC requires that troop meetings take place in safe community settings that are accessible to all members, including girls and adults with disabilities (schools, community centers, libraries, churches, etc.).

In rare instances where access to community settings is limited, GSBDC may make an exception, on a limited basis, for troops to meet in private homes.

Troops can also apply for temporary permission in the occasion of a sleepover or picnic.

## ***Permission Procedure:***

- If the group meeting or activity is being held in a private residence, all persons 18 years or older who reside there must successfully complete a criminal background check prior to the meeting or activity. All other requirements outlined in the Volunteer Screening and Criminal Background Check policy must be met.
- One certified lifeguard at least 16 years old is required to be present for every 10 swimmers. One watcher must also be present. See the Swimming: Safety Activity Checkpoint for complete details and procedures.
- Training is required for overnight camping, outdoor cooking and fire building activities.
- A site visit to assess risk may be necessary



Notify GSBDC to apply for permission to host a Girl Scout activity on private property by emailing [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org).

## **Membership Registration**

Girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement should invest in a membership with GSUSA and individually pay the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

## **Overnight Sleeping Arrangements**

### ***Males***

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members and/or female volunteers. Men may participate only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. In some circumstances, such as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in the sleeping area of the event, and the adult volunteer to girl ratio is adjusted accordingly. Men must always have separate sleeping quarters from girls and women.

### ***Families***

During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same quarter in program areas.

### ***Shared Beds***

If non-related girls are sharing a bed, parent/guardian permission must be obtained first using the Sleeping Arrangements Permission Form.

## **Safety Ratios**

Girl Scouts' adult-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

	<b>Group Meetings</b>	<b>Group Meetings</b>	<b>Events, Travel &amp; Camping</b>	<b>Events, Travel &amp; Camping</b>
	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for every:	Plus one additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:
<b>Daisies (grades K-1)</b>	12	6	6	4
<b>Brownies (grades 2-3)</b>	20	8	12	6
<b>Juniors (grades 4-5)</b>	25	10	16	8
<b>Cadettes (grades 6-8)</b>	25	12	20	10
<b>Seniors (grades 9-10)</b>	30	15	24	12
<b>Ambassadors (grades 11-12)</b>	30	15	24	12

## **Sensitive Issues**

Prior to girl programs containing sensitive issues, a notice of program content must be provided to parents and their written permission must be obtained for a girl's participation. Further permission from the council's program department is necessary.

### ***Sensitive Issues Procedure:***

Current events can be unsettling for kids. Maintaining friendships and getting along at school can be tough. And because you're a trusted role model, girls may turn to you as a friendly confidant or adviser when they have concerns or questions. These kinds of conversations can be challenging, but they are also essential. It's important that girls feel comfortable and supported throughout. When they are at ease, girls can more easily come up with their own viewpoints on difficult and complex subjects.

These newly developed resources can help volunteers, parents, and other caregivers guide the conversation, while keeping it girl led.

## **Swimming at Hotels and Pools on Personal Property**

Backyard pools and hotel pools are common summertime and travel interests of Girl Scout troops. One certified lifeguard at least 16 years old is required to be present for every 10 swimmers. One watcher must also be present. See the Swimming: Safety Activity Checkpoint for complete details and procedures.

## **Troop Formation**

In order to allow for a cooperative learning environment, each Girl Scout troop should strive for a minimum of 8-10 girl members. Some exceptions to this may include:

- Troops that are from sparsely populated, rural areas, where no other girls are available within a reasonable distance.
- Girls that require more individual time and attention from Girl Scout leaders and/or may have special needs.
- Troops comprised of high school girls.
- Girl Scout troops are currently in the formation process and are actively seeking additional members.

### **Troop Trips**

For troop trips of at least 200 miles round trip and/or camping on a site not owned by GSBDC, leaders must complete the application for troop trip/camping. Applications should be submitted to GSBDC 30 days in advance of the planned trip or camping activity.

## **Communication Policies**

### **Brand Protection**

Adults in Girl Scouting, including staff, volunteers, parents and partners have the responsibility to protect the Girl Scout name and marks against unauthorized, inconsistent, and unlicensed use. Careful presentation of our products and our messages safeguards and strengthens the overall brand. All Girl Scout graphics, images and messaging, written and non-written should be in accordance with the council and national criterions.

### **Confidentiality**

Information learned while volunteering is the exclusive (intellectual) property of GSBDC and should be carefully respected and protected. Confidential information must not be disclosed to unauthorized persons and should always be approved by council staff.

### **Electronic Communication**

For the safety of girls and adults, it's imperative that we as an organization protect the privacy of our girls. Without written permission from parents/guardians, pictures of girl members should not be posted.

Volunteers and girl members are expected to uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law in the troop/group electronic communication, just as any other form of communication. This includes, but is not limited to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.

### **Member Information Protection**

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond does not distribute member contact lists to partners, businesses or any non-related individual or group. GSBDC email lists are never to be used to send non-Girl Scout solicitations of any kind, inappropriate jokes or political information.

### **Public Relations**

GSBDC volunteers are encouraged to look for positive PR opportunities throughout the membership year. Press releases and news articles must be approved by a volunteer who is trained by the council's marketing and communications team. If the service unit does not have a volunteer in this position or if

you are unsure of who to contact, contact [CustomerCare@bdgsc.org](mailto:CustomerCare@bdgsc.org) for additional information and support.

When a Girl Scout, volunteer, parent, staff member and/or partner is representing Girl Scouts in anyway, she or he must conduct themselves according to our [Girl Scout values](#).

## **Public Relations Crisis Communication**

In the event that GSBDC should encounter an organizational crisis that has the potential to Warner public attention, only designated individuals are authorized to speak on behalf of GSBDC. All media inquiries should be directed to the External Relations department or the Chief Executive Officer.

### ***Crisis Communication Procedure:***

1. Call 911 if necessary. Make sure all emergency services are notified first.
2. Assign one or more persons to calm the girls and adults present & lead them to a safe location. Assign another person to serve as the contact person with the council.
3. Notify the council:
  1. From 8:30am- 4:30pm Monday-Friday, call (304) 345-7722 or 1-800-756-7616
  2. After normal office hours and on the weekend, call Beth Casey (304) 767-1175, Jessica Richards (304) 634-9477, Roberta Richmond (304) 545-4992
4. Assign someone to receive any media people who may have picked up the alert on the police or other emergency radio. Please do not issue any statements or speak informally to reporters. Simply indicate to reporters that a statement will be issued as soon as accurate information is available. Be courteous, but state firmly that the adults on hand have a responsibility to care for the girls present.
5. Collect names, addresses, and phone numbers of witnesses and parents or guardians, if necessary.

## **Representation of Girl Scouts**

When you are representing Girl Scouts in any way, please remember that you must behave in an appropriate, mature manner that accurately represents the Girl Scout movement.

Girl Scouts is a non-partisan, non-profit organization. This means that when a member of Girl Scouts is representing the organization at any type of event or public interaction, the Girl Scout member's own personal political opinions/loyalties are not to be voiced while representing Girl Scouts.

## **Technology**

Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council 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. [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and [Volunteer Essentials](#) must be consulted and guidelines followed.

## **Definitions Appendix**

**Accounting Team** — Black Diamond staff whom oversees and administers the financial procedures, process and policies within the council.

**Approved Volunteer** — Most all volunteer positions require registration to Girl Scouts of the USA, a criminal background check, appointment by a staff person to the applied-for position and training. An authorized volunteer is one who completes the necessary requirements of an adult volunteer.

**Authorized Volunteer** — Most all volunteer positions require registration to Girl Scouts of the USA, a criminal background check, appointment by a staff person to the applied position and training. An authorized volunteer is one who completes the necessary requirements of an adult volunteer.

**Board of Directors** — GSBDC has an established group of individuals, elected to represent GSBDC. The board's key role is to establish policies for organizational management and make decisions on critical matters.

**Case by Case** — Some instances may require the need for further investigation and for GSBDC to make decisions separately, each according to the facts of the particular situation and its individual circumstances and features.

**Confidential Information** — Member information such as an address, phone, and email, as well as any information contained within the health history form or personal history.

**Council** — There are 112 Girl Scout councils in the United States. Your local council, as referenced throughout the policy document, is Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council or GSBDC in its abbreviated form.

**Council Consent** — For safety and risk management purposes, permission may be a required element of programming at the individual, troop or service unit levels.

**Council Crisis Plan** — The Crisis Communications plan is a set of established procedures and standards for volunteers and staff of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council. It is designed so that staff and volunteers can act as a team in difficult times.

**Criminal Background Check** — A criminal background check (CBC) or background investigation is the process of looking up and compiling the court records of an individual. The majority of volunteer positions at GSBDC require this screening.

**Debt** — A debt is something, typically money, that is owed or due. As referenced in this document, a debt is referred to as an unpaid, financial obligation to either the GSBDC, a Girl Scout troop or service provider.

**Felony** — A crime that typically involves violence and is regarded as more serious than a misdemeanor. A felony is usually punishable by imprisonment for more than year.

**Fund Development** — Fundraising to promote the interests of the Girl Scout Movement is conducted by Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council.

**Girl Scout Volunteer** - A person 18 years of age or older who freely offers a service, skill or expertise to support the achievement of the Girl Scout mission and to achieve the goals of GSBDC. Individuals must meet the requirements of their appointed voluntary position.

**Health History Form** — A health history form is completed and signed by parents/guardians of girls or by adult members themselves, when participating in Girl Scout activities. Health Histories are normally collected and kept by troop or group leaders and are used for risk management and medical purposes. GSBDC follows HIPAA protocol when releasing information contained on the form.

**iGirl** — The iGirl (for individual girls) program is available to all girls in Kindergarten through 12th grade. It is especially popular for girls ages 11 — 17 who love the Girl Scout program but are very busy with other activities. It's a way to stay connected and fulfill your Girl Scout dreams without making a long-term commitment to a troop.

**Incident Report** — In matters of safety-related observations and violations, the incident report form should be used for documentation. Incident report forms are used for things such as, but not limited to injuries, accidents, safety concerns, bullying or harassment observations or violations and equipment safety concerns.

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

**Misdemeanor** — A nonindictable offense, regarded in the US as less serious than a felony.

**Non-related Adult** — All troops and groups must have volunteer leadership that includes at least one female, non-related adult. For this purpose, other persons residing in the same household will be considered related. For example, a non-related adult could be a neighbor, co-worker or friend, but couldn't be a family member or significant other.

**Operational Volunteer** — Operational volunteers help to fulfill the mission of Girl Scouts through the achievement of the annual goals of GSBDC. Operational volunteers support membership functions and provide more hands-on program leadership within the organization.

**Organization** — The Girl Scouts, Girl Scouts of Black Diamond or Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

**Parent** — In this document, a parent is referred to as an adult who has guardianship of a Girl Scout at GSBDC.

**Policy Making Volunteer** — GSBDC's Board of Directors approves the policies of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council.

**Regional Council Representative** — GSBDC regional representatives include staff based in the regions that they serve. Regional council representatives typically work out of their homes and are frequently in schools, at community-building conversations and they attend service unit and service unit team meetings frequently.

**Safety Activity Checkpoints** — Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow guidelines at all times. When preparing for any activity with girls, always begin with the Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACs) written specifically for particular activities. The SACs also explains which activities are not approved as Girl Scout program activities.

**Screening Provider** — GSBDC contracts with a company that specializes in criminal background checks. This provider screens court records and national databases and then compile a report that is provided to GSBDC for review.

**Staff** — GSBDC employs paid professionals who serve in various geographic parts of the council as well as in a variety of specialties to support the annual goals and work plans of the council.

**Service Unit** — A Service Unit is a dynamic support system that through diverse methods, and the support of local communities, provides the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls and adults. It is the embodiment of the Girl Scout movement within the local community and has the responsibility to:

- Extend and retain membership of girls and adults
- Provide direct program and administrative support to girls and adults
- Educate the community about the benefits of Girl Scouting

- Act as a communication center for Girl Scouts

**Service Unit Team** — The purpose of the Service Unit Team is to recruit, develop and support volunteers to effectively implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience with girls at the local and regional levels.

**Service Unit Team Member** — An adult volunteer who fulfills an essential service unit team position, which are, at a minimum, Service Unit Administrator, Treasurer, Event Pathway Consultant, Membership Advisor, Recruiter or Product Sales Chair.

**Troop** — A group of girls who join together to have fun, make new friends and achieve positive outcomes through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. The group is led by adult volunteer troop leaders and volunteers.

**Troop Leader** — Girl Scout troop leaders are members of the Girl Scouts of the USA, screened with a criminal background check, appointed and trained adults. Troop leaders guide girls through planning fun activities, give back to the community and manage the operations of a Girl Scout troop.

**Troop Leadership Committee** — A Girl Scout troop is led by key volunteer positions to support the operations necessary for a fulfilling experience for girls. Every Girl Scout troop is unique in the way the adults divide responsibilities. Common positions include:

- Troop leader
- Assistant leader
- Treasurer
- Cookie chair
- Fall product chair
- Chaperone(s)

**Volunteer Appointment** — In order to ensure the best possible match and experience for girls and volunteers, Girl Scout volunteers must be appointed or accepted by GSBDC to a position.

**Volunteer Essentials** — Volunteer Essentials is essentially an encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering that's there whenever volunteers need it. It provides the nitty-gritty — what you need to know now, as you plan your first few meetings with girls. It's also a valuable “at your fingertips” resource available for year-round planning.

**Volunteer Position** — Adults 18 years of age and older who provide service within GSBDC are considered Girl Scout volunteers. In most cases, one must be registered, screened, appointed and trained in order to hold the position of a Girl Scout volunteer.

**Watcher** — A watcher is an adult who provides an extra safety measure layer to a lifeguard, while Girl Scouts are swimming.







## Acknowledgment and Understanding

This handbook contains the key information and expectations of GSBDC that you will need to be a successful volunteer. Our risk and yours is lowered as you become familiar with our policies and girls have a safer, better experience as well. Please, read the handbook, initially, upon assignment and then revisit this tool as an on-demand reference, when needed.

These policies supersede previous personnel guidelines, policies, and practices that are contrary to these guidelines and are effective April 1, 2022.

This form is available electronically and is the preferred method. If you are unable to access the online form for any reason, please complete, sign and mail this form to:

321 Virginia Street West Charleston, WV 25302

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received and read the Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council Volunteer Policies Handbook implemented on April 1, 2022, which outlines the goals, policies, practices, beliefs, and expectations of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, as well as my responsibilities as a volunteer.

It is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the contents of this handbook. By my signature below, I acknowledge, understand, accept, and agree to comply with the information contained therein. I understand that this handbook is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my volunteer tenure, but is simply a general guide to the goals, policies, practices, benefits, and expectations of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council. Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council reserves the right to change, add, or delete policies, benefits, and practices at any time based on business needs and conditions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Name Printed

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number



Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council  
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