

Managing Sensitive Issues at a Cookie Booth

How to handle a confrontation at a Cookie Booth

Though it is rare, we have had situations where someone will approach a cookie booth and want to discuss topics unrelated to Girl Scout Cookies. On even rarer occasions, the person can become aggressive, making the girls and adults uncomfortable. If this does occur, we recommend the following steps to defuse and manage the situation:

- ▶ First and foremost, do your best to remain calm and confident. The girls will look to you as a role model. If you become agitated or frightened, it can be very upsetting to them.
- ▶ One adult should try to guide the person away from the girls (without leaving the immediate area) while the other keeps the girls close to the booth.
- ▶ Let them know, politely but firmly, that this is not the place to take up their concerns and they are welcome to contact the council. Direct them to our website (gswcf.org) or phone number (1-800-881-GIRL).
- ▶ If they become aggressive and/or are unwilling to leave the area, let them know that you will be contacting the authorities. Do not continue to engage with them at this point.
- ▶ Both adults should take the girls inside the business (bringing the cash box with you). One adult should contact the police (while trying to maintain a view of the booth) while the other stays with the girls and informs the store manager of the situation.

Potential Questions

Why are Girl Scouts holding in-person cookie booths at this time? Is it safe?

The safety and security of our Girl Scouts is our top priority. We are taking the necessary precautions and have implemented protocols to provide the safest possible experience for our troop and Girl Scout Cookie customers. We follow all health and safety guidelines issued by the CDC and the guidance provided by Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). We are constantly monitoring the situation and will stop in-person sales if needed for the safety and security of our girls, customers, and the general public.

How is Girl Scouts diverse?

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida is made up of girls, families, and volunteers with a broad range of life experiences, backgrounds, and beliefs. We are united by our commitment to making the world a better place. Girl Scout programs are available in most residential zip codes, helping girls of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities build valuable leadership skills and take action on issues that matter to them.

Why does Girl Scouts use palm oil in their cookies?

The world's food supply is intricately tied to the use of palm oil and is found in many baked snacks sold in the United States. GSUSA's licensed bakers tell us it continues to be necessary to use palm oil in our cookies to ensure their shelf life, to bring you the highest-quality product, and in order to avoid using trans fats. Although we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time there are no viable ones.

What action is Girl Scouts taking to combat child labor?

We are aware of the concerns around the process by which palm oil is gathered. To be very clear, child labor has no place in the production of Girl Scout Cookies. We have worked and continue to work with our bakers to increase the transparency and sustainability of our production lines and ingredient sourcing. If certain suppliers involved in Girl Scout Cookie production are not following best practices with regard to ethics, we rely on our bakers and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, of which GSUSA is an affiliate member, to take action quickly to meet our standards.

Girl Scouts has gotten too political.

Girl Scouts of West Central Florida does not take sides on political matters. Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of West Central Florida are separate organizations. When you purchase Girl Scout Cookies, all proceeds stay local to help girls and their communities.

Why does Girl Scouts of West Central Florida (GSWCF) keep increasing the price of Girl Scout Cookies?

Several factors go into the decision to increase the cost of a box of cookies including general economic inflation trends and the constantly rising costs involved in the production, transportation and storage of the cookies and girl rewards. The increase also results in troops and service units earning more per box sold (nearly \$1 in some cases). In addition to proceeds for the girls, Girl Scout Cookie funds are critical to support the council in delivering programs to girls, support to members, and our dedication to improving our camp properties. It's important to note that all Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local.

When was the last time Girl Scouts of West Central Florida experienced a retail price increase for Girl Scout cookies?

The last increase of our core cookies was in 2020 when we increased the cost from \$4/box to \$5/box.

What is the Girl Scouts position on the Boy Scouts allowing girls?

Our focus is on our mission and does not waver regardless of what any other youth-serving organization does. Girl Scouts is the premier leadership organization for all girls and we bring with more than 100 years of experience. No other organization comes close to providing the scope and variety of evidence-based out-of-school opportunities specifically designed for girls.

Will the Girl Scouts allow boys to join?

No. Girl Scouts will always be a place where all girls are free to be themselves without the pressures and social anxiety that can result from a mixed-gender environment. Being girl-led is critical to the developmental opportunities we offer and girls generally have plenty of other opportunities to engage in coed activities.

Does Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) or Girl Scouts of West Central Florida have a relationship with Planned Parenthood?

No. Contrary to some online misinformation that has been circulating for years, neither GSUSA nor GSWCF has a relationship or partnership with Planned Parenthood.

Did GSUSA distribute a Planned Parenthood brochure at the U.N.?

No. This decade-old rumor is based on GSUSA's participation in the 54th Commission on the Status of Women at the U.N. Girl Scouts had no connection to or knowledge of the brochure in question and played no role in distributing it.

Does Girl Scouts allow transgender youth to join?

Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization and welcomes all girls. Diversity is a core value of Girl Scouts and we do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical or developmental disability, or sexual orientation. Inclusion of transgender girls is handled on a case-by-case basis with great consideration and sensitivity to the welfare and best interest of all parties involved, especially the child.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please reach out to us at productsales@gswcf.org.