

# Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Leader Volunteer

As a Girl Scout Leader volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two volunteers must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to always check the volunteer-to-girl ratios in the ["Girl Scout Activity Safety Standards & Guidelines" section of Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and the ["Safety" chapter of Volunteer Essentials](#).

In *More than 'Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences*, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

"Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis." (2014, p.27)

## Responsibilities of the Volunteer

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as [permission slips](#)
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise.

- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl, following the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). These are instructions for staying safe while participating in activities. Read the checkpoints, follow them and share them with other volunteers, parents and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

## **Standard of Conduct for Volunteers**

By accepting a volunteer position, you have a responsibility to Girl Scouts and to your fellow volunteers and girls to adhere to certain rules of behavior and conduct. The purpose of these standards is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone.

### **Code of Conduct:**

- Respect the mission of Girl Scouts of West Central Florida (GSWCF).
- Manage conflicts or difficulties in an appropriate manner. Contact your Troop Consultant or Service Unit Manager to voice your concern and receive support.
- Respect your meeting site and the properties of the council.
- Honor confidentiality of volunteers and girls.
- Be willing to take part in orientation and training sessions to enhance your leadership skills.
- Demonstrate respect for the guidance, direction and decisions staff and/or their designated appointee provide to support your role as a volunteer.
- Treat staff, volunteers, girls and members fairly and without discrimination.
- Dress appropriately for your volunteer position and/or activity the girls will be taking part.
- Hats and t-shirts with political views or harmful logos are not permitted during Girl Scout meetings and functions.

## **Grounds for Dismissal**

### **Immediate Dismissal:**

- Willful violation of security or safety rules; negligence or any careless action, which endangers the life or safety of a girl or another adult.
- Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substance drugs while volunteering; use or possession or sale of controlled substance drugs in any quantity while on Girl Scout premises and/or while conducting volunteer activities except medications prescribed by a physician, which do not impair volunteer performance.
- Unauthorized possession of firearms, weapons or explosives on Girl Scout property or while conducting volunteer activities.

- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone, fighting or provoking a fight or negligent damage of property when representing Girl Scouts.
- Insubordination or failing to obey instructions properly issued by your volunteer manager or staff advisor.
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers and/or girls; unauthorized possession or removal of any agency property, including money and documents from the premises without prior permission from management; unauthorized use of agency equipment or property for personal reasons; using agency equipment for personal gain.
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of agency records or other agency documents.
- Breach of confidentiality of personal or health information.
- Inappropriate conduct in a Girl Scout setting.
- Inappropriate behavior toward girls as defined by abuse or harassment policies or other organizational guidelines.

#### **Dismissal at the End of the Appointment Period:**

- Refusal to participate in conflict resolution procedures with GSWCF staff and another volunteer or parent.
- Refusal to abide by any restrictions placed on you by GSWCF staff. (i.e., cannot drive girls; cannot be a signer on a bank account; cannot act in a volunteer capacity, etc.)
- Providing an unsatisfactory experience for the girl members of your troop.
- Continual refusal to communicate with GSWCF Membership staff assigned to your area or with service team members.
- Failure to ask permission for additional money-earning events.
- Allowing an environment of bullying and exclusion at your troop meetings.
- Poor representation of GSWCF at Girl Scout and community events.
- Not demonstrating the core values of the Girl Scout mission. This may include but is not limited to: speaking poorly of girls, parents, volunteers and council staff; posting negative comments on Facebook or other social media websites about girls, parents, volunteers and council staff; embarrassing girls, parents or other volunteers at events, activities and camp; aggressive/antagonistic behavior toward GSWCF program partners; frequent complaining of Girl Scout rules and regulations and ignoring policies and procedures contained in Volunteer Essentials.
- Every volunteer is entitled to the ongoing support of a supervisor and regular or periodic evaluations of her or his performance based on the requirements of the written position

description, including goals and objectives, expectations and time commitments. Annual reappointment meetings will be conducted as needed to address concerns and may be required for a volunteer to continue in a position.

Volunteer positions with GSWCF are 12 month appointed positions. GSWCF reserves the right to dismiss or refuse appointment of any volunteer.

## **Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians**

You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product program, including Digital Cookie; overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

## **Responsibilities of Girls**

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when and where to get help when needed.