

Chapter 8: Standards and Procedures

The following Volunteer Management Standards and Procedures set out the requirements and guidelines for the volunteers of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA). A standard is a measurement of best practices specifically observed by GSGLA. A procedure is established as an official process by which a standard is adhered to. This document does not intend to create a contract between GSGLA and any actual or potential volunteer, nor does it give rise to any legal obligation on the part of GSGLA to any actual or potential volunteer or third person.

All volunteers will be informed of the existence of GSUSA and GSGLA standards and procedures. GSGLA standards and procedures will be made available to all volunteers on GSGLA's website. Every volunteer must agree to abide by the standards and procedures of GSUSA and GSGLA.

1. Inclusiveness Statement

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles strives to provide resources to volunteers working with girls with developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or multiple disabilities. All staff and volunteers must adhere to the following Inclusion statement, "As a Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles member, I will do my best to think, speak, and act in ways that ensure everyone across GSGLA feels they belong and can meaningfully participate in all aspects of Girl Scouting regardless of ability, age, culture, education, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, and/or socio-economic status."

2. Being an Appropriate Role Model

Part of being an effective and responsible Girl Scout adult volunteer includes being an appropriate role model. Girls learn about leadership and appropriate health and safety standards directly and indirectly from the adults around them, and especially from their leaders.

2A. Procedure – Volunteer Essentials and Blue Book of Basic Documents:

Adult volunteers should model the behavior that shows respect for local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. They should also follow the procedures and standards of GSGLA found in *Volunteer Essentials* and in GSUSA's *Blue Book of Basic Documents* <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/who-we-are/facts.html> when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity. Adult volunteers should model behavior that shows respect for the well-being of the girls and other adults.

3. Membership Conditions

3A. Procedure - Volunteers:

All adult volunteers, except those adults serving as temporary advisors or consultants, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and must pay the applicable membership dues on an annual basis and meet GSUSA membership requirements. (Adults who are lifetime members are exempt from the membership dues requirements).

3B. Procedure - Short-term and episodic volunteers:

Short-term (fewer than 30 consecutive days) and episodic (one-day event) volunteers are considered temporary assistants and annual membership dues are optional.

4. Recruitment

4A. Procedure:

A position description will be provided for each volunteer position outlining the purpose, accountability, principal duties, and term of service of the position. Prospective volunteers for most positions will need to be approved*

***Approved volunteers are registered members who have successfully cleared GSGLA's background screening process within the last three years and have completed position related training.**

5. Becoming a Volunteer

5A. Procedure - Requirements:

Parents needed for adult-to-girl ratio, driving girls, staying overnight during troop trips, handling troop or service unit money, or bank account signers, must be approved volunteers. **Approved volunteers are registered members who have successfully cleared GSGLA's background screening process within the last three years and have completed position related training.** In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our members, GSGLA reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty to, pled no contest to, or received a deferred adjudication on certain crimes, or who GSGLA, in its sole discretion, based upon the information before it, otherwise deems as not qualified or fit to hold a volunteer position.

The goal of the background screening is to screen prospective volunteers and place capable and qualified adults in all operational positions. GSGLA reserves the right to conduct a multi-state search, California statewide search, county search, sex offender registry search, as well as an OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) search, and any other necessary search.

All volunteers, including lifetime members, who interact with girls must have a background screening on record that dates back no further than three years. If the background screening is older than three years those volunteers must complete the background screening application. GSGLA reserves the right to require updated background screenings for any volunteer at its sole discretion. Volunteers who will not be interacting with girls may be required to consent to a background screening depending on the position. GSGLA has sole discretion in requesting background screenings for any volunteer position.

5B. Procedure – Application and background screening:

If a person chooses an open volunteer position, via the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog (electronically), this does not guarantee that they will be placed. All volunteers of GSGLA are appointed by a staff member or his/her designee (the service unit manager or day camp director, for example). The staff person or the designee may use many tools to determine the suitability of a volunteer to be placed, including, but not limited to a background screening, reference checks, personal knowledge of the applicant, and an interview.

Potential volunteers must complete the registration process via the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog (electronically) as well as a background screening application. Providing false information, including all zeros in place of the correct social or a dummy social, on the application is grounds for automatic dismissal from participation as a GSGLA volunteer, regardless of the result of the background screening.

Any applicant who disputes or desires to contest the information provided by the background screening report must file a written notice by completing a dispute form www.asurint.com/webdocs/asurint_dispute_form.pdf within 60 days of being notified that her or his application for volunteer participation has been restricted or denied.

It is the applicant's responsibility to challenge the information received in the background screening report and to arrange for any corrections if necessary. GSGLA has no control over the information maintained by any reporting agency and cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided, or other reporting agencies, or to its agents, for any action taken by GSGLA in reliance on such information. GSGLA is entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the background screening results until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript has been provided. Even if an applicant submits corrected background information, GSGLA retains exclusive discretion to exclude or limit an applicant's participation.

Some of the standards and procedures outlined in Volunteer Essentials may apply if GSGLA discovers (via background screening or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty, received a deferred adjudication, or pled no contest to certain crimes in the past seven years under the laws of the state of California, another state in the United States, or another country. At all times, GSGLA has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other predated or non-criminal information.

6. Disqualification

6A. Procedure - Overview:

The criminal offenses that will generally disqualify a person from volunteer participation and the corresponding process used to determine disqualification are discussed below. The decision whether to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation remains at all times within the discretion of GSGLA. Factors that may be considered in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and the tasks associated with the desired volunteer position. GSGLA's primary concern is always to safeguard the best interests of its members.

6B. Procedure – Grounds for disqualification:

The following rules generally will apply if GSGLA learns (via background screening or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been convicted in the past seven years of one of the following crimes under the laws of the state of California, another state in the United States, or another country. At all times, GSGLA has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other pre-dating or non-criminal information.

Grounds for disqualification or limitations:

1. Any felony offense, regardless of type
2. Misdemeanor crime against a child
3. Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
4. Misdemeanor crime involving violence
5. Misdemeanor crime involving arson
6. Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
7. Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
8. Other misdemeanors, as GSGLA may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty, or traffic violations. When an adult in any volunteer position with GSGLA has an outstanding debt to, or has caused a financial loss to GSGLA or its entities, GSGLA has the right to remove the volunteer from her or his position.
9. Being a registered sex offender, or having a registered sex offender living in the home.
10. Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.
11. Other circumstances and general principles: for all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, self-disclosures of complaints about or arrests for violence or abuse against children, GSGLA shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references, and/or interview.
12. Failure to complete the background screening application.
13. Failure to submit correct social security number on background screening application.

6C. Procedure – Failure to disclose:

Failure to disclose the following information may result in disqualification of volunteer status.

1. Any arrests, allegations, pleadings of "no contest", dismissals, or convictions of a crime other than a minor traffic offense. (including DUI's, misdemeanors, or felonies)
2. Allegations, complaints, arrests or reports regarding your involvement in child molestation, violence or abuse against children, or neglect. (regardless of whether the incident was confirmed or denied)
3. If a member of your household is a registered sex offender.
4. Any pending criminal charges against you.

6D. Procedure – Final action:

GSGLA reserves the right to permanently deny anyone a volunteer position if GSGLA officials believe the person is inappropriate for that position. There is no appeal process once a final denial decision has been made by GSGLA.

7. Placement

7A. Procedure - Overview:

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of GSGLA.

7B. Procedure –Choice of position:

Approved volunteers not placed in positions for which they applied may discuss other positions that may be available with a GSGLA representative or designee.

7C. Procedure – Leadership team requirements:

If two people in the leadership team of a troop or other membership pathway are related (e.g., spouses, mother and daughter, brother and sister) or share the same household (e.g., roommates), they must have a third unrelated person, who does not live in the same household as another leader on the leadership team present at all troop meetings and activities. Two of which always must be unrelated adults, and one of whom must be female.

7D. Procedure – Events, camping, travel adult requirements:

For events, travel, and camping trips, two approved, unrelated adult volunteers, who do not live in the same household, and one of whom is female, must be present at all times.

7E. Procedure – Male leader, additional requirements

Male leaders must have a female co-leader so that in case of emergency, a female-leader is present at all times; who is unrelated and who does not live in the same household.

8. Appointment

Girl Scout volunteers must be appointed to their position, using the procedures below. It is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to complete all the required steps. GSGLA reserves the right to limit volunteer involvement until all steps have been completed.

8A. Procedures – Initial steps:

1. Prospective volunteer joins by selecting a desired volunteer position electronically through the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog and paying the membership dues.
2. Prospective volunteer completes background screening.
3. References may be requested by GSGLA staff and checked if additional information is necessary.
4. Prospective volunteer receives notification that her/his volunteer background screening has been approved or approved with restrictions via the prospective volunteers MyGS Portal.
5. If the position is mutually agreed upon after reviewing the appropriate volunteer position description, the new volunteer accepts the position.
6. The new volunteer takes the training required for her/his position, as described in the position description.

8B. Procedures – Service unit manager and team:

1. Appointment of a service unit manager(s) or service unit team members. Service unit managers and service unit team member positions are extremely important. These groups of volunteers directly impact the troop and girl experience.
2. Appointment of the service unit manager is done through an interview conducted by the support specialist and the support manager. Upon their recommendation for appointment, the appointment is granted by the director of membership retention and volunteer development.
3. The appointment period is Oct. 1-Sept. 29. Appointment requires an initial three-year commitment which is thereafter confirmed annually by the director of membership retention and volunteer development and/or the support manager.
4. Appointment of service unit team members is done in partnership with the service unit manager (SUM) and support specialists. Upon recommendation or recruitment of a team member, the SUM and specialist would confer and agree upon appointment.
5. Appointment of the service unit manager and of the service unit team members will be conditional upon completion of the requirements.

9. Reappointment

9A. Procedure - Requirements:

Troop volunteers, Pathway* volunteers and other volunteers who work directly with girls, such as service unit volunteers, training facilitators, camp, and other GSGLA volunteers, must demonstrate inclusiveness, and knowledge of and commitment to safety issues, in addition to financial responsibility, in order to continue in a volunteer role. Volunteers with financial responsibility to local troops/groups or to GSGLA will not be reappointed to a position if required financial responsibilities have not been met. * *Series, event, camp, travel and virtual pathways.*

9B. Procedures – Review, agreement and training:

1. Each appointed operational volunteer's performance will be reviewed periodically.
2. If mutually agreeable, the volunteer completes the appropriate volunteer position description/agreement.
3. Continuing operational volunteers agree to complete and/or update training as required for the position.

10. Benefits and Services

Benefits and services to volunteers may include training and other learning opportunities, support from GSGLA staff and other GSGLA volunteers, GSUSA and GSGLA publications and website, tools for recording volunteer experiences, awards and recognitions, and performance evaluations.

10A. Procedure – No monetary compensation:

Volunteers recognize their Girl Scout position(s) as a voluntary service and do not expect, receive, or solicit any monetary reimbursement for service.

10B. Procedures – Expenses, insurance, and protections for volunteers and directors:

1. Volunteers are encouraged to keep a record of expenses incurred while doing Girl Scout activities (e.g., cost of uniforms, mileage, etc.). Many of these expenses can be applied as income tax deductions. Volunteers are advised to check with the Internal Revenue Service or a tax consultant regarding volunteer expense tax deductions.
2. All currently registered members of GSUSA are automatically covered by a supplemental activity accident insurance policy. The plan provides limited coverage for medical expenses due to accidents that occur while participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities, including traveling directly to and from the activity. GSGLA cannot guarantee that all claims will be paid.
3. According to the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, the federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 protects volunteers acting in the scope of their responsibilities as defined in the position description.
4. Under California law, directors and officers of non-profits enjoy limited protection from liability, as do an organization's volunteers. A member, director, trustee, or officer who serves without compensation for a non-profit hospital or association or a charitable organization is immune from civil liability for an act of or omission done in service if they were acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties, with the exception being damage or injury caused by willful or wanton misconduct.
5. A charitable institution is not liable for the negligence of its officers and employees, unless the institution fails to exercise ordinary care in the selection or retention of competent officers and employees.

11. Training

Every adult volunteer shall be selected on the basis of interest, ability to perform the assignment, and agreement to participate in training as required. Training is provided and required for appointment to most positions.

11A. Procedure - Overview:

All appointed volunteers will receive an orientation to Girl Scouting and any required training as stated on the position description. All volunteers must complete training within the time-frames established on the position description. Failure to complete training shall be a basis for release or a cause for not being reappointed to a position.

11B. Procedure - Orientation:

An orientation to the Girl Scout program should be given for any volunteer position as part of the appointment process.

11C. Procedure – Initial leader training:

Troop leaders and assistant troop leaders must complete the new leader training requirements prior to beginning work with the troop. The New Leader Orientation is mandatory for every new leader. Additional training may be required as GSGLA or GSUSA updates their programs, policies, or offerings.

11D. Procedure – Non-leader training:

Each position description will list the minimal training a volunteer must complete prior to beginning work in that position. The position description may also list progressive training that may be taken beyond the minimal requirements.

11E. Procedure – Additional training:

Additional training, annual training, and workshops may be required for any volunteer position. Volunteers not completing the additional training required for their position within a reasonable amount of time may be asked to step down.

11F. Procedure – Class offerings:

Refer to the event calendar on GSGLA's website:

<http://www.girlscoutsla.org/en/events/event-calendar.html>.

12. Recognitions

GSGLA's volunteer recognition program is designed to be a valuable component of the volunteer support system. It offers formal and informal recognition on a year-round basis. Formal recognition is for significant service and for completing established requirements. Recognition success is defined by doing it well, doing it often, and making it meaningful.

12A. Procedure - Description:

Outstanding service to Girl Scouting will be recognized by GSGLA as outlined on the GSGLA website on the Volunteer Awards page.

12B. Procedure – Years of service and membership:

Adults with 25 or more years of Girl Scout membership and adults with 20 or more years of service will be recognized by the presentation of the appropriate Membership Numeral Guard and Years of Service by GSGLA. See self-nomination form in the Adult Awards and Recognition handbook <http://www.girlscoutsla.org/en/for-volunteers/volunteer-awards.html>.

12C. Procedure – Other awards:

Refer to the Adult Awards and Recognitions handbook on the GSGLA website for criteria, guidelines and applications.

13. Confidentiality

All information concerning staff, volunteers, financial data, and business records of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles is confidential. Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared. Information that is sensitive in nature should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without written authorization from GSGLA. GSGLA relies on volunteers to conform to this rule of confidentiality. Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff, volunteers and of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles itself is a basic value of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles.

13A. Procedure – Volunteer responsibility:

Volunteers of GSGLA may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the standard and procedure of GSGLA that such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service.

Volunteers are expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the expiration of service. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this standard and procedure and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal/dismissal.

13B. Procedure – During and after volunteer commitment:

Volunteers are asked to comply with all confidentiality procedures. During the course of volunteerism, and after retirement of a volunteer position, sensitive or confidential information shall not be divulged, disclosed, or communicated for any reason.

14. Dismissal

In any organization, situations may arise which make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from their volunteer assignment. An action to release an adult volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and GSGLA.

14A. Procedure - Overview:

It is always within the discretion of GSGLA to take immediate action, in the appropriate circumstances, to release a volunteer. Grounds for dismissing or restricting the responsibilities of a current volunteer appear below. The decision to release a person from a current volunteer position or from the volunteer ranks of GSGLA could be the result of an evaluation and feedback process or the result of one problematic incident. Reasons for release may include, but are not limited to, elimination of the position in which the volunteer serves, failure to abide by procedures and standards of GSUSA or GSGLA, refusal to accept and foster the Girl Scout mission and values, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA.

14B. Procedure – Role model:

GSGLA may release any volunteer who, in conducting the Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes a personal lifestyle so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to being a proper role model for girl members.

14C. Procedures – Releasing an operational volunteer:

1. The release of any volunteer is taken very seriously, will be investigated objectively to our furthest abilities, and will be kept confidential. If release of the volunteer is under consideration, the appropriate support staff will arrange a conference with the volunteer as soon as possible and advise him or her of the decision. An additional party will be required to attend the discussion. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to resign voluntarily.
2. If a current Girl Scout volunteer is charged with or convicted of, pled guilty to, received deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes in the Grounds for Dismissal list (see below), GSGLA may ask the volunteer to resign from a position working with girls. It is at the discretion of GSGLA whether to allow the volunteer to continue in any capacity, and any adverse action taken will be done so only after a thorough investigation.
3. Grounds for Dismissal
 - a. Any felony offense, regardless of type
 - b. Misdemeanor crime against a child
 - c. Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
 - d. Misdemeanor crime involving violence
 - e. Misdemeanor crime involving arson
 - f. Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
 - g. Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
 - h. Other misdemeanors, as GSGLA may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, and other crimes of dishonesty or traffic violations. When an adult in any volunteer position with GSGLA has an outstanding debt to, or has caused a financial loss to the council or its entities, GSGLA has the right to remove the volunteer from her or his position.
 - i. Being a registered sex offender, or having a registered sex offender living in the home.
 - j. Unresolved Situations: If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, that application cannot be approved and the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated. If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.
 - k. Other circumstances and general principles: For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, GSGLA shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references.
 - l. Failure to disclose any of the above within 10 days to the Support Department.

4. Volunteer Misconduct

Adult volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with respect to the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. The following volunteer misconduct situations may result in the dismissal from a volunteer position:

- a. **Theft:** Any concerns relating to misappropriation or misuse of Girl Scout funds or theft of equipment, materials, or supplies. This includes funds or equipment at the council, service unit, or troop level.
 - b. **Excessive absenteeism or inability to perform responsibilities:** not completing the agreed to term or service, or demonstrating no improvement in performance after being coached multiple times by GSGLA staff or service unit team member.
 - c. **Continuous or malicious slander:** Continuous and malicious gossip or derogatory attacks concerning anyone associated with Girl Scouts. This includes Girl Scout volunteers, parents, and GSGLA staff.
 - d. **Serious behavioral concerns:** This includes the use of drugs or alcohol while participating in Girl Scout activities, threats of violence (personal injury, defamation of character, etc.), physical fighting, arrest and yelling/verbal aggression towards girls, volunteers, or staff.
 - e. **Breach of confidentiality:** Sharing confidential information about girls or volunteers with outside parties that are not privy to said information. This includes the use of Girl Scout contact information and materials for personal use or gain.
 - f. **Refusal:** Actively choosing not to subscribe to or adhere to GSGLA policies, procedures, and program expectations.
 - g. **Failure to cooperate** with a financial audit or dispute resolution investigation.
 - h. **Failure to complete** membership registration and/or background screening when directed by GSGLA.
 - i. **Failure to submit** correct social security number on background screening application.
 - j. **Failure to abide** by the duties and responsibilities as outlined in the position description
5. The service unit manager responsible for overseeing the volunteer is responsible for notifying their support specialist at GSGLA if they become aware of a situation involving one of the above bulleted items. The support specialist should then notify the manager of support. After reviewing the facts the team may ask the volunteer to step down from the position.
 6. Background screenings include a time frame of at least seven years; therefore, it is appropriate that the volunteer must be dismissed or put in a position restricted from working with girls for a minimum of seven years from the disposition of the offense. The length of this time frame and all other considerations related to the volunteer's position are at the sole discretion of GSGLA.

14D. Procedures – Restriction of activity:

1. If a current Girl Scout leader or assistant leader is charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes, she or he may have restrictions placed on her or his volunteer activities or responsibilities.
2. In keeping with the denial guidelines for incoming volunteers, an ongoing volunteer who has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, or received a deferred adjudication for or pled no contest to certain crimes, judgment or probation may be asked to step down from their volunteer position and not allowed to become a leader or assistant leader if the incident or knowledge of the incident is within seven years. At the end of this time frame, it is within the sole discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the volunteer can be placed in a leadership position working with the girls.
3. Volunteer misconduct as described within the standards and procedures section of *Volunteer Essentials* may result in restriction of leadership duties.

14E. Procedure – Restriction from money handling:

If a volunteer has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to misdemeanor crimes involving theft, fraud, or forgery, or other crimes of dishonesty in the event that the person is allowed to continue as a volunteer, that person will be restricted from management of Girl Scout money.

14F. Procedure – Current arrest or conviction:

Arrests of current volunteers, and current volunteers who have pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes, or who have been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for crimes that are brought to GSGLA's attention, will be handled in a similar manner to open warrants and pending charges for prospective volunteers. The activities of the volunteer will be restricted while GSGLA researches the matter. It is at the discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or be allowed to continue.

14G. Procedures – Service unit manager or team member or leader:

There are occasions where current service unit managers or current service unit team members are not reappointed or are removed from their current service unit positions. This may occur after the following:

1. A thorough review of position performance based on the position description, and observable documented information.
2. A review of records of attendance and participation in formal and informal training sessions and meetings.
3. A personal interview with the volunteer at the earliest opportunity. The volunteer will be told of the specific performance areas(s) that is not satisfactory.
4. Efforts will be made to help the volunteer achieve satisfactory job performance within a specific time period.
5. If a satisfactory level of position performance is not achieved within the designated time period, official notice of release from the volunteer position will be communicated to the volunteer.
6. The health, safety, or welfare of girl members, other volunteers, or staff is endangered.

Note: Volunteers are released from their volunteer position only; this does not cancel their membership in Girl Scouts. All circumstances, including all written documentation and communication concerning release from a volunteer position, are strictly confidential and will be protected.

In addition to the items listed in the procedure for **releasing an operational volunteer**, a service unit manager or a service unit team member may be removed or not reappointed for the following reasons:

1. Persistent or continual refusal to support and promote council initiatives.
2. Persistent or continual negative and disparaging communications about the Girl Scout organization, "Council", staff, or other volunteers.
3. Failure to adhere to compliance requirements as designated in the position description
4. Failure or refusal to follow GSGLA and GSUSA policies, standards, and procedures.
5. Failure or refusal to communicate/return calls or emails from staff or other volunteers in a timely manner.
6. Failure to stay current with GSGLA and GSUSA communications.
7. Failure or refusal to partner/cooperate with council staff.

15. Resignation

In order to maintain professionalism in our volunteer organization, a person having reason(s) to resign is provided with appropriate channels to follow.

15A. Procedure - Volunteer action:

A volunteer may resign from her or his position at any time. Written notification to a GSGLA staff member or designee is encouraged. Membership dues are non-refundable.

15B. Procedures – Staff action:

1. Reason(s) for desiring to resign should be discussed immediately with the person to whom the volunteer is accountable to, prior to making a final decision.
2. Any resignation submitted will be acknowledged by a GSGLA support specialist or manager.
3. If notice of resignation has not been submitted, but GSGLA staff has attempted to reach out to the volunteer on several documented occasions without success, the volunteer may be deemed to have resigned.

16. Dispute Resolution

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, **do not** share your complaint with others—this causes the situation to escalate.

When difficulties arise with a girl or girls at a troop, Community or Council activity, it is best to discuss the situation calmly and objectively with the girls first. Make sure your conversation is in the presence of another adult – not one on one. It is important for a girl's parent/guardian to be informed of the situation and to be involved in its resolution. Consult with your troop mentor for advice and support. It is appropriate to ask the parent/guardian to meet with the troop leadership team to discuss the girl's behavior and ask him/her to help the leadership find a reasonable solution to the problem.

Assessing the Conflict

1. Fact find; listen actively to all persons involved. This may require an investment of your time, one on one meetings or group meetings may be necessary.
2. Take notes.
3. Don't act upon emotion – many problems are emotion-based, and emotions are not logical.
4. Watch for the implied meaning of words.
5. Don't make moral judgments.
6. Don't jump to conclusions.
7. Consider each person's point of view.
8. Take a break and come back fresh.

Tips for Resolving Conflict

1. Create a clear framework for all involved; set time limits on meetings or discussions.
2. Setting clear expectations is critical. Determine what the desired outcome/solution is for each person.
3. Diffuse anger by stating how you feel, but use "I" messages.
4. Don't launch a personal attack.
5. Speak up. Don't let resentment build and reach a boiling point.
6. Don't expect an apology.
7. Ask open-ended questions.
8. Check your ego at the door.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your service unit manager. If the service unit manager cannot help you resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the SUM), contact GSGLA support staff for additional guidance; GSGLA support staff will make the final decision on the resolution of the matter. The needs of all the girls affected by the situation should always be considered. As a Council, we make every effort to place and keep a girl in the troop she and her parent/guardian desires, however, it is not always possible to do. When the adults involved cannot reach a resolution or do not follow through with the agreed upon actions to resolve the issue, it may be necessary to find another solution; this may result in the removal of a volunteer, leader, parent or girl. Again, in all situations, the needs of the girls should come first. If, for any reason, a conflict or dispute arises between individuals and cannot be resolved through discussion with each other, the dispute resolution procedures outlined in the standards and procedures section of Volunteer Essentials will be followed until the conflict or dispute is resolved.

16A. Procedures - Description:

A grievance may arise when:

1. An individual believes that policies, standards or procedures related to her/his position in Girl Scouting are not being properly administered;
2. There is a disagreement of any kind between two or more volunteers, or between volunteers and parents, or between volunteers and staff, or volunteers and community members;
3. There is a dispute over the interpretation of one or more GSGLA procedures and standards. In order to present the best possible Girl Scout experience to all members, non-Girl Scout conflicts or issues should not be addressed, discussed or brought forth within a Girl Scout setting, to include meetings, events, trips, social media or electronic communication, etc.

GSGLA encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email, texting, instant messaging, social media or any other exchange that does not promote person-to-person resolution is not recommended by GSGLA. If, for any reason, a conflict or dispute arises between individuals and cannot be resolved through discussion with each other, the dispute resolution procedures outlined in the standards and procedures section of Volunteer Essentials will be followed until the conflict or dispute is resolved.

16B. Procedures – Steps for resolving the dispute:

1. The most effective way to resolve a dispute is by calm and open discussion between the persons involved. A problem solving tone should be adopted during these discussions.
2. If a solution is not resolved privately between the two parties involved, the next step is for one or both or all individuals to email the concern to: support@girlscoutsla.org. The correct protocol for seeking assistance with dispute management is in the following order:
 - a) Affected parties and the troop leader, if the troop leader is not a source of the conflict;
 - b) Service unit manager, if the service unit manager is not a source of the conflict;
 - c) Support specialist
 - d) Support manager
 - e) Director, membership retention and volunteer development
3. The email should include the results of the first attempt(s) at resolution, including dates, times, individuals involved, proposed resolution, and explanation why the proposed resolution did not/will not resolve the grievance.
4. If there is any reason why a volunteer cannot communicate her/his issue to the next immediate person in this chain of command, the person holding the next position in this hierarchy should be contacted.
 - a) Within two weeks after receiving the email, the appropriate support staff person will investigate the situation and may call a conference of the parties involved with the purpose of mediating and resolving the conflict or dispute.
 - b) A written summary of the meeting, , will be distributed to all parties involved..
 - c) As a Council, we make every effort to place and keep a girl in the troop she and her parent/guardian desires, however, it is not always possible to do. When the adults involved cannot reach a resolution or do not follow through with the agreed upon actions to resolve the issue, it may be necessary to find another solution; this may result in the removal of a volunteer, leader, parent or girl. **GSGLA support staff will make the final decision on the resolution of the matter.**
 - d) In some situations, it may be necessary to form an ad hoc group. **This is at the sole discretion of GSGLA.** If a solution is still not reached, an ad hoc group may be formed and may consist of operational volunteers and GSGLA staff, to reach a final decision.

17. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any GSGLA volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family, or any party, group or organization in which said volunteer is actively involved, may be seen as adverse to, or in competition with the interests or concerns of GSGLA. This standard and procedure is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

In conducting the affairs of GSGLA, a conflict of interest shall be defined as a volunteer, or a member of his/her family who could expect financial gain of \$150.00 or greater from a particular troop, service unit, or GSGLA decision or transaction. The purpose of the conflict of interest standard and procedure is to protect the GSGLA's constituents when volunteers are contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a volunteer or family member holding a leadership position over Girl Scout members or other volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from soliciting directly or indirectly any Girl Scout member or their families for any business relationship, charitable organization, or vendor relationship that may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

17A. Procedure - Overview:

A volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family shall not engage in conduct or activities which constitute a conflict of interest. The following transactions constitute examples of conflicts of interest prohibited by this standard and procedure:

1. Financial gain of \$150.00 or greater from a troop, service unit, or GSGLA decision or transaction;
2. Utilizing her/his position as a volunteer for personal, professional, political or monetary gain (acting individually on behalf of any group, organization, or business to which she/he has allegiance).
3. Using for personal advantage or for the advantage of any other person or organization the confidential information or material of GSGLA (such as rosters, mailing lists, donor lists, etc.)

17B. Procedure – Disclosure and subsequent steps:

Duty to Disclose: Volunteers shall disclose in writing a full description of any activity, interest or relationship that might create or appear to create a conflict of interest as soon as practicable, prior to the inception of the activity, interest, or relationship. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest where a volunteer, or family is expected to gain

financially the volunteer must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all facts to their service unit leadership and support managers to consider the proposed transaction or arrangement.

1. If the proposed transaction may cause a potential financial gain less than \$150.00 (aggregate throughout the membership year), the support manager will determine if a conflict of interest exists.
2. If the proposed transaction may cause a potential financial gain greater than \$150.00 (aggregate throughout the membership year), the service unit leadership should contact the support manager, who shall convene an ad-hoc committee for review in determining if a conflict of interest exists.

18. Uniforms

18A. Procedure – Girl uniform:

The official Girl Scout uniform for girls is a white shirt (either their own or the official Girl Scout polo shirt for their program level), their own khaki pants or skirt, and the official program level tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards. Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies may wear the khaki and white uniform, or choose to wear other official Girl Scout uniform components for their program level, such as the Daisy or Brownie beanie, and other official components offered. As a link with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from other WAGGGS member countries, all Girl Scouts have an official, neckerchief-style scarf to wear with their uniform, too.

Dress code for all Girl Scouts include the following:

- Girls should always wear shirts with sleeves that cover at least the top of the shoulder. This prevents sunburns and hides straps for older girls. The shirt should go below the waist so no midriff shows.
- Shorts should come to mid-thigh or at least be long enough to provide full bottom coverage.
- Socks should cover the ankles especially in outdoor settings.
- Closed toed shoes.

18B. Procedure – Adult uniform:

The recommended uniform for Girl Scout adults is their own navy business attire, worn with an official Girl Scout scarf for women or official Girl Scout tie for men, and the Girl Scout Membership Pin and World Trefoil Pin.

18C. Procedure – When to wear:

Girl Scout adults are encouraged to wear the official uniform at ceremonies and when they are representing the Girl Scout Movement (meeting with community leaders, for example). Having a uniform is not required for Girl Scout membership, but wearing the uniform may be required for participating in certain events for both adults and girls.

19. Contracts and Agreements

There is a wide variety of contracts and agreements associated with volunteer-led events and services. Each time a location reservation is made, a community space is requested for troop meetings, a sleepover, field trip, or camping excursion is planned, or a volunteer is obligating themselves and the council to the terms of the written document. Take care to read each contract carefully and understand what is being agreed upon. Does it say what you want? Are prices, dates and other details in line with your event and clearly defined? When planning your events, you are the first proofreader of any written agreement. Follow council guidelines to obtain approval for any GSGLA activity, offering only documents that you have thoroughly read and understand before signing. Send your request and questions to COI@girlscoutsla.org. Please allow a minimum of 10 business days for processing.

19A. Procedure - Signature:

Contracts or agreements for events or services obligating any GSGLA entity will be signed by the event organizer, and must represent rules, terms and conditions established by the council. They will be considered supported by the council only when entered into with vetted parties or approved vendors.

19B. Procedure - Requirements:

Contracts or agreements signed on behalf of GSGLA will uphold council values and be protective of the council, its resources, and its membership.

19C. Procedure - Request for GSGLA documents:

Requests for GSGLA documents should be in writing. Written requirements for council documents will be found in the event's contract or rules and regulations from the venue. If the only written version of the request of council documents is on the venue's website, please provide the link or print out of that specific webpage.

20. Troop Treasury

20A. Procedure - Source:

Troops should be self-supporting. Troop funds should not be money simply collected from parents.

20B. Procedure - Money earned and collected belongs to the troop:

Troop funds include dues and money earned by the girls to support their program plans; they may also include donations made to the troop. Troop funds do not belong to individual girls – they belong to the Girl Scout troop as a whole. Each Girl Scout's family should receive a written or electronic Troop Finance Report in the troop's June year-end reports.

20C. Procedure - Troop splits or disbands:

When a troop splits or disbands, the remaining troop funds will be distributed at the discretion of the support specialist. In most cases, if the troop splits, funds are divided equally between both troops. However, in no instance does the money become the property of an individual member. The final Troop Finance Report and disband notice must indicate how the funds were distributed. The signed report is turned into the service unit manager.

21. Private Inurement/Private Benefit

21A. Procedure - Description:

To ensure council compliance with IRS regulations and to protect GSGLA's 501(c)3 tax exempt status with the IRS, GSGLA does not allow troops or other Pathways to create reserve funds or earmark funds or financial disbursement for individual girls.

21B. Procedure – Gifts to an individual:

GSGLA does not accept tax deductible donations where the gift appears to be primarily for the benefit of a single individual.

21C. Procedure – Funds remain with the troop/group:

All benefits to girls from troop or other pathway accounts must support the Girl Scout Mission. Funds from troop or other pathway accounts remain with the group and do not follow girls when they leave the group.

22. Debt Collection

26A. Procedure - Description:

When an adult in any volunteer position with GSGLA has a personal outstanding debt to GSGLA, GSGLA has the right, at its discretion, to remove the volunteer from her or his position and not reinstate the volunteer. Misappropriation of funds could result in legal action.

23. Social Media

23A. Procedure – Troops/groups and service units:

Girl Scout troops/groups and service units may create a website or use social media to promote, or communicate with members regarding Girl Scout activities. When forming a troop/service unit Facebook, Twitter account, website, or other form of social media you must have a GSGLA volunteer/adult member as part of your group and the group must follow the Computer/Online Use: [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

23B. Procedure – Age of the girl:

Websites or online service directed to children under 13 that collects personal information from children must comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which indicates what a web operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent and what responsibilities an operator has to protect children's privacy and safety online. Visit <https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/complying-coppa-frequently-asked-questions> for more information.

Girl Scout troops/groups and service units using social media must meet the age requirement established by social media channels, and all minor Girl Scouts must have a photo release form on file at their troop and/or service unit. We also recommend all troops/service units obtain parental permission for girls to participate.

23C. Procedure – Staff interaction:

Notify your communications specialist at communications@girlscoutsla.org of this social media page with the location of the page and the GSGLA adult member associated with this page. If contacted by a member of the media through social media and asked to comment on a Girl Scout related issue please refer them to our council's director of marketing and communications at 626-677-2266.

23D. Procedure – Safety:

When representing Girl Scouts on social media channels make safety a priority. Make sure the privacy standards settings ensure the safety of girls.

23E. Procedure – Maintain Girl Scout positions and common sense:

Practice diligence to ensure that groups you are joining or linking to have standards consistent with Girl Scouts and make sure that the messages you post do not conflict with Girl Scouts positions; contact your support specialist or customer care at 213-213-0123 if you need clarity. Use good judgment and common sense- do not write or post anything that would embarrass or upset Girl Scout members and volunteers, or reflect badly on the organization.

23F. Procedure – Solicitation:

No solicitation of any sort, at any time, is to be permitted on social media.

23G. Procedure – Monitor posts:

Treat others as you want to be treated; do not use the internet to harass, attack, or abuse any individual, group, race, gender, religion, political group, etc. Profane language or derogatory remarks against any individual or group used in any of the context posted will not be tolerated and could result in automatic dismissal. Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouting. Remember that what you post online will be around for a long time, and realize that when you release something on-line, that it can be released for the world to see. Use discretion and think twice before you post something. Respect other's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when posting photos, comments, etc.

23H. Procedure – Graphic Guidelines / Social Media and Photography:

Registered troop leaders may use Girl Scout graphic images provided by GSGLA in the annual Volunteer Marketing Toolkit for production print materials. In the production of print or online materials, Girl Scout graphics must maintain their original design, may not be altered in any way (color, shape, etc.) and must be presented in adherence to usage guidelines provided. When appropriate, have a parent's or caregiver's written permission before using pictures of girls on any print or electronic materials—including social media. Do not tag or attach personal identifying information—girls' full names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, school locations, etc. Follow the guidelines for Computer/Online Use *Safety Activity Checkpoints*. Questions related to the Graphic Guidelines / Social Media and Photography standard and procedure should be addressed to the GSGLA Marketing Department at communications@girlscoutsla.org. GSGLA reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer from any volunteer position if she/he is found to be in clear violation of this standard and procedure.

24. Accident/Incident Management

Guidelines and procedures presented in all GSGLA documents, manuals, and trainings are designed to prevent or minimize any injury or damage to people and property. Accidents do happen, however, all accidents, incidents, mishaps, conflicts, and property damage require submission of an Accident/Incident form.

24A. Procedure – Accident/Incident Report:

The adult in charge of the activity where the accident/incident took place must complete and submit the fully completed Accident/Incident Report form within 72 hours. An Accident/Incident Report should be completed either via eform (<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/gsglaaccidentincidentreport/>) or paper form (http://www.girlscoutsla.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsla/documents/membership/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf) sent to RiskManagement@girlscoutsla.org

24B. Procedure – 24 Hour Emergency Hotline:

All accidents requiring treatment beyond basic first aid and any damage done to property requires submission of an Accident/Incident Report Form and must be reported to GSGLA's 24 Hour Emergency Line: (877) ICE GSLA (877-423-4752)

24C. Procedure – Report to Staff:

An administrative volunteer who is notified of an accident/incident should report it to her immediate staff contact person (e.g., Service unit manager notifies the support specialist, the training facilitator notifies the training staff). Serious Accidents and Major Emergencies: Emergency response or immediate action by authorities is required.

24D. Procedures – Handling the emergency/incident:

1. Give injured person(s) first aid and simultaneously have someone call a hospital, ambulance service or doctor. Call 911 if available; if not, call the police. If there has been an automobile accident, a death, or a suspected crime, call the police.
2. Contact the camp ranger if you are on camp property.
3. Put a responsible adult in charge of accounting for all individuals; organize a search for anyone who is missing.
4. See that a responsible adult remains with the injured person. Do not move the person unless her/his life is endangered by being left at the scene of the accident. If there has been a death, do not move the victim or change the surrounding area until the police have arrived.
5. After immediate emergency needs have been met, call GSGLA's 24 Hour Emergency Line: (877) ICE-GSLA (877-423-4752). Your call will be returned by a GSGLA official as soon as possible. Please keep a phone line open or have the ability to accept a message at the number you left with the ICE operator.
6. After giving the injured person(s) first aid, call the family and report the nature of the emergency and the person's condition. Give only the facts; do not blame anyone. Ask their wishes concerning medical treatment and hospitalization.
7. For your protection, do NOT discuss the incident or give out information to anyone except the police or a known and recognized GSGLA staff member in a leadership position. If the media contacts you, know you are NOT authorized to make a statement. Immediately direct them to GSGLA's 24 Hour Emergency Line: (877) ICE-GSLA (877-423-4752) and state it is a media issue.
8. Make a record of the following, indicating the time and what procedures were followed:
 - a) How the accident or emergency happened
 - b) First aid administered and by whom
 - c) Statements made to ambulance attendants, doctors, police, etc.
 - d) Telephone calls (who made them, who they called, what they said)
 - e) Names and addresses of all witnesses
 - f) Take photos of any property damage
9. Within 72 hours, an Accident/Incident Report should be completed either via eform (<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/gsglaaccidentincidentreport/>) or paper form (http://www.girlscoutsla.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsla/documents/membership/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf) sent to RiskManagement@girlscoutsla.org.

25. Troop Transfers

Troops are assigned to a geographical area called a service unit, based on a member's zip code. A troop may request a transfer to a new service unit, if the troop moves into another service unit's geographical area based on zip code. Troops that are having personal issues with their service unit must follow the Dispute Resolution protocol. Transferring to another service unit due to personal issues would be approved in extremely rare cases and must align with the troops meeting location zip code as it relates to service unit zip code boundaries.

26. Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Environment

Research has shown the harmful effects of cigarette smoke to non-smokers, especially children. Cigarettes have been known to cause fires. Smoking and the use of other tobacco products or the use of eCigarettes is prohibited at all GSGLA facilities and properties.

26A. Procedure - Smoking:

As role models to Girl Scouts, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from smoking at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e. troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, GSGLA programs, etc. Volunteers working directly with girls will not smoke in front of the girls at any time or in any location where girls may be exposed to second-hand smoke. There will be no smoking in GSGLA-owned or operated buildings and facilities, or near the entry/exit doorways. Volunteers responsible for girls must ensure other adults present (e.g. parent helpers) follow the no-smoking rule.

26B. Procedure – Tobacco use:

Smoking and the use of other tobacco products is not allowed in the presence of girls when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity.

27. Alcohol and Substance Abuse

27A. Procedure - Requirements:

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not possess, sell, or use illegal drugs. The use, distribution, or possession of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages is not permitted at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e. troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, GSGLA programs, etc.

According to US Department of Health & Human Services (Office of Adolescent Health) www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/adolescent-health-topics/substance-abuse/home.html “alcohol is the most abused drug among youth in the United States, followed by tobacco.”

27B. Procedure – Legal drugs:

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not misuse prescribed or over-the-counter drugs at any Girl Scout activity. While volunteering, including transporting girls, it is not permitted to be under the influence of any substance, including marijuana, which may impair physical and/or mental skills.

27C. Procedure – Alcohol at adult events:

Girl Scout volunteers shall not drink or be under the influence of alcohol during Girl Scout activities when girls are present. An exception to this standard and procedure includes a limited number of GSGLA sponsored or approved (with prior written consent) events for adults where girls may be participating as speakers, greeters, flag ceremony color guard, etc. and whose parents will be notified that alcohol is being served to adults.

27D. Procedure - Dismissal:

Violations of these procedures and standards regarding alcohol and substance abuse will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

28. Harassment

28A. Procedure - Requirements:

GSGLA is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and conduct that is in alignment with the principals of the Girl Scout Law. It is the standard and procedure of GSGLA to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of harassment. Any act of harassment by any volunteer, male or female, against another volunteer, girl member, or GSGLA employee, shall not be tolerated.

28B. Procedure – Reporting harassment:

Any volunteer who feels that she has been subjected to harassment of any type should follow the dispute resolution standards and procedures as outlined in Volunteer Essentials. The appropriate employed staff member will follow the escalation guidelines to investigate and resolve the situation in an expeditious manner.

29. Child Abuse

Leaders or volunteers who suspect that a child is being abused (physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect) should consult with their respective support specialist. California Law stipulates that “...volunteers of public or private organizations whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children are encouraged to obtain training in the identification and reporting of child abuse...”

([Penal code 11165.7](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=11165.7.&lawCode=PEN) -http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=11165.7.&lawCode=PEN).

Volunteers, are **NOT** mandated reporters.” In situations where a volunteer believes that a child is in imminent danger as a result of child abuse, they are encouraged to report the suspected abuse directly.

Los Angeles County Report Line	800-540-4000
Kern County Report Line	661-631-6011
San Bernardino County Report Line	909-384-9233
Ventura County Report Line	805-654-3200

What is Child Abuse?

Although there are many formal and acceptable definitions of child abuse, the following is offered as a guide on child abuse and neglect:

1. Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child’s physical or emotional health and development.
2. Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature.

Forms of Child Abuse:

1. **Physical abuse**
Any non-accidental injury to a child. This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping, and paddling.
2. **Sexual abuse**
Any sexual act between an adult and child. This includes fondling, penetration, intercourse, exploitation, pornography, exhibitionism, child prostitution, group sex, oral sex, or forced observation of sexual acts.
3. **Neglect**
Failure to provide for a child’s physical needs. This includes lack of supervision, inappropriate housing or shelter, inadequate provision of food and water, inappropriate clothing for season or weather, abandonment, denial of medical care and inadequate hygiene.
4. **Emotional abuse**
Any attitude or behavior which interferes with a child’s mental health or social development. This includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, negative comparisons to others, and telling them they are “bad, no good, worthless or a mistake.”

What If I’m Not Sure?

When a child reports what could be child abuse or when a situation exists where the child may be subjected to abuse, negligence, or other harm, volunteers must contact a GSGLA staff member.

29A. Procedure – When to report:

Any act of child abuse or neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse or neglect by any volunteer, male or female, against any girl member, shall not be tolerated. Girl Scout volunteers are also responsible for protecting the well-being of girl members by reporting any witnessed or suspected abuse or neglect.

29B. Procedure – Reporting instructions:

When a Girl Scout volunteer suspects that a child may be a victim of child abuse or receives information that a child is or may be a victim of abuse, they should contact their regional council representative. Additionally, an Accident/Incident Report should be completed either via eform (<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/gsglaaccidentincidentreport/>) or paper form:

(http://www.girlscoutsla.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsla/documents/membership/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf) sent to RiskManagement@girlscoutsla.org

29C. Procedure - Immediate danger:

Volunteers are not mandated reporters, but if a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police. Keep the child in your care until appropriate assistance arrives.

When a Girl Scout volunteer observes physical injuries of a suspicious nature, receives a report or accusation of sexual abuse, learns that a child is fearful of returning home, and/or has been abandoned by the parents or caregivers, the

volunteer must call GSGLA immediately on GSGLA's 24 Hour Emergency Line: (877) ICE-GSLA (877-423-4752). Within 72 hours of the calling the emergency line, an accident/Incident Report should be completed either via eform (<https://www.gsglavolunteerapps.org/gsglaaccidentincidentreport/>) or paper form (http://www.girlscoutsla.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscoutsla/documents/membership/Accident_and_Incident_Report_Form.pdf) sent to RiskManagement@girlscoutsla.org. This information is considered confidential. Therefore, after it is reported to law enforcement and the appropriate person at GSGLA, it should be discussed on a need to know basis only, to protect the privacy of the child.

29D. Procedure – Abuse or bullying at a meeting or activity:

Volunteers are expected to establish a no-tolerance procedure for abuse or bullying at troop meetings, events, or any Girl Scout activity. In instances where one child abuses another, the parents or caregivers of each child should be notified immediately. The child responsible for the abuse will be removed from the program or environment in which she is participating. In such situations, the parent or caregiver of the abused child can determine whether to submit a report to local authorities about the behavior of the other child or take other appropriate action.

29E. Procedure – Child abuse charge or conviction:

GSGLA will release a volunteer who has been convicted of or pleads guilty or no contest to a charge of child abuse or neglect when GSGLA is aware of such conviction or charges. GSGLA may release a volunteer who has been charged with child abuse or neglect pending resolution of the charge. It is within the discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or will be allowed to continue. If and when such charges are cleared, a volunteer may be considered for reinstatement, at the discretion of GSGLA.

30. Sex Offenders

A registered sex offender may not serve as a troop leader, co-leader, troop helper, chaperone, or in any other troop volunteer position. A registered sex offender may not participate in any way, either in troop activities of any kind or in GSGLA activities where girl members may be present. Troop meetings and activities may not be held or conducted at any residence where a member of the household is a registered sex offender. Having a registered sex offender living in the home disqualifies all adult members of that household from becoming a GSGLA volunteer.

30A. Procedure – Reporting volunteers or family/household members:

Troop leaders, other troop volunteers, and parents or caregivers of girl members are required to immediately notify GSGLA if they learn or become aware that any troop leader or other troop volunteer, or troop family member is a registered sex offender, has pending charges, has pled guilty or no contest, or has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication, regarding sexual offenses. In addition, troop leaders or other troop volunteers, and parents or caregivers of girl members, are required to immediately notify GSGLA if he or she is, or has an immediate family or household member who has pending charges, pled guilty or no contest, or who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication regarding sexual offenses.

30B. Procedure – Notification of parents:

When GSGLA, in its discretion, determines that it is reasonably necessary to safeguard girl members, GSGLA may notify the parents or caregivers of all girl members of a troop regarding: (a) the status of a troop leader or volunteer or family member as a registered sex offender; (b) the requirements of this standard and procedure; and (c) the steps taken by GSGLA to comply (for instance, the dismissal of, or written notice as described above to, the registered sex offender.) For instance, if a family member of a registered sex offender withdraws his or her girl member from the troop, or if a troop leader or other troop volunteer has been dismissed, GSGLA may determine it is not necessary to give notice to the parents or caregivers of the other girl members of his or her status as a registered sex offender. This standard and procedure addresses registered sex offender only. It is not intended to and does not limit GSGLA's right to dismiss troop leaders, volunteers, or girl members or to deny the applications of potential troop leaders, volunteers or girl members, for other reasons than those addressed in this registered sex offender standard and procedure.

GSGLA does not appoint any volunteer who is a registered sex offender nor has a registered sex offender in their household.

31. Weapons and Fireworks

31A. Procedure – Firearms and weapons:

GSGLA strictly prohibits staff, volunteers, or girls from possessing any form of weapons, handgun, firearm, prohibited weapon, or explosives restricted or allowed by local, state, or federal law at any time while engaging in Girl Scout activities, programs, or while on any Girl Scout properties. Exempted from this are specific instances approved in writing by a GSGLA executive, or Law Enforcement Personnel when acting in a professional capacity. Volunteers and girls may use pocketknives, kitchen knives, hatchets, and other such equipment only under strict supervision and only after proper instruction.

The possession of unauthorized weapons or firearms at any Girl Scout event on GSGLA property will be grounds for dismissal. A pocketknife is acceptable when used for training or as a camping tool.

31B. Procedure – Law enforcement:

Exceptions to the standard and procedure include law enforcement officers, security guards, or other persons who have been given (prior) written consent by GSGLA to carry a weapon on the property. GSGLA reserves the right to conduct searches on its property or authorize searches by law enforcement on its property.

31C. Procedure – Weapons in the home or vehicle:

All persons who normally maintain weapons in their home or their vehicle will secure or remove them before girls enter the premises. This includes troops who meet in a home where weapons are present.

31D. Procedure – Fireworks:

GSGLA strictly prohibits the possession, use, or sale of fireworks at Girl Scout events or on GSGLA-owned properties. Fire-powered projectiles or rockets may be approved for an organized program or activity conducted with a council approved instructor or agency.

32. Legal Action against or by GSGLA

32A. Procedure - Description:

When an adult has brought legal action against GSGLA or has caused GSGLA to initiate legal action, GSGLA has the right, at its discretion, to decline to appoint that person to a volunteer position within GSGLA or to remove that volunteer from his or her position if currently in place. Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims or magistrate court.

