



girl scouts
of northern indiana
michiana



GSNI-M Volunteer, Financial, and Group Policies and Procedures

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Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana

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GIRL SCOUT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Why do Policies and Procedures exist?

To protect the girls and assure legal protection for the Movement.

How are they established, and where to find them?

They are found in this document, *Volunteer Essentials*, and *Safety-Activity Checkpoints*. Many policies and procedures have been set by the National Board of the Girl Scouts of the USA. Every Girl Scout in the country must follow them.

Local policies are set by the board and management of the Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana and they supplement national policies and procedures.

Board of Directors statement

For the volunteers of Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana, the Council Board of Directors adopted on October 4, 2008, these policies and standards.

These policies supersede all previous policies from the four aligning councils.

- All policies are ongoing and subject to review and revision by the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.
- This document contains policies, procedures, and standards related to volunteers.
- Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana reserves the right to refuse reappointment or to dismiss (or to exclude affiliation with GSNI-M) any volunteer who refuses to conduct herself/himself in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement or who violates any policies of either Girl Scouts of the USA or Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.

Volunteer Philosophy

All volunteers are expected to support and promote the Promise, the Law, the ideals and principles of Girl Scouting, and the policies and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.

We maintain that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the voluntary leadership of its adult members who strive to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. It is through voluntary leadership that the Movement serves girls. To ensure the satisfaction of volunteers and to utilize the skills and talents of volunteers effectively, it is essential that the following policies be established and maintained for all volunteers.

Volunteers are defined as any person who willingly gives one's service without concern for monetary compensation; therefore volunteers are not considered employees.

No policy or provision in this resource is intended to create an employment relationship.

All volunteers are expected to maintain high standards of productivity, cooperation, attendance, efficiency and economy in their volunteer work for the council.

GSNI-M and Sensitive Issues

As volunteers for GSNI-M, we are sometimes asked about GSUSA and GSNI-M’s stance on issues that may be sensitive to our members and their families. In general, our position is that decisions about sensitive issues should be handled by the girl and her family, in the context of their spiritual beliefs.

As a Council chartered by GSUSA, GSNI-M supports GSUSA’s positions on these issues. GSUSA positions are summarized in the booklet “What We Stand For” (2001). Specific, situational statements are also published by GSUSA when appropriate. If you have any questions about the appropriate way to handle a sensitive issue with a girl member or parent, please seek advice from GSNI-M.

Girl Scout Inclusiveness Statement

Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization and accepts all girls who identify culturally as females, as well as adults, who are willing to live by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

The volunteers, girls, and families in GSNI-M come from different socioeconomic and religious backgrounds and have a variety of needs. Some may have physical, mental, or behavioral special conditions. Some may identify in the LGBTQ+ community. Parents or volunteers may share information with you about their daughter or themselves to help you better understand and work with them. Please remember to keep such information confidential, unless the parent or volunteer specifically states that it is fine to share it.

Thank you for supporting GSNI-M’s endeavor to welcome all girls, volunteers, and families into Girl Scouting.

Abbreviations in this document

Girl Scouts of the USA – GSUSA

Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana – GSNI-M

Volunteer Policies – VP

Financial Policies – FP Group Policies – GP

Chief Executive Officer – CEO

Definitions

Group- girls are participating in Girl Scout programming in any way.

Service Unit- a small geographic portion of the council (formerly known as Community)

VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

VP1: Affirmative Action for Volunteers

Policy GSNI-M follows the direction and guidance of GSUSA on the subjects of affirmative action and non-discrimination, as indicated in the Blue Book of Basic Documents.

Procedure “There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups.” – Blue Book of Documents 2021, p. 21.

To ensure that the membership of GSNI-M are reflective of the diversity of the population groups within its jurisdiction, GSNI-M is committed to affirmative action in the following:

- the recruitment, selection, placement, development, and recognition of volunteers
- the extension of Girl Scouting to girls and adults in all communities within our jurisdiction

GSNI-M shall place special emphasis on securing representation of persons from under-represented minority groups throughout the entire organization, both at the volunteer and staff levels.

VP 2: Membership Registration

Policy Membership registration with the Girl Scouts of the United States of America is a requirement of all girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement.

The Girl Scout membership year is October 1 through September 30.

Procedure **All** girls and adults must be registered before they can participate in Girl Scout activities as Girl Scouts.

This includes adult volunteers that are:

- handling money
- driving girls to/on Girl Scout outings
- actively participating at Girl Scout meetings or activities

Accident insurance protection is provided for every **registered** girl and adult member while engaged in Girl Scout activities. The cost of insurance is covered by membership dues paid to the Girl Scouts of the USA. The Basic Accident Insurance is secondary medical coverage to the families' primary medical insurance carrier.

Lifetime membership is available in Girl Scouting for members 18 years of age and older. Reduced lifetime membership fees are offered to young Alumnae under the age of 30 and to anyone who has served as a volunteer for a period of 10 or more years.

VP 3: Recruitment

Policy The recruitment process consists of a number of methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions.

Procedure Written position descriptions that define specific responsibilities and clarify expectations may be used in the search. Prospective volunteers may be provided with position descriptions for each position for which they are being considered, or that matches their interests.

VP 4: Selection

Policy Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position (experience, knowledge, skills), council need, ability and willingness to attend training, ability to work as a team member with other Girl Scout adults, criminal background check outcomes, expressed commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law and willingness to become a registered member of GSUSA.

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender identity and gender expression, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law.

Volunteers for certain positions will receive some type of interview before selection.

Procedure Since protecting the girls served by Girl Scouting is of the utmost importance to all; it is essential that the council takes steps to assure the integrity of its adult volunteers.

Each volunteer will be required to undergo a criminal background check before selection.

Volunteers may receive an interview before selection and/or be requested to provide character references (dependent on position).

All documentation will be kept in a secure location at the Leadership and Learning Center with access limited to authorized staff only.

VP 5: Criminal Background Checks

Policy Criminal background checks will be conducted for all new volunteers without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, height, weight, marital or familial status, disability, service in the uniformed services, or any other characteristic protected by law. The council may request a criminal background check on any volunteer already appointed at any time during their appointment.

Procedure Any background check will be conducted in accordance with the Federal Fair Credit Laws. The Federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. Each prospective volunteer will give written permission to conduct a criminal background check or will authorize via the online background check portal.

Successful background checks will be valid for three years from the date the check is completed.

If the prospective volunteer is unable to complete the online background check authorization via the secure portal, he/she will complete the paper ***Criminal Background Check Authorization Form***, place it into an envelope and seal it. The prospective volunteer should mail the form directly to the Fort Wayne service center.

If, while an active volunteer with GSNI-M, a volunteer is arrested and/or convicted of a crime (including any criminal driving infractions such as a single DUI), she/he must notify GSNI-M staff immediately. This includes all such convictions or violations whether or not they occurred while on Girl Scout business.

VP 6: Grounds for Disqualification

Policy If the council learns (via criminal background check or otherwise) that a volunteer has been convicted of one of the following crimes the following guidelines will apply. At all times it is at the council's discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other information.

Procedure ***Grounds for Disqualification:***

- any felony offense, regardless of type
- crimes against a child
- crimes involving the use of weapons
- crimes involving violence
- crimes involving arson
- crimes involving public indecency
- crimes classified as Hate Crimes
- residing on the same premises as a Registered Sex Offender*
- misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance within the last five years

- other misdemeanors as the council may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, or traffic violations

*Registered Sex Offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scout programs.

Limitations on Handling Money:

For misdemeanor crimes involving theft, fraud, forgery, or dishonesty of any kind, the applicant may be accepted as a volunteer but will be restricted from the management of Girl Scout money.

Unresolved Situations:

If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or if there is a pending charge with no disposition, the application cannot be approved until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the criminal background check has been updated.

Other Circumstances and General Principles:

For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, the council shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. The council may request an interview or character references.

If the council wishes to take adverse action (non-appointment or appointment with restrictions) based on the results of the criminal background check, the applicant will receive written notification, giving them the opportunity to dispute the results of the background check in case there are errors. If the applicant does not contest the results of the background check, or the dispute is unsuccessful, the council will move forward with the adverse action and send another written notification to the applicant.

If the applicant does not deny the results of the background check but wishes to appeal the council's decision, they may do so *in writing* to GSNI-M. They must include in their written appeal three character references. The council will review their appeal and make a binding decision.

VP 7: Placement

Policy

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions, and they may request reassignment.

Procedure

Adults who are selected for volunteer positions will be placed, on the basis that they qualify for the following:

- willingness to become a member
- ability to perform the volunteer position
- willingness to participate in learning opportunities

VP 8: Appointment

Policy Every volunteer must agree to abide by the policies, procedures, and principles of GSUSA and GSNI-M.

Procedure Upon successful completion of the application process, the prospective volunteer, will be notified of their appointment status.

At the time of the appointment, the volunteer will receive information for their orientation.

VP 9: Learning Opportunities

Policy All volunteers will receive basic training for their position and may also be required to complete additional learning opportunities that are designated as mandatory for the position within a specified time frame. Learning opportunities will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his work.

Procedure Opportunities will be provided for volunteers to participate in online learning, learning events, and workshops to enhance their performance in their position and to allow further skill development. These are found on gsLearn, GSUSA's online learning platform.

Other Learning Opportunities:

Other essential learning opportunities may be available for other positions or functions such as camping, first aid, and product program. Essential learning will be outlined in the position description.

Learning opportunities will be offered in a variety of ways at a variety of locations.

Beyond essential learning, workshops and other learning opportunities are available on many levels and are designed to meet the ongoing needs of volunteers as they develop and grow in their position.

Some specialized activities [GP8] require certified instructors to be present (e.g., small-craft safety, archery, etc.). GSNI-M does not accept certifications obtained through online-only courses. Blended learning courses that include an in-person skills assessment are appropriate.

VP 10: Supervision and Performance Appraisal

Policy Each volunteer in a leadership role will be assigned a supervisor that will be a staff member. This supervisor will support and mentor the volunteer during their term.

A review or evaluation may be requested at any time by a volunteer or her/his supervisor. The volunteer's immediate supervisor may choose to review the volunteer's performance in a written and/or personal interview.

An unsatisfactory performance review may result in a probationary period to give the volunteer time to address her/his performance deficiencies, or it may result in release.

Procedure The staff member responsible for supervision and reappointment of the volunteer will maintain a supervisory relationship with the volunteer including regular contact primarily during the first year of appointment to remain proactive in resolving concerns, issues, and providing a mentoring relationship. Moving forward, staff will maintain periodic contact, as needed. However all volunteers, regardless of tenure, should reach out to staff for help when they have questions, concerns, or issues.

At least one month prior to the end of the volunteer's appointment year, the person in charge of supervision of the volunteer's responsibilities may meet with the volunteer and conduct an annual performance appraisal. The performance appraisal should include both a review of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The performance appraisal session should also be utilized as an opportunity to ascertain the mutual interest of the council and volunteer in the volunteer's continued service in her or his position.

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

Written documentation of the appraisal conversation will be securely retained by the council with access limited to authorized staff only.

VP 11: Reappointment

Policy Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to the council and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers, and employed staff.

In some cases, volunteers may not be reappointed to their position. Non-reappointment to the current position does not mean the volunteer is released from all current positions. A non-reappointment could result in the appointment to a new or different position.

Procedure Limits on the number of years a person can be reappointed to a position, when applicable, will be indicated in the position description.

A volunteer may request reassignment to another position at any time.

In the case of a non-reappointment after an unsatisfactory annual performance appraisal, the volunteer will receive a letter confirming their non-reappointment to their position. Reason for this non-reappointment should include a summary or explanation for non-reappointment.

Volunteers who are not reappointed or disagree with their reassignment may submit a letter to GSNI-M requesting a resolution to the process.

VP 12: Recognition

Policy Volunteers serve in Girl Scouting because they believe in the goals of the Movement. Volunteers can receive satisfaction from giving service to others and can achieve personal growth and development. Expressions of appreciation will be given at many levels. The council's formal recognition system is only one way to recognize volunteers and will be consistent with the GSUSA adult recognition system.

Procedure Recognition is the responsibility of all teams, both volunteer and staff. Recognition can be done informally, on the spot, and in a variety of ways.

Formal recognition of volunteers through the National and GSNI-M Recognition Awards can be shown through the nomination of any volunteer for an appreciation for her/his service. Any volunteer, girl member, and/or her family members may nominate a volunteer for formal recognition. Additional information and applications for these awards may be found on the Awards & Recognitions page of the GSNI-M website. Volunteers who are awarded recognitions are honored at an annual adult recognition event.

VP 13: Release

Policy Situations may arise in which the council may initiate a release of a volunteer from a position prior to the end of the term of appointment. Any action to release a volunteer will receive careful and detailed consideration and follow the procedure below.

The council may release an individual because of, but not limited to:

- restructuring of positions or elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves
- the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position
- conduct not consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement
- misappropriation of funds or debt incurred to the council, service area, or group
- the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies
- failure to support the council's policies, activities and/or goals

Release from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA.

Procedure The following procedures will be followed if it has been determined that volunteer must be released.

Step 1:

Facts and results will be shared with the CEO (or their designee) and appropriate staff support to determine if a release is needed.

Step 2:

A plan for notifying the individual is established. A council representative may be designated to contact the volunteer. If a discussion is arranged, it is desirable to have one other responsible person present during the discussion to help avoid the possibility of misunderstanding or misquoting. The council representative will indicate in writing the outcome of the meeting and of the further action, if any, which will be taken.

Step 3:

Volunteer will be notified of their release by letter or through a face to face meeting. In the case of a meeting, the individual will be given the opportunity to resign or withdraw voluntarily, and with dignity, by submitting in writing their resignation. Unless otherwise indicated, the discussion should be followed with a written summary, one copy of which goes to the individual and one copy of which retained with the volunteer's records. If the individual does not choose to voluntarily withdraw, a letter of dismissal or release will be presented/forwarded and a copy will be placed into the volunteer's file.

Release from a council position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA.

All termination proceedings are issues that shall remain strictly confidential. A current record of released volunteers will be kept in a confidential location with limited access for reference during selection and appointment of volunteers.

VP 14: Resignation

Policy At any time, a volunteer may choose to resign or initiate change of positions. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. All resignations must be made in written notification to the supervisor.

Resignation from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA.

Procedure GSNI-M will acknowledge any resignation submitted by email or return letter. At that time, they can request any additional paperwork or supplies that are required from the volunteer.

The *notice of resignation* will be placed with the volunteer's file.

VP 15: Conflict of Interest

Policy

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

Volunteer members or any member of their family, acting individually, or on behalf of any group, organization or business to which they have allegiance or obligation cannot utilize their position at GSNI-M for personal, professional, political, or monetary gain.

Volunteers cannot use for personal advantage or for the advantage of any private business or other organization confidential information or material acquired in the discharge of their duties (such as rosters, mailing lists, telephone directories, and the like).

Neither volunteers nor any member of their family may accept any gift, entertainment, services, loans, or promises of future benefits from any person who personally or whose employer might benefit or appear to benefit because of the operational volunteer's connection to GSNI-M.

Board members may not serve simultaneously in policy-making (governance) and operational (service delivery) volunteer positions. Board members must resign from all operational positions while serving as a member or officer of the council's Board of Directors.

Procedure

Great care should be taken to protect Girl Scout proprietary information. As a volunteer, you may have access to materials such as member rosters, mailing lists, branded program materials, etc.

Examples of inappropriate actions include but are not limited to:

- Taking contact information from a member roster and sending emails/communications to sell from a third party, or providing roster information to a third party.
- Sharing Girl Scout program materials (PDFs from the Volunteer Toolkit, Journey guides, etc.) for use by other organizations unless approved by the council.
- Forwarding confidential internal communications to a third party.

Everyone in Girl Scouts has a role in protecting the Girl Scout name, trademarks, designs, artwork, photography, trade dress (uniforms, badges), slogans, and other intellectual property and brand elements. Careful presentation of our products and our messages safeguards and strengthens the overall brand and legal protections.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including the release of the volunteer position.

VP 16: Role Models

Policy Girls are the only reason for Girl Scouts. The female role model is essential to fulfilling the purpose of Girl Scouting. Interaction with women in leadership positions is of particular importance in developing the self-image of young girls.

GSUSA and GSNI-M require that men serving in group leadership roles do so in conjunction with women. Therefore, it is required that at least one member of the team is an adult female, not related to the male leader and that a female adult unrelated to the male leader be present at all group gatherings/events for the entire time the group is together at that gathering/event.

Procedure Group leadership teams shall be made up of at least two non-related adult volunteers, one of which must be an adult female. (This includes but is not limited to father, mother, child, brother, sister, wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, or any individual who makes her/his home with a volunteer)

VP 17: Adult Uniforms

Policy The Girl Scout organization is a uniformed one in which the uniform is a symbol and mark of distinction. A uniform may be required for some official functions (i.e., National Convention, flag ceremonies, community events, etc). Purchase of a uniform and/or components is at the volunteer's expense and is encouraged. Wearing the Girl Scout uniform is suitable for almost all Girl Scout functions. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when they are not in uniform.

Procedure Official Girl Scout uniforms are appropriate in most Girl Scout activities and functions. Volunteers are encouraged to wear items associated with Girl Scouting such as a Girl Scout shirt to group meetings, council events and more.

Our individual and collective appearance directly reflects on the image of our organization and our professional image. Volunteers should take care in what they wear, considering if the attire is appropriate to the function. GSNI-M reserves the right to discuss inappropriate attire choices with individuals when they arise.

The official Girl Scout Adult uniform consists of a scarf worn with membership pins for women, and a tie for men. The scarf/tie and membership pins worn with navy blue business attire are considered the dress/business uniform. Other casual pieces are available from the council stores.

VP 18 A: Grievance

Policy The grievance policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. All members may use the grievance procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status.

Grievances are complaints based on a procedure or policy related to a volunteer's position. A grievance is not a personal difference of opinion or personality conflict. These situations should be handled by working directly with the person(s) involved or through the volunteer's immediate supervisor.

Procedure *Step 1:*

Submit the grievance in writing and forward it to any Service Center.

Step 2:

The person submitting the grievance will receive an initial follow up confirming the feedback has been received within one week of submission.

VP 18 B: Conflict Resolution

Policy The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. All members of the organization may use the conflict resolution process. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. Informal counseling by volunteer and staff personnel is the first step in resolving a situation involving a conflict or dispute. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking immediate and appropriate action with respect to the volunteer.

The conflict resolution process will only be used in these situations when a resolution cannot be resolved through informal efforts.

Conflict resolution procedures apply only to persons still actively involved in Girl Scout program or their volunteer positions. These procedures do not apply to any persons who were volunteers but have resigned or who were released from their volunteer positions.

Procedure *Step 1:*

If an informal resolution is not possible and a further hearing is desired, the person filing the complaint must do so in writing, citing the issue. The signed and dated document must be specifically titled "Conflict Resolution Request," identify the person with whom the conflict or grievance is with, and cite the policy, procedure or situation that has allegedly been misapplied. A copy should be sent to the identified

person's supervisor. Within ten working days, the supervisor will call a conference of all parties involved in the dispute and attempt to resolve the conflict. A written summary of the conference will be distributed to all parties.

Step 2:

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the disposition of the conflict resolution, the council staff member or the council staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within ten working days following her or his initial conference.

Step 3:

If the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations, and sends a copy to the CEO.

Step 4:

The CEO will appoint a dispute/complaint resolution appraisal team. (The appraisal team may be comprised of a management representative, an employee not involved in the conflict resolution process, and a council volunteer selected by the complainant.) The dispute review team will review the documentation on file and meet with the individuals involved. The appraisal team may seek additional information, if necessary, to aid it in making a final decision. The team will provide the CEO with a written report of its findings and recommendations within ten working days of the review hearing. Copies will also be issued to the volunteer and immediate supervisor.

If the recommended resolution is not acceptable to the volunteer or any of the supervisors involved, a request to submit the recommended resolution to the CEO for a final and binding decision will be made. The CEO may exercise the following:

1. Accept the Dispute Resolution Team's recommended solution.
2. Provide an alternative final and binding decision.

This is the council's final decision. It is the responsibility of the CEO to implement the decision.

VP 19: Information Technology and Individual Privacy

Policy

The definition of an electronic communication is any communication that is broadcast, created, sent, forwarded, replied to, transmitted, stored, held, copied, downloaded, displayed, viewed, read, or printed by one or several electronic communications services, including, e.g., e-mail, telephone, , online meetings, and social media.

GSNI-M encourages the use of electronic communications resources for legitimate and authorized Girl Scout program purposes. To ensure the reliable operation of these resources, their use is subject to the following:

- Contents of all electronic communications shall conform to laws and GSNI-M policies regarding protection of intellectual property, copyright, patents, and trademarks.
- Use of electronic communications resources for any purpose restricted or prohibited by laws, regulations or GSNI-M policies is prohibited.
- Access and display of any type of sexually explicit images or documents are prohibited.
- Use of electronic communication resources for personal purposes, including monetary gain, or for commercial purposes that are not directly related to GSNI-M business or otherwise authorized by appropriate GSNI-M authority is prohibited.
- Usage that directly or indirectly causes strain on the electronic communications resources is prohibited.
- Capturing, opening, intercepting or obtaining access to electronic communications, except as otherwise permitted by the appropriate GSNI-M authority, is prohibited.
- Use of electronic communications to harass or intimidate others or to interfere with the ability of others to conduct GSNI-M business is prohibited.
- Users of electronic communications resources shall not give the impression that they are representing, giving opinions or otherwise making statements on behalf of GSNI-M unless authorized to do so.
- Directly or by implication, employing a false identity (the name or electronic identification of another) is prohibited.
- Forging e-mail headers or content (i.e., constructing an e-mail so it appears to be from someone else) is prohibited.
- Unauthorized access to electronic communications or breach of any security measure is prohibited.
- Interfering with the availability of electronic communications resources is prohibited, including but not limited to the following:
 - (i) sending or forwarding e-mail chain letters or their equivalents in other electronic communications services;
 - (ii) "spamming," i.e., sending electronic junk mail or junk newsgroup postings;
 - (iii) "letter-bombing," i.e., sending an extremely large message or sending multiple messages to one or more recipients to interfere with the recipient's use of electronic communications resources;
 - (iv) intentionally engaging in other practices such as "denial of service attacks," i.e., flooding the network with traffic.

GSNI-M strives to maintain an environment that is free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its membership. Therefore, GSNI-M prohibits the use of computers and e-mail systems in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others or harmful to morale.

No volunteer of GSNI-M should expect any privacy in the sending or the receipt of electronic mail (E-mail) communications on council computers. Any information entered into council-owned equipment will belong to Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.

Procedure GSNI-M will enforce disciplinary action up to and including possible release for violation of “Information Technology and Individual Privacy” policies. Any illegal activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities. If an inappropriate usage is detected, the volunteer’s immediate supervisor will contact the volunteer to ensure that the volunteer understands the situation and will enforce disciplinary action if necessary.

Troops holding virtual meetings and experiences should review and follow GSUSA Safety-Activity Checkpoints for all activities planned.

VP 20: Harassment/Bullying

Policy GSNI-M is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, gossiping, and implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

The council expressly prohibits any form of harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender expression, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, veteran’s status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.

Procedure Any volunteer who feels that they have been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a supervisor or the CEO. The supervisor, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the CEO, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions.

GSNI-M will not tolerate, permit, or condone any form of physical discipline or verbal abuse, such as name calling towards girls or adults at any time. Assistance with motivation and coaching techniques is available from GSNI-M.

VP 21: Sexual Harassment

Policy It is against GSNI-M’s policies for any individual, regardless of sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any

volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, sexually harasses another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member regardless of sex, gender identity, and/or gender expression.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual acts or favors, abusing the dignity of another through insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct and threats or suggestions that a volunteer's status is conditioned upon toleration of or acquiescence to sexual advances. Some examples of sexual harassment that could create a hostile work environment include telling of sexual jokes or stories; the presence of sexually explicit photographs or other materials; touching of another person's clothing, hair or body; making sexual comments about another person's body; making sexual comments or innuendoes; asking personal questions about another person's social or sexual life; staring; leering; and making sexual gestures.

Procedure Any volunteer who feels that they have been sexually harassed should promptly report such behavior to a supervisor or the CEO. Upon receiving a complaint, a supervisor will report the matter to the CEO. The CEO will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective action.

VP 22: Child Abuse

Policy GSNI-M supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act ("the Act"). The Act defines child abuse and neglect as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment: of a child under the age of 18, or the age specified by the child protection law of the state in question; by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare; under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened."

The Act also defines sexual abuse as the use, persuasion, or coercion of any child to engage in any sexually explicit conduct (or any simulation of such conduct) for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct or rape, molestation, prostitution, or incest with children.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts, and it is against the council's policy for any volunteer, regardless of sex, gender identity and/or gender expression, to physically, sexually, mentally, emotionally, or verbally abuse or neglect any girl member.

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

Procedure Indiana Code §31-33-5-1 and Michigan Child Protection Law Act 238 of 1975 makes it an individual's duty to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. A report made in good faith provides the reporting person immunity from any civil or criminal liability.

To report child abuse, please call Child Protection Services at 1-800-800-5556 for Indiana or 855-444-3911 for Michigan. Be sure to be prepared to give exact name, address, and telephone numbers of a parent, guardian or custodian, the age of the child, description of what you saw or what the child said to you, a log or history of behaviors that have concerned you.

Volunteers must also complete an ***Accident/Incident Report Form*** describing the incident(s) and submit it to any GSNI-M Service Center. All information shared will be kept confidential and in a secure location.

For more information about reporting suspected child abuse, please refer to www.in.gov/dcs and click on Child Protective Services or www.michigan.gov/dhs and click on Adult and Children's Services, then Abuse & Neglect, then Children's Protective Services.

VP 23: Possession/Personal Use of Firearms

Policy Possession and the use of firearms are prohibited on all council properties and at all Girl Scout group activities, girl program events and learning events unless being used for approved Girl Scout programming.

Girl programs involving the use of firearms must follow *Safety-Activity Checkpoints* and include written approval obtained from GSNI-M before the event.

Procedure Violation of the policy regarding possession and use of firearms may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including release from the appointment.

VP 24: Substance Abuse

Policy Possession or illegal use of drugs, intoxicants, or alcohol at any time on the council's premises or in the presence of girl members is prohibited. Any suspected use or possession of illegal drugs, intoxicants, or alcohol will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Procedure Violation of the policy regarding illegal use of drugs or intoxicants may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including release from the appointment.

Exception: Alcohol may be served at adult fundraising/donor events or adult only gatherings with prior authorization from the CEO.

VP 25: Smoke-Free Environment/Smoking

- Policy** Smoking is prohibited in all buildings or structures occupied by GSNI-M. This includes but is not limited to offices, restrooms, conference rooms, stairwells, hallways, elevators, campsites and buildings, as well as in company vehicles.
- Smoking in the presence of girl members whether on or off-site while participating in Girl Scout activities is strictly prohibited.
- Procedure** Violation of the policy regarding smoking may result in immediate disciplinary action.

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana holds the 501(c) (3) status that is regulated by the Internal Revenue Service. The 501(c) (3) status is a federal law strictly governed by the IRS and does not carry to individual groups or members of the council. As such, **only** those donations that come directly to the council are eligible to be considered tax-deductible to the donor. Also, funding proposals need to be coordinated to maximize giving opportunities from a single source.

FP 1: Solicitation of Contributions

Policy Individual groups, Service Units, or regions **cannot** request grants from public or private foundations. Direct solicitation of cash is an inappropriate money-earning activity, and therefore, adult volunteer members and girls **cannot** solicit financial contributions except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors working towards their Gold Award. Prospective Gold Award Girl Scouts may solicit philanthropic donations to their Council of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from the council's Chief Executive Officer or designee.

Solicitation of goods must be approved by the council's Chief Executive Officer or designee before approaching any company.

FP 2: Voluntary Contributions

Policy All voluntary contributions of \$250 or more, intended to benefit Girl Scout program in Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana jurisdiction, regardless of value, form, or designated use, shall be made only to Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana. Any tax deduction available to a donor is determined by the federal Internal Revenue Code. Volunteer Service Matching Grants are considered voluntary contributions.

Procedure *Step 1:*

If a group or Service Unit receives a voluntary, non-solicited contribution of \$250 or more, the donation will be accepted and recognized by Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana.

Step 2:

The Service Unit or group must submit a **Contributions Reimbursement Form** which could accompany the check or be sent at the same time to the Fund Development Team specifying their plans for the use of the money to ensure that it will be spent for Girl Scout program purposes.

Step 3:

10% of the donation may remain with GSNI-M to cover administrative expenses.

Step 4:

Groups must also meet the following qualifications to receive funds:

- the group must be currently registered
- have a current **Bank Information and Agreement** and financial report on file.

Step 5:

All voluntary contributions, regardless of the amount, must be listed on the **Group Financial Record**.

FP 3: Group Banking

Policy All Regions/Groups/Service Units/Camps must open a region/group/Service Unit/camp checking account/savings account.

Procedure Every group and Service Unit must complete and submit a current **Bank Information and Agreement** within one week of opening a new account, or a **Bank Information and Agreement Update** when changes are made to existing account. Only regions/groups/Service Units with a current **Bank Information and Agreement** and financial report on file will receive disbursements from the council.

Regions, Groups or Service Units are only permitted one checking or savings account.

Groups that are planning long-term trips (i.e., trip to another country, extended travel within the United States), have the option of setting up a special trip bank account. If groups want to pursue this option, they need to contact GSNI-M first for procedures for handling these funds. Separate financial reports must be submitted for recording all deposits and expenses related to the trip.

Groups or Service Units may have a debit check card, but may not have any type of electronic card that incurs debt such as a credit card in the groups' name.

All group and Service Unit checking accounts need a **minimum** of two registered, non-related adult volunteers as signers **on the account**. Only one signature is required on each check.

Volunteer-Led camps are the only other group that may hold a checking account. No other groups may hold a checking account or savings account. All groups working within the Service Unit should be working with the Service Unit on events and projects and therefore utilizing the Service Unit funds.

To open a checking account:

GSNI-M has established relationships with banks that will accommodate its needs as a Girl Scout Council. Banks that enter into an agreement will be a GSNI-M preferred bank.

Groups that have accounts at a preferred bank will not need to submit monthly statements with their **Group Financial Record**.

All groups are required to open their account at a GSNI-M preferred bank if there is one in their county. The preferred banks are:

First Bank of Berne
First Source
Horizon
Lake City Bank
PNC

As part of the onboarding process, new troops will receive a ***Group Checking Account Packet***.

For existing groups that are switching banks, please submit a request to frontdesk@gsnim.org for the ***Group Checking Account Packet***. Include in your request to which bank the group is switching.

Checking account Guidelines:

- 1.** Group/Service Unit/camp checking and savings accounts are never to be used for personal transactions. Improper usage can result in removal from all volunteer positions.
- 2.** The group may obtain debit cards to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. Debit cards are not to be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Therefore, each debit card holder must only use the debit card that is in their name. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled at least monthly to ensure accurate and timely, and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.
- 3.** Online banking is authorized on group bank accounts to view account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the group account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all account signers. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help prevent cardholder/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account.
- 4.** All group money must be run through the account, with minimal cash transactions. Cash should only be used when a debit card or check cannot be accepted. All receipts for cash transactions need to be kept in the group's records. Any cash that is collected must be deposited as soon as possible.
- 5.** Volunteers should write receipts for any money collected from members or parents, unless using Cheddar Up.
- 6.** If a volunteer must be reimbursed for a group purchase made from their personal funds, another signer on the account must write the check. The receipt for the purchase must be kept with the troop records.

7. Although receipts are not required to be turned in with financial reports, they must be kept in the event of a group audit. Groups should keep all receipts for the current and previous membership year in their records.

FP 4: Financial Responsibility, Financial Reporting, and Group Treasury

Policy

It is the responsibility of the adult leadership of each Girl Scout group to see that any money earned or received “never becomes the property of individual members – girls or adults.”

At no time is the group treasury to be used for activities that are not Girl Scout related.

Financial information should be readily available to be shared at any time and by the request of any parent, Service Unit Financial Coordinator, or member of the council staff. Sharing financial information through group newsletters or other communications is expected.

An up-to-date, current **Bank Information and Agreement** must be kept on file at the Leadership and Learning Center to keep the status of the group account available to the council.

Procedure

Responsibility

Groups are responsible for keeping current and accurate records. Each group should have a designated Treasurer that is primarily responsible for maintaining the group records. The other signers on the account are responsible for double-checking the records on a regular basis (monthly highly encouraged).

Troop Co-Leaders and girls (in an age-appropriate manner), should determine the budget as a group. Whenever possible, the group treasury should budget for and cover most of the group expenses. Expenses may include but are not limited to: membership registration fees, program supplies, awards earned, membership pins, recognitions, event fees, etc. The budget and financial records of the group should then be shared with parents on a regular basis (again, monthly is highly encouraged).

Girls are also encouraged, with the help of volunteers and parent/guardians, to earn the CFO patch each year they are active.

If a parent/guardian, volunteer, or key stakeholder in the group suspects' misuse of group funds, they have the ability to report the concern anonymously to Red Flag Reporting. To contact Red Flag, call 1-877-647-3335 or visit www.RedFlagReporting.com. Use client code “GSNIM.”

Abuse of group funds or account will result in GSNI-M action including, but not limited to, termination from the volunteer position, and/or restrictions on handling finances or further money-earning activities until the matter is resolved. Legal action will be taken if necessary.

Reporting

An up-to-date ***Group Financial Record*** must be kept with the group records at all times. This demonstrates how the group treasury is being used. The leaders will share the ***Group Financial Record*** and bank statements on a regular basis with the group (monthly highly encouraged).

Troops, Service Units, and Camps must submit a ***Group Financial Record*** to Council each year that it is active.

- Due June 25 of each year will be the ***Group Financial Record*** for information from June 1 through May 31 of the previous year.

Troops are encouraged to submit the ***Group Financial Record*** via the **Finance Tab** on the Volunteer Toolkit. If not submitting through the **Finance Tab**, Troops must turn it in with the hard copy version, called the ***Annual Financial Report***.

Service Units/Camps do not have access to the Volunteer Toolkit, so these groups must submit the ***Group Financial Record*** directly to the council.

Hard copies are to be submitted in one of the following ways:

- Fax to 855-422-0084
- Email to frontdesk@gsnim.org
- Mail to:
 - Attn: Forms
 - 10008 Dupont Circle Drive East
 - Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Bank statements for each month of the reporting period must be included with the report for months where the group account was not at a GSNI-M approved bank.

Financial reports must also be filed by groups that are disbanding or merging. See specific steps for these groups in [FP6].

Audits

Financial audits will be performed on group accounts on a random basis. Volunteers must cooperate with staff during this process, and provide the information requested promptly.

According to the Blue Book of Basic Documents, all money earned or received in the name of Girl Scouting is the property of Girl Scout councils or Girl Scouts of the USA. “Such assets are not the property of individuals, troops, geographic units, subordinate units, or communities within a Girl Scout council” (2021, p. 20).

As such, GSNI-M reserves the right to request to view an up-to-date financial report and receipts from the group at any time. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from volunteer positions.

FP 5: Delinquent Accounts and Bad Debt

Policy Any debts incurred are the responsibility of the volunteer and can result in dismissal from the volunteer position.

Any sums due to GSNI-M shall be deemed delinquent if not paid within 30 days after billing or other notice. The council has the right to initiate collection procedures on all delinquent accounts by use of a collection agency, the council's attorney, county prosecuting attorney, or another agent.

Procedure Any volunteer may be removed from all volunteer positions if they have:

- Knowingly written a personal or group check with insufficient funds (NSF) or on a closed account to Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana or anyone else on behalf of a Girl Scout group.
- Failed to pay an outstanding debt to GSNI-M or any of its units, whether the debt is for a personal expense, a Girl Scout product program, or a group expense.
- Misused group or Service Unit funds.
- Failed to remit all funds due to GSNI-M or any of its units
- Failed to submit appropriate group, special event, or Service Unit assets to the council or the Service Unit Financial Coordinator, as applicable (i.e., closing out a group)

In some circumstances, reinstatement to a volunteer position may be considered through an appeal process. The appeal process begins with the volunteer making a formal request in writing to GSNI-M after **complete restitution** has been made. The council reserves the right to implement certain measures such as reappointment only if someone other than the volunteer in question is responsible for the group funds.

FP 6: Disbanding/Dividing/Merging or Changing Group Accounts

Policy When a group disbands **ALL** remaining funds should be turned over to either Girl Scout Office.

Procedure If one or more girls move from one group to another group within the council, their original group account stays intact, and no funds are transferred. When girls are placed/accepted into an existing group, they participate in the activities planned by that group and work within the constraints of that group's treasury. **Funds are only transferred if the original troop chooses to do so.**

When a group disbands, divides, merges or changes the number, the group should discuss the distribution of funds using the following:

Disbanding Group

A troop is considered disbanding when no girls choose to continue into another troop.

The Group leader will close the bank account, and turn over remaining money (in the form of a cashier's check) and checkbook to the Council. The Group leader will submit an up-to-date **Group Financial Record** to the Council. This should be done within 30 days of the last meeting.

When the council is notified by a financial institution of monies remaining in inactive group accounts, the council will request that the account be closed and those funds issued to the council in the form of a check. Those funds will then be applied to the council's membership dues assistance fund for girls and adults.

Dividing Groups

If the group (all girls and families) divide into two or more groups, the funds should be pro-rated between the new groups.

Example: There are currently 12 girls in the group with \$1,200 in the group account. Five girls are going to group A, and seven girls are going to group B. The \$1,200 is divided by 12 to equal \$100 per girl. Thus, \$500 goes to group A, and \$700 goes to group B. If any girls are not continuing, the group funds are divided according to the number of girls that are remaining within Girl Scouting and dispersed to the new groups accordingly. At no time should the funds be considered on an individual basis nor distributed to the girls.

Merging Groups

If two or more groups are merging to form one group, group funds will be merged into one checking account using the new group number of the merged group. Groups are only allowed one checking account [FP 3].

Changing Group Numbers

If the group is using a new group number, the number must be changed on the account, or the account should be closed and reopened with the new group number.

Refer to [GP4] for additional information on the processes for disbanding, dividing, or merging groups.

FP 7: Money-Earning Projects

Policy Girl Scout groups conducting money-earning projects must have prior approval from the council and certify compliance with all applicable legal requirements.

Procedure Troops are only eligible to participate in additional money-earning projects if they have participated in both the Council-sponsored Fall and Cookie Product Programs. The group must request in writing using the **Group Money-Earning Application** for any money-earning projects other than the annual cookie program and fall product program before doing the project.

Approval for additional money-earning projects will only be given to groups that have a current *Bank Information and Agreement* and the most recent financial report on file.

Appropriate Money-Earning Projects are:

- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| -bake sale | -auction | -spaghetti
supper | -craft sale |
| -car wash | -pancake
breakfast | -dance | -plant sale |
| -fashion show | -rummage
sale | -ice cream
social | -yard sale |

Non-appropriate Money-Earning Projects are:

- Sale of any commercial products (e.g., Pampered Chef[®], LuLaRoe[®], coupon books, etc.)
- Promotional nights or events with restaurants or other organizations (e.g., Girl Scout night at McDonald's[®])
- Direct solicitation
- Raffles or games of chance

For additional money-earning guidelines, please refer to Volunteer Essentials

FP 8: Fundraising for other Charitable Groups

Policy In accordance with Girl Scouts of the USA, the council, and its groups are **not allowed** to raise funds for other organizations. Refer to Volunteer Essentials for more information on ways to support other organizations.

FP 9: Tax Exempt Status

Policy Use of the council's corporate tax exempt number for group purchases is not allowed. Girl Scout groups are **NOT** tax exempt under state law.

GROUP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GP 1: GSUSA Policies

Policy All GSUSA policies, guidelines, and recommendations (unless a specific GSNI-M policy has been approved to the contrary) listed in Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, Safety-Activity Checkpoints, and other documents and all applicable state and federal laws/codes shall be followed at all times by members of GSNI-M in all phases of operation.

GP 2: Group Size

Policy A group consists of at least the following minimum participants according to grade level, and from more than one family.

Girl Scout Daisy/Brownie/Junior 5 girls

Girl Scout Cadette/Senior/Ambassador 3 girls

Procedure Groups with less than the minimum size should combine with another group within their school or Service Unit. Groups may consist of more than one grade level.

Groups of less than minimum may be transferred to Individually Registered Member status.

Rational Girls should be able to participate in groupings large enough to provide experience in self-government and in groupings small enough to allow for the development of the individual girl. At no time will a group of less than the numbers stated above be considered a group.

GP 3: Group Management

Policy Each group must have at least two, unrelated adult co-leaders. At least one member of the leadership team must be an adult female, unrelated to any adult male on the leadership team.

Group leader teams may not be made of solely husband-wife pairs, mother-daughter, sister-sister, or any other relations that may prove as a conflict of interest. A non-related adult female must be an active part of the leadership team.

Procedure All adults participating with the group in a leadership or committee function must be registered and have completed a background check.

GP 4: Change of Group Status

Policy A written letter or form for changes of leadership due to the resignation of leader, change in leader status, disbanding of a group, division of a group or merging of a group is required with as much advance notification as possible.

Procedure *Resignation of leader*

Please refer to [VP 14] for process and procedure.

Change in leader status

Step 1:

Notify in writing the Troop Support Specialist at frontdesk@gsnim.org. Information shared should include who is moving to what position and reason for the change.

Step 2:

New leader(s) will be appointed contingent on appropriate application procedures and learning opportunities.

Step 3:

The leader/volunteer that is changing status needs to contact the bank where the group account is located and follow necessary bank procedures for the adding and deleting of a signature. It is recommended that the new leader/volunteer work with the former leader/volunteer. A revised copy of the ***Bank Information and Agreement*** must be submitted to any service center.

Step 4:

Give all items belonging to the group or purchased with group funds to the new group leadership, the Service Unit Manager, or deliver them to the Fort Wayne or Granger Office.

Disbanding a group

Step 1:

Discuss with or notify the parents/guardians of the group. These individuals may be able to help secure new leadership for the group. It is important to include them in the decision making process.

Step 2:

Notify in writing the Troop Support Specialist at frontdesk@gsnim.org. This written notification should state the reason the group is disbanding and the outcome of the notification/discussion with the parents/guardians and sponsors.

Step 3:

Refer to [FP6] for the process/procedure of closing the group bank account.

Step 4:

Turn in a current copy of the *Group Financial Record* to the council. Include bank statements for months when the group was not banking at a GSNI-M approved bank.

Step 5:

Turn in all group items including supplies, equipment, records, handbooks, etc. to Service Unit Manager or any Service Center.

Division or merging of a group**Step 1:**

Discuss with the parents/guardians and sponsors of the group what is taking place. They deserve to know the status of the group and any changes that are happening within it.

Step 2:

Notify in writing the Troop Support Specialist at frontdesk@gsnim.org. This letter should contain information pertaining to what is taking place, the discussions that have been held as part of the decision, how the group resources are being divided or merged and which girls will be continuing with which group.

Step 3:

Refer to [FP6] for the process/procedure for the group bank account.

Step 4:

Please keep the Troop Support Specialist aware if a conflict occurs during the process. They may assist in the process to help keep the transition smooth for the girls.

GP 5: Proof of Insurance/Certificate of Insurance

In some situations, a volunteer may be asked for a Certificate of Insurance (COI) stating the limits of liability for the council policy or to be listed as an additional insured. This may occur in the following instances:

- Use of a facility (school, church, etc.) for a group meeting, service unit event, etc.
- An event held at a non-council facility, such as a campground

Policy

In some situations, GSNI-M will require that a COI be requested and received from sites where Girl Scout program activities are taking place. These include but are not limited to: entering into a contractual relationship and planning a specialized activity. If planning a specialized activity, GSNI-M will request to be listed as additional insured.

GSNI-M will provide a copy of insurance upon request. If the request involves a charge or fee to process, the group or Service Unit will be responsible for these charges.

Procedure If asked for a COI stating the limits of liability for the council or to be listed as additional insured, fill out and submit the *Certificate of Insurance Request Form*.

If GSNI-M requires a COI from a site where Girl Scout program activities are taking place, submit a request through that site for their COI.

GP 6: Tagalongs and Family Events

Definition Tagalongs are children, including siblings, who are not members of the group and are not participating in activities as a potential member. Registered members of a different group, but who are not the proper age for the event or activity are also considered “tagalongs.” Tagalongs are **NOT** covered under any Girl Scout Accident Insurance.

Policy Tagalongs must **not** attend Girl Scout activities, meetings, or field trips.

Procedure If groups or Service Units want family members to be involved, they are encouraged to hold a “family event” in which all members of the family are invited to participate in the activity or special event. Groups or Service Units may also hold a “Bring-A-Friend” event/activity to recruit girls into the organization. In this case, additional insurance coverage (Plan 2) is available. This insurance covers non-member participants in an approved supervised Girl Scout activity.

For family and friend events, groups will need to purchase the Plan 2 optional insurance coverage from Mutual of Omaha. For additional information about plans, go to www.mutualofomaha.com/girl_scouts_of_the_usa. To purchase additional insurance, complete the *Additional Insurance Request Form* and forward with payment to any service center at least two weeks before the event. Online purchase is not available to volunteers.

GP 7: Contracts/Agreements

Policy Girl Scout volunteers may not be the sole signer to sign contracts or agreements (excluding car rental agreements) in the name of Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana. Only the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or individuals designated by the CEO may enter into contracts on behalf of Girl Scouting.

Examples of such agreements include, but are not limited to:

- Online Authorizations
- Waivers
- “Hold Harmless” language

- Indemnification language

Procedure

When planning your activity involving the use of non-council property or an activity that may require a contract, inquire at the beginning of the planning if a formal document, agreement or contract will be necessary. If a contract is required, it must be forwarded to GSNI-M at least two months in advance. Include a letter with the contract describing the event or function and any other details that will assist in the completion of the contract.

Some contracts may be so adverse that the council representative cannot sign them. Negotiations may instead be in order. Girl Scouts welcome cooperative activities with other organizations, but as a matter of sound stewardship and good business practice, the Girl Scouts will not indemnify other organizations from the possible results of that organization's own actions or negligence. Neither will the council's representative sign a contract that requires waiving of the rights of others.

If an organization or business requires documentation of the council's insurance coverage, GSNI-M can provide one. Please refer to [GP 5] for the procedure.

GP 8: Trips

Policy

Trips taken by Girl Scout groups require notification and/or approval, refer below for specific details.

Procedure

A trip is defined as any activity that takes place outside of the normal troop meeting time and/or location. This excludes events that GSNI-M or Girl Scout Service Units are hosting/facilitating.

Overnight Trips:

For all overnight trips up to and including three days, two nights in length, with no activities that require council approval according to Safety-Activity Checkpoints.

- Submit the following information to frontdesk@gsnim.org
 - Trip date, time, and location
 - Roster: Attach a list of girls and adults going on the trip. Indicate any adults who are driving on the trip.
 - Activities planned

Specialized activity approval:

A specialized activity is an activity that a group is conducting that Safety-Activity Checkpoints requires council approval or that requires facilitators with specific certifications. The Safety Activity Checkpoints for each activity will state if that particular activity requires council approval.

The following are examples of some of these activities:

- swimming - horseback riding - archery - climbing - boating - etc.

Before participating in the activity, please complete a ***Non-GSNI-M Specialized Activity Form*** and submit the form to frontdesk@gsnim.org at least four to six weeks before the event. This form is not needed if the activity is happening at a council-sponsored activity or event.

To plan a specialized activity at one of GSNI-M's camps, please submit activities request at time of online rental reservation. Select desired camp on "Camp" tab of gsnim.org to view information and reserve. Please complete request four to six weeks in advance. Groups have the choice of requesting GSNI-M staff to facilitate an activity (subject to staff availability), or they can provide own facilitators. If providing own facilitators, the facilitator must have current certification and have completed site-specific training for the activity.

For Extended trips (More than three days and two nights):

As soon as a group decides on their extended trip and wants to start planning, they need to complete an ***Extended Trip Form***. Check the "Preliminary Extended Trip Approval" spot at the top of the form and follow appropriate directions. This form is to be submitted to frontdesk@gsnim.org 3-6 months in advance for extended trips within the United States and 12-18 months for international trips. Because these plans are initial plans, we do not expect the details to be in place and information can be changed when they submit their "Final Trip Approval" (checked at the top of the ***Extended Trip Form***). Groups should not do any money-earning activities/projects until after submitting their preliminary approval form **and** money-earning approval form and have received approval on both.

After preliminary approval is given, groups will start working on their "Final Trip Approval." This form should be turned in at 1-2 months prior to the trip.

GP 9: Transportation of Volunteers and Girls

Policy

Transportation to and from homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities – outside of normal time and place in which group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, a registered Girl Scout, and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in volunteer essentials must be followed.

- If the group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in Volunteer Essentials must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.
- 15 passenger vans as described below should not be used for any Girl Scout activity, except under special circumstances with prior GSNI-M approval. GSNI-M will **NOT** approve any leases or rental of 15 passenger vans.

Procedures/information:

The NHTSA states that the risk of roll-over of 15 passenger vans is greatly increased with 10 or more passengers a “15-passenger van” is described in section 10309a2 of the “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (2005) as “a vehicle that seats 10-14 passengers, not including the driver”. GSNI-M will also use this definition of a “15 passenger van”.

Therefore, only private vehicles or leased vehicles seating nine passengers and under may be used for Girl Scout transportation.

Groups may charter larger vehicles with council approval. Companies must have a positive rating, provide a certificate of insurance and signed Bus Agreement, employ appropriately licensed drivers and follow all other safety requirements.

All girls and adults must wear seatbelts while in a van, car, or truck. They must also follow all state laws, including booster seat usage, according to the state that they are traveling in.

Group leaders need to make sure their drivers are licensed drivers with a valid registration and current insurance.

Group leaders must make sure that all Girl Scout guidelines are followed.