

## Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers 6/24/2020

This guidance is being provided as of the Edition Date above (when a vaccine has not been made readily available). Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana-Michiana may modify this guidance as circumstances change. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional/county differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and national directives.

**Beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 15<sup>th</sup>** Troops may consider 'in-person' meetings by adhering to the following guidelines. Please read through the guidelines and chat with your troop families to see how this could work for your troop. It's important to consider the concerns of all families so that no one feels excluded.

- **Strongly Recommended** [Virtual meetings](#) should be continued to prevent spread of COVID-19.
- **Recommended** Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained for up to 100 people
  - Within 100, smaller groups recommended in pods of no more than 12 girls plus leaders needed to meet ratio
  - No more than 8 pods of 12 girls plus leaders in any given open space
  - Pods should not interact to help with contact tracing should a member of a pod become infected or exposed to COVID-19
  - Restroom and hygiene protocols should be practiced for COVID-19 risk mitigation
- **Permitted with caution** Indoor meetings (in public facilities, not in homes) are only allowed if social distancing practices can be maintained.
  - Groups of at most 12 girls plus leaders necessary to meet ratio are permitted when social distancing can be guaranteed
  - Restroom and hygiene protocols should be practiced for COVID-19 risk mitigation
  - GSUSA strongly suggests **no** meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. The recommendation is to **stay away from in-home meetings** for the time being.
- **Face Coverings**
  - Volunteers should remind girls that **Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks)** not only to protect themselves but to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community.
  - Girls can bring their own face coverings. Please have disposable masks on hand for those who need them.
  - Volunteers can teach girls how to handle their face coverings so that the coverings are effective. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact [frontdesk@gsnim.org](mailto:frontdesk@gsnim.org) for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.
- **Personal contact**
  - Each girl should have her own supplies (i.e.: snacks, water, scissors, crayons, paper, etc.). No group sharing of supplies to reduce chance of cross contamination between members.
  - First Aid Kits should include supplies for COVID-19 prevention.
  - Hugs, handshakes, "high-fives," and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Refrain from these gestures for the time being.
  - Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows).

**\*\*NOTE:** Remember, some families may not be ready to send their girl member to meetings. Please reassure those families that it is alright. Please plan meetings that can be duplicated for these members to complete in their own homes or strongly consider zooming your meeting for your troop or for these members. It is important to consider the concerns of all families so that no one feels excluded.

*Additional Resources:* First Aid Kits; Trips & Transportation; Restroom & Hygiene; Reporting COVID-19

## Reporting and communicating a positive COVID 19 test

If you should learn of a COVID-19 positive test result, do NOT contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact [frontdesk@gsnim.org](mailto:frontdesk@gsnim.org) or 1-800-283-4812 in this situation. A council staff member and NOT volunteers, will be responsible for:

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester,
- Contacting the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers),
- Notifying a facility or homeowner where a troop has met, and
- Alerting the state department of health.

Let other volunteers know that council staff, NOT volunteers, will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the tester's identity is confidential. Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need to know basis with a council staff member.

## Restroom and Hygiene Protocol

Use these questions and reminders to help decide how and when to return to troop activities.

### Troop Meeting Space

Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

For meetings held at public facilities, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

**Meetings may *not* be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist.**

Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

Troop Meetings in the home: GSUSA strongly suggests ***no*** meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. **Stay away from in-home meetings** for the time being.

Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as CDC or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities. Place signs in the meeting or activity space to remind girls and volunteers to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Signs should include:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### First Aid Kits

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including:

- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- tissues
- disposable facemasks
- Disinfectants

- Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls
- Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost prohibitive. However, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal

### **First Aid / CPR Training**

Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency.

### **Disinfectants and Disinfecting**

- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, etc.)
- Use a household cleaner, or see the EPA's list of effective cleaners approved for use against COVID-19.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.)
- Household bleach is effective against COVID-19 for up to 24 hours when properly diluted. Check that the bleach is not expired and determine if it can be used on a given surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - To prepare a bleach solution, mix:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
    - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

See the CDC's website for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

### **Trips and Transportation**

#### **Day trips and activities**

In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. Girls must provide their own transportation to activity locations (no carpools at this time). If activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

#### **Travel and overnight stays**

Overnight trips are **not permitted**. The timeframes for these trips will be evaluated monthly and will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, contact [frontdesk@gsnim.org](mailto:frontdesk@gsnim.org) for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

#### **Transportation**

Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings.

Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.