

## Chapter 8: Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines Volunteer Policies & Procedures

Volunteers should familiarize themselves with those GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines policies and practices that guide and protect their status as Girl Scout volunteers. The policies listed below pertain to all volunteers regardless of position or role.

### *Affirmative Action for Volunteers*

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 Basic Documents 2006*, p. 21

### *No Discrimination*

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer on the basis of disability, race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, or socioeconomic status.

### *Membership Registration*

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the United States of America and individually pay the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

—*Blue Book of Basic Documents 2006*, pp. 20-21

### *Recruitment*

The recruitment process consists of a number of methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions. Written position descriptions that define specific responsibilities and clarify expectations will be completed prior to recruitment and used in the search. Each volunteer will also be required to complete an application, provide references, sign agreements, and undergo a background check prior to selection.

### *Selection*

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend courses, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement. 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, sexual orientation

creed, national origin, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law. Volunteers will receive some type of face-to-face interview prior to selection.

## *Membership*

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet Girl Scouts of the USA membership standards, be registered through the council as members of the Girl Scout Movement, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines council.

## *Placement*

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. All troops/groups must have two unrelated adults present at all times, at least one of which must be female.

## *Appointment*

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one year. (See "Reappointment" for additional information.)

## *Learning and Development*

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

## *Orientation*

Each volunteer is provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, local council information, and the support systems available to help them in their work. Orientation can be done one-on-one or in a group setting.

## *Advantages*

Advantages to volunteers include support in their position and other learning opportunities. Volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their skills while serving with the council. As appropriate, the council will assist volunteers in broadening their skills through assignment to new volunteer positions involving additional and/or greater responsibilities. Other advantages for volunteers include, council publications; tools for recording volunteer experience; references upon request; liability insurance; and supplementary accident insurance, as part of national and/or council membership.

## Performance Appraisal

Each volunteer shall be provided with the opportunity for a periodic performance appraisal and evaluation. 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 appropriate staff member will be assigned the responsibility to schedule and conduct the performance appraisal for each volunteer.

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

Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position. These standards should list the responsibilities of the position, measurable indicators of whether responsibilities were accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of responsibilities. Creation of these standards will be a joint function of staff and the volunteer assigned to the position, and a copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer along with a copy of the position description at the beginning of her or his assignment.

## Volunteers as Role Models

For many girls, the Girl Scout volunteer is one of the important adults in their lives. Good volunteers really do make a difference. Their leadership can encourage girls to pursue healthy life-styles and to develop independence, self-reliance, and openness to the world's cultural and racial diversity.

Volunteers are role models. The language used, the way they handle authority and conflict, and their respect for their own health and that of others are all part of that role modeling. Volunteer actions also reflect on the entire Girl Scout image.

Girl Scout volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Accept all girls, regardless of race, religion, socio-economic status, ability, or family structure;
- Complete the required coursework to become effective leaders and to be *Safety-Wise*;
- Use fair and responsible practices when working with girls and troop money;
- Follow all Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines policies and procedures;
- Not use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in the presence of girls;
- Not attend any girl activity while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs;
- Avoid displays of sexual behavior in the presence of girls.

## Reappointment

Prior to the completion of her or his term, each volunteer who is to be reappointed to the same position or rotated to a different position may receive confirmation of such reappointment or rotation. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and Girl Scouts of the USA 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. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

## Uniforms

A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense and is encouraged. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin when they are not in uniform.

## Conflict Resolution/Dispute Resolution

The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. The policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. All volunteers may use the conflict resolution procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. Informal counseling 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 procedure is as follows:

*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/Dispute Request," identify the person with whom the conflict is occurring, and cite the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied. A copy should be sent to the identified person's supervisor. Within ten (10) 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 (10) working days following her or his initial conference.

*Step 3.* In the event that 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 council's Chief Executive Officer.

**-Or-**

*Step 4.* The Chief Executive Officer will appoint a dispute/complaint resolution review team. (The review team will 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 review team may seek additional information, if necessary, to aid it in making a final decision. The team will provide the Chief Executive Officer with a written report of its findings and recommendations within ten (10) working days of the review hearing. Copies will 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 Chief Executive Officer for a final and binding decision will be made. The Chief Executive Officer 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 Chief Executive Officer to implement the decision.

In the event the dispute is with the Chief Executive Officer, the "Conflict Resolution/Dispute Request" should be submitted to the Director of Human Resources and Volunteer Development.

## *Recognition*

Adults participate in Girl Scouting because they believe in the philosophy of the movement. There are times when an individual has given such extraordinary service that others want to express appreciation in a special way. The Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines Council's formal recognition system will be consistent with Girl Scouts of the USA.

## *Release*

Either the council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

## *Harassment*

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines 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, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

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

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has 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 to the Chief Executive Officer. The supervisor, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer or Director of Human Resources and Volunteer Development, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective actions.

## *Sexual Harassment*

It is against the Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines Council's policies for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. 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 programs, sexually harasses another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex or creates a hostile work environment.

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; unwelcome and/or overly familiar 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. Any volunteer who feels she or he has been sexually harassed should promptly report behavior to a supervisor, the Director of Human Resources and Volunteer Development, or the Chief Executive Officer. Upon receiving a complaint, a supervisor will report the matter to the Director of Human Resources and Volunteer Development, who will conduct an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective action.

## *Child Abuse*

Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines support and maintain environments free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts, and it is against the council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, 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.

## *Reporting Requirements*

**Note:** Child abuse is a crime. Minnesota and Wisconsin have child protective or law enforcement agencies that are mandated by state law to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse. Volunteers are considered mandatory reporters. If a mandated report is made, the council will not commence any investigation until after consultation with the reporting agency. The Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines Council will not tolerate any retaliation or intimidation directed toward the complaining party, and such retaliation may be a separate ground for discipline up to and including termination. The applicable law is as follows:

### Minnesota

The service provider who knows or has reason to believe that abuse or neglect has taken place is required to immediately report by telephone or in person to the County Department of Social Service, the Sheriff's Department, or the City Police Department the facts and circumstances that contributed to a suspicion that child abuse or neglect has taken place or will occur. A written report must follow the oral report rendered to the reporting agency.

### Wisconsin

The service provider who sees that a child who has been abused or neglected, or has reason to believe that a child has been threatened with abuse or neglect, and that abuse or neglect of the child will occur, shall report immediately by telephone or in person to the County Department of Social Services, the Sheriff's Department, the City Police Department, or in the case of American Indian children, the Tribal Government, the facts and circumstances that contributed to a suspicion of child abuse or neglect, or to a belief that child abuse or neglect will occur.

### After you have made a report

Remember, anyone who reports in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability, and the reporter's name is confidential, accessible only by court order.

It's important to respect the confidentiality of the child and others involved. It is not appropriate for you to discuss the situation with anyone - including family members, friends, or Girl Scout volunteers - except police, social service officers, and Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines officials to whom you report. If reports are investigated and found not to be true, rumors could be very damaging to the child and others involved with her. Discussing these matters may lead to Girl Scout actions, up to removal from the volunteer position.

Any person who makes a report can request a summary of the disposition of that report (what's been done about it) from the local social service agency. That person will receive a concise summary unless release of this information would be detrimental to the best interests of the child.