



**VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
for  
**Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Inc.**  
(GSOFACT)

**Approved by the Council Realignment Committee (CRC): July 10, 2007**

**Approved by the GSOFACT Board of Directors: October 1, 2007**

**Volunteer Policies and Procedures for  
Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Inc.**  
(Approved by Council Realignment Committee [CRC] 7/10/07)  
(Approved by the GSOFCT Board of Directors 10/1/07)

**INTRODUCTION:** The Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Inc. (GSOFCT), maintains that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the volunteer leadership of its adult members. It is through its volunteer leadership that the Movement serves its girls. To ensure the satisfaction of its volunteers and to best use their talents, it is essential that the following policies and procedures be established and maintained. These policies and procedures work in conjunction with the council's by-laws and the following current Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA) publications:

- *Blue Book of Basic Documents,*
- *Safety-Wise.*

The GSOFCT upholds all GSUSA policies and has adopted the following policies and procedures of its own.

**DEFINITIONS**

A **POLICY** is an established course of action that must be followed. Policies provide consistency of action, give direction, and minimize the need for risk management.

These policies do not create a contract, express or implied, with any volunteer and may be changed at any time at the discretion of the council. In addition, volunteers are not employees of the council and are not covered by any of its pay or benefit plans or practices. Specifically, volunteers are not paid or provided benefits for their volunteer services.

A **PROCEDURE** describes the course of action to carry out a policy.

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**I. RECRUITMENT:** Each volunteer is provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, local council information, and the support systems available to help her/him in her/his role. The volunteer position description provides specific responsibilities and schedules, cites expectations, and, in conjunction with performance goals, forms the basis for assessment of volunteer performance.

The GSOFCT strives to include volunteers who strengthen the council through two distinct types of service.

- A. **GOVERNANCE VOLUNTEERS:** These include members of the Board of Directors, Board Nominating and Development Committees, and Delegates.
- B. **OPERATIONAL VOLUNTEERS:** Service Team members, Leaders, Co-Leaders, etc., are those involved in carrying out the council's specific, measurable objectives, which have been developed within the framework of the corporate goals as adopted by the Board of Directors. These volunteers are ultimately accountable to the Chief Executive Officer.

**II. INCLUSION:** In recognition of its responsibility to its volunteers and girls and in keeping with GSUSA equal opportunity policies, the GSOFACT expressly prohibits any form of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, ancestry, genetic information, and any other protected class status.

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.

GSOFACT is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and outreach in the recruitment, selection, placement, development, and recognition of volunteers in all communities within its jurisdiction.

**III. MEMBERSHIP.** All volunteers and girls participating in the GSOFACT shall meet GSUSA membership standards and be a currently registered member of GSUSA and the Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Inc. She/he shall agree to abide by the policies, principles, practices, and standards of the GSOFACT and GSUSA.

**IV. REGISTRATION.** All adult volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered members of GSUSA.

## **V. VOLUNTEER SYSTEMS**

**A. SELECTION: Policy:** Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position, and the willingness and availability to participate in training for the position.

**Procedure:** All adult volunteer members must submit a completed application, furnish three (3) references, and have a satisfactory background check according to the requirements of their position.

**B. TRAINING:** Once a volunteer has successfully completed the application, she/he must participate in orientation and training as required by the position. The level of orientation will correspond to the level of participation. For example, those who are serving as Leaders take full orientation, while those who are less involved will have a less intensive level of orientation.

**C. PLACEMENT:** Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the GSOFACT. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the GSOFACT will take precedence over the needs of the individual.

**D. PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL:** Volunteers will have the opportunity to confer with the person to whom she/he is accountable concerning her/his annual performance review.

**E. REAPPOINTMENT:** Prior to completion of a volunteer's term, she/he will receive confirmation of reappointment to her/his position or rotation to

a different position. Reappointment takes place only after completion of a satisfactory performance review and mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and adherence to GSOFACT and GSUSA policies and standards.

**F. RECOGNITIONS:** The Girl Scouts of Connecticut, Inc., formal recognition system shall be consistent with GSUSA policies and standards.

**G. TERMINATION:** Any volunteer may resign her/his position at any time, but the council expects that resignations will be with reasonable notification to the council. The GSOFACT may terminate the services of a volunteer at any time and for any reason, such as these listed below.

- Restructuring of volunteer positions
- The elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves
- The inability or failure to complete the requirements for the position
- Misappropriation of funds
- The inability or failure to perform the agreed-upon responsibilities to the satisfaction of the GSOFACT
- The refusal to support the Mission and values of the organization and the council goals
- Membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA
- Failure to comply with council or GSUSA policies
- Providing false, incomplete, or misleading information on the volunteer application
- Inappropriate behavior including, but not limited to, physical violence, abuse, stalking, threatening, menacing, lying, harassment, falsification of documents, and carrying firearms at a Girl Scout activity
- Failure to pass successive background checks

An adult volunteer who is terminated from her/his adult position may continue her/his membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she/he is not able to meet the membership requirement related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or to supporting the Mission and values of the organization. When this is the case, her/his Girl Scout membership will not be renewed.

**Procedure:** The volunteer and her/his manager will confer both in person and in writing as to reasons for the termination. A third party should be present during this process. At this time, the volunteer will be given the opportunity to withdraw voluntarily from the position by submitting a written resignation within five (5) working days.

If termination is not voluntary, the volunteer will be fully informed, in writing, regarding the reasons for the termination by the person to whom she/he is accountable.

Unless otherwise indicated, the discussion should be followed by a written summary, one copy of which is given to the volunteer and one to be held in the council's volunteer personnel files.

Absolute confidentiality must be observed at all times to protect the rights of the volunteer.

**H. CONFLICT RESOLUTION:** The GSOFACT has established a system for resolving conflicts that arise when a volunteer believes that policies and/or procedures related to her/his position are not being administered properly as applied to her/him.

**Philosophy:**

- **Phase I:** Many conflicts can be prevented and/or resolved by volunteer managers who understand the Volunteer Management System of the GSOFACT and who are sensitive to human relations. Likewise, many conflicts can be avoided when volunteers are informed at the time of placement of the council's structure and role accountability for decision-making responsibilities.

Most conflicts can be resolved when they are brought to the attention of the volunteer's immediate manager. It is hoped that most, if not all, conflicts will be resolved informally. The goal is to eliminate the cause for the conflict.

- **Phase II:** When a volunteer and her/his immediate manager are unable to resolve a conflict through informal efforts, the volunteer should refer to the council's conflict resolution procedure for all volunteers listed below. Every volunteer may expect a welcome reception and a fair resolution of the conflict without fear of jeopardizing her/his volunteer status. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure, however, will not restrict the GSOFACT from taking appropriate action to safeguard the health and safety of the girls.

**Procedure:**

**Step 1:** The volunteer requests a conference with her/his manager to take place within ten (10) working days of the date the written complaint was filed. The volunteer cites the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. If the manager is the issue, proceed to the next level. If the manager is not a staff member of the GSOFACT, the appropriate staff member must be informed of the complaint and the date of the conference meeting. The staff member informs the Chief Executive Officer, or her/his designee, of the complaint and conference date.

**Step 2:** If the volunteer is not satisfied with the disposition, the council staff member or, if appropriate, the staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within ten (10) working days. After the initial review of the issues, the volunteer can expect a response within ten (10) working days.

**Step 3:** In the event that the complaint is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member prepares a written report on the complaint, including recommendations for her/his supervisor, and sends a copy to the Chief Executive Officer.

**Step 4:** The Chief Executive Officer will make the final decision as to the resolution of the complaint and see that this decision is implemented.

## **VI. HARASSMENT/SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

GSOFACT is committed to maintaining an environment free of harassment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. The council will not tolerate harassment, including sexual harassment as defined in this policy, of volunteers, employees, or members, by anyone, including any volunteer, employee, vendor, member, client, or customer, whether on the Girl Scout premises, at assignments outside, or at sponsored social or membership functions.

Harassment is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of her/his race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, ancestry, genetic information, or any other protected class status that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome or unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based on sex when (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of the volunteer's position, (2) submission or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for a decision relating to the volunteer, or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the volunteer's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. The offender or the victim of harassment may either be a man or a woman, and harassment can occur involving persons of the same or opposite sex.

Examples of sexual harassment include unwanted sexual advances; explicit sexual propositions; demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment; repeated sexual innuendos, suggestive comments, sexually oriented kidding, teasing, or practical jokes; jokes about gender-specific traits; foul or obscene body language or gestures; display of foul or obscene printed or visual material (including, but not limited to, email); and physical contact, such as touching, patting, pinching, or brushing against another's body.

If any volunteer believes that she/he is being harassed, the volunteer should clearly and promptly notify the offender that the behavior is unwelcome. If for any reason a volunteer does not feel comfortable confronting the offender or if a confrontation does not successfully end the harassment, the volunteer should contact the council immediately.

All complaints of harassment will be taken seriously and will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. To the fullest extent practical and appropriate under the

circumstances, the GSOFACT will treat complaints and the terms of their resolution as personal and confidential. Corrective action will be implemented if an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred. If either party directly involved in a harassment investigation is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution, that individual should submit a written request to council to have the decision reconsidered.

This policy also prohibits harassment and sexual harassment by any volunteer against any employee or member.

## **VII. CHILD ABUSE**

GSOFACT supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. Child abuse or neglect is any act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, actual serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare. A child is defined as a person under the age of 18. The council will follow up and report, if applicable, any unlawful act as stated in the State of Connecticut General Statutes.

Sexual abuse is defined as employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person 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 and, in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children. Sexual abuse may also include sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and/or involvement of children in pornographic material.

GSOFACT will refuse appointment or reappointment, and dismiss or exclude from volunteer status, any volunteer who in the judgment of the council poses a risk of injury to a minor, is believed to have abused or neglected any child under the age of 18, or has been convicted of any crimes against children. Individuals who are listed on any sex offender list in any state or upon instructions from a government or legal authority will be refused membership or participation in any Girl Scout activities.

**Procedure:** In order to protect confidentiality, in cases of reported, suspected, or confided abuse/neglect the volunteer should contact the Chief Executive Officer or her/his designee. If none of the above can be reached, the volunteer may call the Connecticut Department of Children and Families Care Line: 1-800-842-2288. Such a report should include the names and addresses of the children and her/his parents, guardians, or other person having responsibility for her/his care and all evidence forming the basis of such belief. A person who in good faith makes this report is immune from civil or criminal liability per state statute.

## **VIII. SMOKING/ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE**

Volunteers are prohibited from smoking in the presence of girls and/or during any Girl Scout activity.

No person shall possess, use, sell, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or use lawful drugs in an unauthorized manner, on GSOFACT property, during any Girl Scout activity, or at any time if it would adversely affect the reputation of the Girl Scouts.

Any violation of this policy will result in the removal of the volunteer from the council property, and associated costs and/or transportation fees will be the responsibility of the volunteer. No refund of fees will be given. In addition, the volunteer will be removed from her/his volunteer position.

Alcohol may be consumed at adult council-wide functions or events only with the permission of the Chief Executive Officer.

### **IX. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Each volunteer has an obligation to conduct herself/himself in a manner that does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest or that has the potential for one. An actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer, because of her/his position with the Girl Scouts, makes or influences a decision that may result in a personal gain for the volunteer or the volunteer's friends or relatives. For purposes of this policy, a relative includes any person who is related to the volunteer by blood or marriage, or who is in a similar relationship. A friend is any social acquaintance or individual with whom the volunteer has a social relationship.

If a volunteer is involved in any activity for the Girl Scouts that presents an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest (e.g., if the volunteer has any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases), full disclosure in writing to the Chief Executive Officer is mandatory as soon as possible, to establish safeguards and to protect all parties involved.

A Board Member shall not, while serving as a member of the council Board of Directors, serve in a council operational volunteer position that would require formal GSUSA or council-developed or sanctioned training.

### **X. CONTRACTS**

All contracts must be authorized and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or her/his designee.

### **XI. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Any court-mandated community service projects must have prior approval by the appropriate council staff.

### **XII. ANIMALS**

No persons shall bring any animal onto any GSOFACT property or to any Girl Scout activity without the written permission of the Chief Executive Officer or her/his designee. Exceptions will be made for animals needed to assist persons with disabilities.

### **XIII. WEAPONS**

Possession or use of firearms by adults or girls at any Girl Scout activity is prohibited.

#### **XIV. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

All monies raised or earned, and other assets received in the name and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be authorized by GSOFCT or GSUSA and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Such monies and other assets become the property of, and are administered by, GSUSA or GSOFCT. Such assets are not the property of individuals, geographic units, or communities within a Girl Scout council.

Those assuming stewardship of any Girl Scout monies within the jurisdiction of the GSOFCT are accountable to GSOFCT.

Volunteers are responsible for complying with all finance and money-earning policies and practices, as defined in the Leader Guide, including but not limited to the following:

- Money handling,
- Banking,
- Recordkeeping,
- Reporting,
- Money-earning activities.

Money-earning projects may not be held during the United Way campaign or council-wide fundraisers.

Adults who owe a debt to the council that is past due will be removed from all volunteer positions. A debt is defined as a check written for insufficient funds, unpaid product sales funds to the council or the troop, or non-payment of money owed to the organization for products or services.

Past due debts (unpaid/misappropriation of funds) more than 30 days after notification will be processed for collection. Individuals will be responsible for all fees associated with the collection of the debt and may be subject to other legal action.

Volunteers who repay a past due debt will not be reappointed to any position that includes leadership or money-handling responsibilities.

All financial information is confidential. It is against council policy to disclose any financial or personal information garnered through one's leadership role as a volunteer to others.

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