



Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons

**Volunteer
Policies and Procedures**

Table of Contents

DISCLAIMER:	2
INTRODUCTION	3
TERMS	3
NON-DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY OF VOLUNTEERS	4
ADULT MEMBERSHIP IN GSUSA	4
APPLICATION FOR A VOLUNTEER POSITION	4
PLACEMENT IN A VOLUNTEER POSITION	6
BACKGROUND SCREENING	7
EXPECATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS	7
WHISTLE BLOWER PROTECTION	8
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	8
RECOGNITION	9
UNIFORMS	9
VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE	9
REAPPOINTMENT	10
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	10
RELEASE	11
SEXUAL AND OTHER FORMS OF IMPERMISSIBLE HARASSMENT	12
CHILD ABUSE POLICY	12

DISCLAIMER:

These volunteer policies are compiled for informational purposes only. These policies and this handbook are not a contract for participation as a volunteer nor are they intended to create or imply a contract.

Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons council reserves the right to change, suspend, or eliminate any or all matters contained herein and all other policies, rules, and procedures at any time without prior notice. It also retains the sole discretion to interpret the provisions of these policies and to depart from the provisions if the council determines that such action is appropriate.

These volunteer policies and procedures supersede the provisions of all other previous handbooks, manuals, policies, rules and procedures that address the subjects covered herein or are inconsistent with these policies and procedures. All such previous handbooks, manuals, policies, rules and procedures are expressly revoked.

INTRODUCTION

Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons (GSDH) council is committed to the individual growth, safety, and well-being of its members. Our council is a charter member of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and upholds all of its policies and procedures. Each adult volunteer, regardless of the position she/he holds, contributes directly or indirectly to girls' development. This provides an opportunity to be a positive role model and to help girls grow strong. Volunteers are encouraged to request guidance and support from their Girl Scout network of mentors, supervisors, and staff.

Volunteer policies and procedures are established by the council to:

- Provide safe, high quality program experiences to girls
- Use the skills and experiences of volunteers effectively
- Provide all volunteers the opportunity for participation, challenge, growth, and advancement
- Create an environment of courtesy, respect, and fairness for all volunteers

TERMS

The following terms will assist in understanding the Volunteer Policies and Procedures.

Policy: An established mandatory course of action which can be monitored and enforced. GSUSA National policies are printed in the *Leader's Digest: Blue Book of Basic Documents*. Policies such as those contained in this document are adopted by the Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons council.

Procedure: A way of work, a customary process, or method to put policies into action to accomplish a desired end. Procedures, for example, help us to register, obtain permissions, conduct product sales, etc.

Policy Influencing Volunteers: Volunteers who carry out policy-influencing assignments and are ultimately accountable to the council Chief Executive Officer. Policy-influencing volunteers such as chairs, delegates, board committee, and task group members support the policy decision-making process.

Operational Volunteers: Volunteers who carry out operational assignments and are ultimately accountable to the Chief Executive Officer. Operational volunteers give support and direction for delivery of the Girl Scout program to girls.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY OF VOLUNTEERS

Policy: Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination. The council prohibits discrimination against any volunteer or volunteer applicant because of that persons' race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, and status with regard to public assistance, or any other legally protected status.

Procedure: Volunteers are recruited, selected, placed, trained, supported, and retained for all volunteer positions according to the standards stated in the NON-DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY OF VOLUNTEERS POLICY. Any volunteer who needs a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of her/his position should request such an accommodation in a timely fashion.

ADULT MEMBERSHIP IN GSUSA

Policy: Girl Scout membership is open to all adults who are at least 18 years of age, no longer enrolled in high school, and accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. All adults participating in Girl Scouting must 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. Supplemental Accident insurance and a subscription to "*Leader*" magazine are included with GSUSA Membership. No potential member will be turned away due to an inability to pay membership dues. Financial assistance is provided by Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons to any potential member who wants to join but who lacks the ability to pay dues. Non-registered adults, such as a volunteer from American Red Cross, are welcome to work with the girls when supervised at all times by two or more unrelated registered adults.

Procedure: To register with GSUSA, an adult submits a completed registration form and pays the annual membership dues, except those adults who are Lifetime members. Adults who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity are encouraged, though not required, to become members. Financial Assistance application forms are available from the Council for GSUSA membership dues.

APPLICATION FOR A VOLUNTEER POSITION WITH GIRL SCOUTS—DAKOTA HORIZONS

Policy: Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualification for membership, ability to perform in the volunteer position, and the willingness and availability to participate in training for the position. Voluntary positions should not be confused with employed staff positions.

In consideration of the safety of girl members, Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons requires all new registering operational volunteers, regardless of position, to complete an application process. This application process includes becoming a registered adult member, completing a volunteer application form, and a background-check. When all steps are completed, an official appointment or denial of appointment letter will be issued from the GSDH council.

Each volunteer position will have a written position description that defines specific responsibilities and clarifies expectations. Position descriptions form the basis for assessment of volunteer performance, reappointment, rotation to another position, and release.

Procedure: Each operational volunteer will be a registered member of GSUSA and will complete a Volunteer Application Form including identification of references and signature to accept authorizations as stated on the application form. The Council reserves the right to request an update periodically or when a volunteer moves into a new position.

DISQUALIFICATION FROM VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

The following rules shall apply if Girl Scouts-Dakota Horizons (GSDH) learns (via a criminal background search or otherwise) that a prospective volunteer has been convicted of, has pleaded guilty to, has received adjudication for, or has pleaded no contest to one of the following crimes:

Automatic disqualification:

- Crimes against children
- Felony offenses against persons
- Felony offenses against a family member
- Crimes defined as public indecency
- Crimes involving the use of weapons
- Any violent crime
- Any felony drug-related offense
- Any felony conviction within the five-year period preceding the background check
- Residing on the same premises as a registered sex offender*
- Any second offense involving driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated within the five year period preceding the background check will be automatically disqualified but may be eligible for reversal upon appeal by prospective volunteer or by the discretion of the council

**Registered sex offenders are not eligible for membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and may not participate in any capacity with Girl Scouts. Any adult living on the premises with a registered sex offender may participate only as a parent/guardian.*

Possible disqualification:

For all other criminal offenses, or felony convictions older than the five-year period preceding the background check, GSDH shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. The decision whether to allow service shall be within the discretion of GSDH. Factors to be considered by GSDH in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, the position for which the person seeks to volunteer, the length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, the circumstances under which the crime was committed, the degree of rehabilitation, the likelihood that the person will commit the crime again, and the number of crimes committed by the prospective volunteer. Residing with a convicted felon may also disqualify a prospective volunteer from being able to volunteer depending on the severity and frequency of the conviction(s).

Confidentiality:

GSDH will maintain the confidentiality of all criminal background search information including information regarding disqualification decisions. However, some of this information (e.g. registered sex offenders) is readily available by the public.

PLACEMENT IN A VOLUNTEER POSITION

Policy: Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both her/his needs and the needs of the Council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the Council will take precedence. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions or they may request reassignment. See DISCLAIMER.

Until such placement is made, the following restrictions will apply:

1. All applicants must participate in a Council approved Orientation prior to any meeting with girls.
2. Appropriate *Safety-Wise* guidelines such as adult/girl ratio will be maintained.
3. At least two non-related adults who have completed the screening and placement process and been approved as volunteers by Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons must be present at all times.
4. All meetings will take place in a location approved by the Service Unit Manager or Council staff member.
5. Girls will not be transported other than by their parents/guardians until placement is made.

Procedure: If approved as a volunteer (Troop Leader, trainer, or administrative volunteer, etc.) the term will be for one year, if mutually agreeable. Other volunteer positions may require a shorter or longer term appropriate to the task. Voluntary service should not be confused with employed staff status.

BACKGROUND SCREENING

Policy: All potential staff and volunteers are directed to complete an application form giving contact information, references, and background check authorization.

Background screening is the process of authenticating information. Girl Scouts – Dakota Horizons adheres to industry standards as we work with potential volunteers and employees.

Based on the results of the background check, the candidate's interests and skills, and the available opportunities at the council, the candidate's application is either accepted or denied.

All applications, background screening information, interview notes, and related documentation are kept in a secured file. The file and the office are locked during nonoffice hours.

Confidentiality: Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons will safeguard personal information in its possession to ensure confidentiality. Additionally, the council will only collect personal information required to pursue its business operations and to comply with government reporting and disclosure requirements. Personal information collected by the council includes names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, emergency contact information, EEO data, social security numbers, and date of birth.

Personal information will be considered confidential and as such will be shared only as required and with those who have a need to have access to such information. Personal information used in business system applications will be safeguarded under council proprietary electronic transmission and intranet policies and security systems.

If a material breach in maintaining the confidentiality of personal information occurs, the incident is reported to the Chief Membership and Program Officer. The Chief Membership and Program Officer investigates the incident and takes corrective action. A standard of reasonableness will apply in these circumstances.

EXPECATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Policy: Girl Scout volunteers are expected to serve as appropriate role models for girls and for other volunteers.

Expectations for volunteers include, but are not limited to:

- No use of tobacco in the presence of girls at Girl Scout programs, activities, and events
- No consumption of alcohol immediately before or during the time they are responsible for girl members or present at girl events
- No possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs or misuse of prescribed drugs
- No promotion of religious or political preferences while functioning as a Girl Scout volunteer

- No promotion of an individual opinion or philosophy inconsistent with Girl Scout beliefs and principles at Girl Scout programs, activities, and events
- No contact information of any kind shall be used for personal causes or to promote personal agendas. No willful or malicious damage of Council property or reputation
- No firearms or explosives on Girl Scout property or at Girl Scout functions

WHISTLE BLOWER PROTECTION

Policy: Girl Scout—Dakota Horizons upholds the highest ethical standards in all practices. In the event that a staff or volunteer member suspects wrong-doing of any nature she or he is encouraged to make a report. It is the policy of this Council that any individual reporting suspicions of wrong-doing is protected from any retaliatory actions intended to punish the individual for said reporting.

Procedure: Any individual who suspects wrong-doing of any nature and at any level of the organization shall contact the District Director or the CEO. Obligations for volunteers include, but are not limited to:

- Maintain conduct consistent with the Girl Scout Promise, Law, and Values.
- Maintain confidentiality and refrain from sharing sensitive information with others concerning Girl Scout programs, activities, and events.
- Handle Girl Scout funds in accordance with Council policies and utilize funds only for Girl Scout purposes.
- Follow Girl Scout safety and program standards. See *Safety-Wise*.

Procedure: Failure to meet these expectations and/or obligations will result in a formal performance improvement plan or release of the volunteer.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Policy: All adult volunteers must be willing to participate in training for her/his specific position including an Orientation session. It shall be the responsibility of Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons to provide training to every adult volunteer for her/his specific position. The Council may also offer training opportunities specific to health and wellness issues, such as stress management, health screenings, good nutrition, etc. in an effort to promote volunteer wellness.

Failure to obtain training may result in a volunteer being released from her/his position.

Procedures: Training is offered to help volunteers gain the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful. Training is available on many levels and is designed to meet the ongoing needs of volunteers as they grow and develop in a position. Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons will monitor participation in basic and advanced leadership training and will issue the appropriate recognition to the volunteer. Financial assistance is available on a case by case basis.

RECOGNITION

Policy: Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons believes that recognizing volunteers is a way of sharing respect and appreciation for their accomplishments. Recognitions are tangible reminders of rewarding relationships with Girl Scouting.

Procedure: Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons provides recognition for adult voluntary service. Service Units and community members are encouraged to publicly recognize the service of local volunteers.

UNIFORMS

Policy: Although Girl Scouting is a uniformed organization, a uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin when attending any Girl Scout function or representing Girl Scouting at community events.

Volunteers, members, and helpers, at large community or Council events or gatherings, must be visibly identified as Girl Scouts. The appearance of volunteers makes an impact on the perception of girls and the community and consequently on the overall impression of Girl Scouts.

Procedure: Girl Scout members may purchase uniform components at their discretion.

VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE

Policy: All volunteers are expected to meet the Council's standards for volunteer performance as detailed in her/his position description. Each volunteer will be provided with the opportunity for review and evaluation appropriate to her/his position on an annual basis. The review process will consist of an appraisal by the volunteer's supervisor. If the volunteer's performance does not meet appropriate standards, she/he may be given a reasonable opportunity to correct and/or improve performance.

Procedure: A volunteer's performance will be evaluated by her/his supervisor. This evaluation may take the form of a written self-evaluation, an interview, or a face-to-face conversation, etc.

If a performance issue is apparent, a Performance Improvement Process may begin. The volunteer's supervisor may then attempt to follow these steps:

1. The volunteer and the supervisor will meet to discuss the performance issue. The volunteer will be informed of the action that should be taken to improve her/his performance.
2. A written summary outlining the performance issue and expected improvement will be given to the volunteer.
3. If there is no improvement, the volunteer will be placed on probation. Continued discussion between the supervisor and the volunteer will be summarized in writing. A reasonable time period in which to resolve the performance issue will be set. Specific corrective action which the volunteer is expected to take will be outlined in writing. If the performance issue is not resolved, the Council may take action to release the volunteer from any further service.

REAPPOINTMENT

Policy: The Council has the right to reappoint a volunteer to her/his current position, refer them to another position, or not appoint or reappoint them to any position.

Procedure: Reappointment is based on past performance; adherence to 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. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Policy: Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons will resolve volunteer conflicts in an equitable manner consistent with its policies and procedures.

Conflict/ Dispute Resolution

The most effective way to solve problems and resolve disputes between volunteers, or between volunteers and others, is by open discussion between and among the parties involved. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally to the satisfaction of all parties, the dispute resolution procedure will be followed. Initiation of the dispute resolution procedure is not grounds for discipline or release from assignment; however, the Council reserves the right to take appropriate action with respect to volunteers.

Dispute Resolution Procedure

Step 1. If an informal resolution is not possible and a hearing is desired, the person filing the complaint must do so in writing to a Council supervisor, citing the relevant facts. The

signed and dated document must: (a) be specifically titled “Conflict Resolution/Dispute Request,” (b) identify the person(s) whom the conflict concerns and (3) cite the issue or the policy or procedure that has allegedly been violated. If the conflict concerns a Council staff member, a copy should be forwarded to the staff member’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 will prepare a written report of the facts, including recommendations, and forward a copy to the Chief Executive Officer.

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 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 also be issued to the volunteer and immediate supervisor.

RELEASE

Policy: Either the Council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a voluntary position. Although advance notice is not required, when a volunteer requests release, a minimum notice of two weeks is requested. Voluntary positions should not be confused with employed staff status.

The Council may release a volunteer for reasons including, but not limited to, those listed below:

- Restructuring of positions
- Elimination of volunteer positions.
- Inability or failure to carry out the duties of the position.
- Failure to meet the expectations of volunteer conduct.

Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons retains the discretion to release any volunteer at any time. Release from a position does not cancel membership with GSUSA. See DISCLAIMER.

SEXUAL AND OTHER FORMS OF IMPERMISSIBLE HARASSMENT

Policy: Girls Scouts—Dakota Horizons is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination and disrespectful and offensive behavior. Disrespectful and offensive behavior, including inappropriate or degrading remarks and conduct, has the potential of being perceived as harassment or discrimination. Harassment and discrimination is prohibited and will not be tolerated by the Council.

The Council expressly prohibits any form of harassment that would violate federal, state, or local law.

Disrespectful and offensive behavior includes unwelcome remarks and physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual's race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, and status with regard to public assistance, or any other legally protected status.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Harassment may be verbal, physical, written, or visual. Conduct that may constitute harassment includes, but is not limited to, sexual or suggestive comments or jokes, sexual propositions, sexist remarks, unwanted staring or leering, pressure for sexual favors in return for special treatment, or unfavorable treatment or harassment not of a sexual nature directed toward an individual because of her/his race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, sex, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, and status with regard to public assistance, or any other legally protected status. See **DISCLAIMER**.

Procedure: Any volunteer who feels that he/she has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, Council staff member, or any agent of the organization should immediately report the incident to a supervisor, the Chief Executive Officer, or the Board of Directors. Any supervisor receiving such a complaint must report the matter to the Chief Executive Officer or the Board of Directors. The Chief Executive Officer or designee deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors will promptly and fairly investigate the complaint and, depending on the findings, take the appropriate corrective action.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

The Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons Council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (“the Act”) defines child abuse and neglect as “the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse as 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.”

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. It is against the Council's policy for any volunteer or employed staff, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member.

In accordance with this policy, the Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons Council will neither condone nor tolerate:

infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members;

physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities;

emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Requirement to report suspected child abuse or neglect

The first step to be taken in any situation is to contact the immediate supervisor among employed Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons staff.

It is the policy of Girl Scouts—Dakota Horizons Council to require all employed staff and volunteers to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to proper local authorities within 24 hours of observing or learning about a possible incident of abuse or neglect. If the possible incident takes place in Minnesota a written report must be submitted to law enforcement or county social services within 72 hours of said incident.

Some indications of abuse would include, but not be limited to: physical injuries that appear to be non-accidental in nature; such as bruises, burns, cuts, fractures, or swelling. Some conditions of neglect include, but are not limited to: inadequate food, clothing, shelter or medical care; abandonment, exposure to threatening conditions, inadequate supervision, exposure to criminal activity or certain controlled substances.