

**GIRL SCOUTS OF VIRGINIA SKYLINE COUNCIL  
POLICIES**



GIRL SCOUTS OF VIRGINIA SKYLINE COUNCIL, INC.

COUNCIL POLICIES

**GENERAL**

G1 - All members of Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council must adhere to *Safety-Wise*, and to the policies of the Girl Scouts of the USA, which are contained in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* and the *Leader's Digest*.

G2 - All members of Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council must adhere to GSVSC's council policies contained in this document, its *Safety-Wise* Supplement, its Volunteer Management Policies, its Corporate Fiscal Policies, and any other policies which may be developed and distributed to its membership.

**PROGRAM**

P1 - Troops/groups must have written permission from a council-authorized volunteer or employee to participate in the following activities:  
a. activities that involve travel outside the community  
b. camping activities, including backyard camping  
c. programs that include human sexuality and related health issues  
d. activities that present a greater risk than usual to participants

NOTE 1: Refer to the Volunteer Resource Manual section on troop trips for a list of council-authorized volunteers and employees.

NOTE 2: Refer to *Safety-Wise* Supplement document for definition of "community."

NOTE 3: Refer to *Safety-Wise* for information on activities with greater risk than usual.

P2 - During activities involving girl participation, there shall be no alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs used, consumed, or possessed by anyone present and anyone arriving under the influence noticeable by their behavior will be prohibited from participating in the activity.

NOTE 1: Prescription drugs authorized by a physician are allowed if indicated on health form.

NOTE 2: Possession and use of tobacco products by those under 18 years of age at Girl Scout activities is prohibited, even though parental consent is indicated.

NOTE 3: The Accident, Incident and Crisis Report form may be used in confidence to report an occasion of prohibiting someone from participating due to substance influenced behavior.

P3 - Auxiliary heaters fueled by electricity, wood, coal, gas, oil, solar, propane, kerosene, etc., are never to be used in areas used for sleeping during regular sleeping hours.

NOTE: There is potential danger of asphyxiation and fire because no one is awake and in control of use.

P4 - No open flame sources such as candles, lanterns, stoves, etc., are to be used in tents.

NOTE: Although tents may be flame retardant, clothing, sleeping bags, etc., are not, and the opportunity for fire is great.

P5 - Non-Girl Scout groups and families of registered Girl Scouts must submit the designated application and pay appropriate fees for use of any GSVSC facility, and will be given time and date consideration if not in conflict with on-going Girl Scout use. The designated application must verify that the group/organization/family has or can obtain appropriate insurance for the nature of their use; be financially responsible for any and all damages beyond the requested damage deposit amount caused by their use and/or personal injury; and must sign the hold harmless provision contained within the application. Any non-Girl Scout group may be denied use of the facility if their beliefs and practices are in conflict with those of the Girl Scouts and/or with previous use have shown lack of care and responsibility for GSVSC facilities/property.

## **FINANCE**

F1 - Any registered Girl Scout volunteer who assumes stewardship of any Girl Scout monies within his/her jurisdiction is accountable to Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council for those monies, and those monies shall be held in a checking or interest-bearing account at an accredited financial institution.

NOTE: The public trusts that money earned by Girl Scout troops/groups and/or raised by the Council is used to further Girl Scout program; uniform reporting using the Annual Troop Finance Report helps assure this trust.

F2 - Each bank account established and managed by registered Girl Scout volunteers must have at least two adult signatories. No two persons from the same family or household may be considered signatories on a Girl Scout bank account.

NOTE: Prevents collusion.

F3 - Any volunteer who willfully and knowingly writes a dishonored check from a Girl Scout bank account, who willfully and knowingly writes a dishonored check from his or her personal account payable to Girl Scouts, or who uses Girl Scout money for personal purposes will be removed from his/her position, is ineligible for any position in the council, and will be responsible for any bank charges and misappropriated funds involved, including any applicable court or legal fees.

NOTE: It is difficult to continue to "trust" an individual when the Girl Scout Law "to be honest" has been breached and therefore the girls would not have a good role model.

F4 - Troops/groups not re-registering must send any unused funds to council headquarters. These funds are held for one year pending re-registration of this troop/group. If the troop/group does not re-register, the funds are then used as start-up resources for new troops/groups and financial assistance for girls.

F5 - Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council will pursue outstanding debts owed to the council and, when practical, debts owed to its registered troops/groups up to and including appropriate legal action.

F6 - The Board of Directors shall determine the necessity for any council-sponsored product sale and the use of the proceeds.

F7 - Special permission is required through the service unit in order for a troop/group of registered Girl Scouts to sell cookies at booths. All troops/groups must have at least two adults present at all times.

F8 - Special permission is required through the Director of Fund Development in order for a troop/group of registered Girl Scouts to engage in any money-earning activity other than the council-sponsored product sales.

F9 - Contributions shall be made payable to Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council. Written permission from the Director of Fund Development or her designee must be secured before troops/groups or individuals accept cash donations or donations of real property having a value of more than \$100. These gifts must first be received at council headquarters and will then be forwarded to the troop/group. Gifts that violate the Affirmative Action Policy shall not be accepted. Only the Director of Fund Development or her designee may issue letters of tax deductibility.

F10 - Adults may not conduct money-earning activities under the Girl Scout name to support their own participation in an activity unless they have direct responsibility for supervising a group of girls during the activity for which the money is being earned.

F11 - In accordance with the council's risk management plan, all monies used by and for the service units must be kept in a checking account at an accredited financial institution for tracking/documentation purposes. The only authorized signers on those accounts are the service unit manager and the assigned council employee. Checks for \$250 or more must have both signatures. All bank statements must be sent directly to council headquarters. A financial report on the checking account is required in July of each year to cover all activity in the account for the previous year ending June 30. Any bank charges incurred due to bounced checks or insufficient funds are the personal responsibility of the service unit manager. All funds in excess of \$100 on June 30<sup>th</sup> must be returned to the council general fund by July 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

A1 - Only the President of the Council and her/his designee is authorized to communicate with the media about any situation of a serious or controversial nature that would have impact on the reputation or image of Girl Scouting. That communication shall be the "Council Statement." Any other communication to anyone by anyone is unauthorized.

NOTE: Assures clearance with legal counsel and presentation of facts.

A2 - Registered Girl Scout volunteers in leadership roles in troops/groups are authorized to sign contracts for renting passenger vehicles when such vehicles are obtained from a licensed rental agency, car dealer, church or other organization having such a vehicle available for use for an approved Girl Scout activity.

NOTE: Contracts for all buses must be approved and signed by the Director of Program Services or her designee.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

M1 - Service Units are obligated to organize Girl Scouting for all girls who wish to belong and who meet the applicable membership requirements.



## STANDARDS OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
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We maintain that the strength of the Girl Scout movement rests in the voluntary leadership of its adult members. It is through this voluntary leadership that the movement serves girls. To ensure the job satisfaction of volunteers, to employ the talents of volunteers effectively, and to uphold the standards and values of the Girl Scout movement, it is essential that the following policies be established and maintained. Volunteering is a privilege that comes with defined responsibilities. The volunteer management policies, practices, and procedures govern those responsibilities and behaviors. Volunteer members are expected to adhere to the policies at all times. "Every adult volunteer in Girl Scouts must be selected on the basis of qualification for membership, ability to perform the job and willingness and availability to participate in training for it."<sup>1</sup>

### **ABOUT THE POLICY HANDBOOK**

The Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council (GSVSC) volunteer management policy handbook is designed to assist volunteers in understanding the behaviors expected of them while volunteering for Girl Scouts and to be aware of consequences for failure to comply with policies.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF ALL VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout movement shall meet membership standards, be registered through the council as members, and agree to abide by the policies of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), which are contained in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* and the *Leader's Digest*, and GSVSC policies, which are found at the beginning of this document.

All volunteers agree to accept and practice the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

All volunteers agree to follow all policies, standards, and procedures.

All volunteers agree to accept and practice the standards for appropriate behavior.

All volunteers agree to accept and practice safe behavior as outlined in *Safety-Wise*.

<b>INCLUSIVENESS STATEMENT</b>
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**To sign means that you will .....**

Read and sign the statement indicating you understand the impact of inclusiveness on your actions and behaviors in carrying out the responsibilities of Girl Scout leadership. All volunteers in good standing must have a signed Statement of Inclusiveness on file at council headquarters. In addition to the Statement of Inclusiveness, Girl Scouts further describe expectations in regard to inclusiveness:

"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."<sup>2</sup>

GSVSC shall place special emphasis on securing representation of persons from under-served and diverse groups in all communities within its jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, 2003, page 22

<sup>2</sup> *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, 2003, page 22

GSVSC shall conduct its programs and organizational affairs so as to value diversity and institutionalize pluralism.

**PLURALISM**

“Pluralism is a system with individuals or groups differing in background, experiences, and culture that allows for the development of a common tradition while preserving each group’s right to maintain cultural heritage. Pluralism is a process involving mutually respectful relationships.”<sup>3</sup>

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**

“GSVSC complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable state and local laws providing for nondiscrimination in volunteer service against qualified individuals with disabilities. GSVSC also provides reasonable accommodation for such individuals in accordance with these laws. It is GSVSC policy to, without limitation:

Ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner in the volunteer application process and that volunteers with disabilities are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner in all terms, conditions and privileges of volunteer service.

- a) Keep all medical record information conveyed, in writing or verbally, confidential in accordance with the requirements of the ADA.
- b) Provide applicants and volunteers with disabilities with reasonable accommodation, except where such an accommodation would create an undue hardship on GSVSC.
- c) Recognize that volunteers with a non-contagious illness may wish to continue their volunteer service and, in fact, that continued volunteer service may be therapeutically important in their recovery process.”<sup>4</sup>

**STANDARDS FOR ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR**

Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc. is committed to a work environment in which relationships are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the council to provide all employees and volunteers with a work environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

**HARRASSMENT**

The Modern Penal Code (MPC), section 250.4, defines harassment as a petty misdemeanor if with purpose to harass another, she/he: 1) makes a phone call without legitimate purpose; or 2) insults, taunts, or challenges another in a manner likely to provoke a violent or disorderly response; or 3) calls at inconvenient hours or in offensive language; or 4) subjects another to offensive touching; or 5) engages in any other course of alarming conduct serving no legitimate purpose of the actor.

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been the victim of or a witness to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, a council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a supervisor or to the CEO. The supervisor, upon receiving such a complaint, must report the matter to the CEO. The CEO will take appropriate measures to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner. Volunteers are assured that the utmost discretion will be used consistent with the requirement of the law in the conduct of the review. If a review indicates that harassment has in fact occurred, immediate and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including release from volunteer status.

<sup>3</sup> *Safety-Wise*, page 154

<sup>4</sup> GSVSC Board Policies

**SEXUALITY**

Any volunteer member, in conducting Girl Scout program, shall not advocate, solicit, or promote any form of sexuality so as to create substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to maintaining the proper role model for girl members.

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be participating in such conduct.

Volunteers may use GSUSA and GSVSC-approved programs, with written parental/guardian permission, as appropriate vehicles to discuss sexuality with girls. See *Safety-Wise*, pages 40-41.

**SEXUAL CONDUCT**

GSVSC will not condone or tolerate the following behaviors of volunteers when in the presence or vicinity of girls or other participants at Girl Scouts activities:

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be participating in such conduct.

- overt displays of sexual activity among volunteers or between volunteers and employed staff;
- any display or demonstration of sexual activity among volunteers, or between volunteers and staff, or between volunteers and girl members;
- sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between volunteers and girl members;
- unwanted sexual advances or unwanted sexual activity of any kind between volunteers and employed staff or among volunteers;
- use of the Girl Scout name, related activities, publications, and/or facilities as vehicles for public or private promotion of sexual orientation and/or practice;
- infliction of sexually abusive behavior upon girl members, including sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and/or involvement of girl members in pornographic materials.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE CONDUCT**

GSVSC will not condone or tolerate the following behaviors of volunteers when in the presence or vicinity of girls or other participants at Girl Scouts activities:

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be participating in such conduct.

- 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 ABUSE CONDUCT**

There is an important line between reminding a girl of an agreed-upon, appropriate behavior, reprimanding a girl for violating a rule, and denigrating a girl. Yelling or shouting at a girl unless there is immediate danger is not an

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acceptable interaction between an adult volunteer and a girl.

GSVSC will not condone or tolerate the following behaviors of volunteers when in the presence or vicinity of girls or other participants at Girl Scouts activities:

- emotional maltreatment of girl members, including nonverbal and verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks;
- using Girls Scouts as a basis for initiating or perpetuating personal disagreements. Adult volunteers are charged with being role models who work out differences between themselves in responsible and appropriate ways. Verbally, physically, or emotionally abusive conduct that occurs between adults in front of girls or involves parents of registered girls will not be tolerated.

### **APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL TOUCHING**

Volunteers are encouraged to be caring, nurturing individuals, so hugs and pats on the back for encouragement are considered appropriate when a girl initiates the contact. However, at no time should an adult or older girl in a supervisory position be alone with or unobserved by other adults with a single child.

### **SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

In accordance with guidelines on sexual discrimination issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council, Inc. endorses the following:

- Sexual harassment is an unwelcome sexual advance, a request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
- It is illegal and against the council's policies for any volunteer, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex.
- Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that presents behavior incompatible with the values, traditions, and purposes of Girl Scouting as stated in Constitution of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

Any volunteer who believes that she/he has been the subject of sexual harassment as defined in the council's policy is to report the incident(s) to her/his immediate supervisor, the CEO, or the Personnel Task Group chairman. All complaints of sexual harassment will be investigated immediately and results kept confidential. GSVSC will not engage in any retaliatory behavior against a complainant or anyone giving information in the investigation for the complainant.

### **HOSTILITY**

GSVSC strictly prohibits hostility in any form against another volunteer member as well as girl members and staff, visitors, parents, and anyone else having some involvement with the council. Hostility is considered to include physical violence as well as harassment, intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about hostility whether in person or through some other means of communication, such as writing, telephone, voicemail, or electronic mail. This applies to all volunteers at

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be participating in such conduct. Retaliation against anyone who has reported a possible or actual violation of this policy is strictly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including release from volunteer service.

all facilities occupied by the council or off premises if involved in activities for the council. Examples include, but are not limited to: camps, meetings, events, and trip sites.

### **TROOP/GROUP SIZE**

Each troop or group has at least one adult leader and one or more assistant leaders. Because the female role model is essential to fulfilling the purpose of Girl Scouting, at least one member of the leadership team must be an adult female.<sup>5</sup>

Troops should be large enough to provide experience in self-government and small enough to allow for the development of the individual girls.<sup>6</sup>

A group consists of at least five girls from more than one family.

### **MALE LEADERS**

Men may serve as assistant leaders and only when a female leader is present. A man cannot be an assistant leader to his wife unless there is an unrelated female troop leader present and registered.

There may be trips on which fathers or male leaders are part of the group. It is not appropriate for males to sleep in the same space with girl members. They may participate only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. Sleeping accommodations for such events should be announced in advance, and girls must be instructed **NOT** to enter the “sleeping accommodations” of males. Men should not be among the adults supervising girls in the sleeping area of an event. The adult-to-girl ratio for the trip will need to be adjusted accordingly.

### **ADULTS IN GIRL SCOUTING WHO SMOKE**

Adults who do smoke should think carefully about the role models they are providing to Girl Scouts and should consider whether they are showing true concern for the health and welfare of the individuals for whom they are responsible. At no time should an adult smoke in the presence of girls when involved in a Girl Scout activity, event, camp, or meeting.

- Meetings that involve adults should be so scheduled that a time is provided for those who do smoke to retire to a designated place for at least 10 minutes during each two-hour period.
- When adults are accompanying girls on an activity, they should plan for some time away from the girls if they must smoke.
- Most facilities used today by Girl Scouts do not allow smoking, and that request should be honored.
- On council camp facilities, it is expected that adults will not smoke along trails or in tents, cabins, latrines, and other buildings. Fire circles are the safest area at which to smoke when girls are not present.
- It is not permissible for girl members to smoke cigarettes at a Girl Scout function.

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<sup>5</sup> *Safety-Wise Program Standard #13*

<sup>6</sup> *Safety-Wise Program Standard #20*

### **USE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS**

Alcohol is not appropriate at girl events.<sup>7</sup> Leaders are expected to set an example. Improper use of prescription drugs directly before or during any Girl Scout activity is not permitted. Use of illegal drugs or alcohol directly before or during any Girl Scout activity is not permitted.

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be participating in such conduct.

### **GUIDELINES FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF PREGNANT GIRLS**<sup>8</sup>

GSVSC believes that a pregnant girl may not be denied membership simply because of her pregnancy.

- Membership in Girl Scouting is open to all girls who meet the membership standards and accept the Promise and Law.
- A girl's ability to participate in Girl Scout-approved activities is determined on the basis of information supplied on the annual health statement and physician's statement as appropriate.
- An older girl who may be assuming a leadership position with younger girls in a troop, group, or camp setting must be considered for such position under the volunteer management policies and related procedures.

### **GUIDELINES FOR ISSUES OF CHILD ABUSE**

It is the policy of the council to provide an environment that is free of child abuse and safeguards the health and well-being of girl members of GSUSA. Virginia has a child protective/law enforcement agency that is mandated by state law to receive and investigate reports of suspected child abuse. West Virginia has local child protective services established by the state in every county. GSVSC supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect.

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with the council any volunteer implementing Girl Scout program who has been convicted or has been found guilty (regardless of prosecution) of child abuse or neglect. A volunteer member suspected of child abuse will be suspended from volunteer responsibilities until the case is resolved.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE**

GSVSC believes that one of our primary concerns is the health, safety, and well-being of the girls. Virginia state law requires employees and volunteers to report suspected cases of child abuse. According to Virginia law, an abused or neglected child is any child under 18 years of age whose parent(s) or any person responsible for his or her care:

- a. causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
- b. neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care;
- c. abandons the child;

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<sup>7</sup> *Safety-Wise*, page 10

<sup>8</sup> Adopted by board of directors 3/01

- d. neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development; or
- e. commits or allows to be committed an illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, and prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

**ANY PERSON WHO SUSPECTS THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED OR NEGLECTED MUST MAKE A COMPLAINT.**

**TO REPORT A SUSPECTED CASE OF CHILD ABUSE, DO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Call the CEO of Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council (800-542-5905 or 540-777-5100). She has resources to assist you with making your report. If she is not available, go to step #2.
2. Call your local social services office (check the telephone book under county or city listings). If at night or on a weekend, go on to step #3.
3. Call the Child Abuse Hotline (800-552-7096).
4. Regardless of the situation, inform the CEO as soon as possible by phone and form #1089 (Accident, Incident, and Crisis Report).

When reporting a suspected case of child abuse, you do not have to give your name, but it is helpful to give your name in case more information is needed. These steps must be taken within three days of the suspected abuse.

**RELIGION IN THE GIRL SCOUT PROGRAM**

“Girls are encouraged and helped through the Girl Scout program to become better members of their own religious group, but every Girl Scout group must recognize that religious instruction is the responsibility of parents and religious leaders. Every Girl Scout group shall respect the varying religious opinions and practices of its membership in planning and conducting activities.

GSVSC reserves the right to refuse appointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with GSVSC any volunteer who is found to be forcing a belief system on girl members.

“GSUSA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word ‘God’ in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word ‘God’.

“When a Girl Scout troop is sponsored by one religious group, members of different faiths or religious affiliations within the troop shall not be required to take part in religious observations of the sponsoring group.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, 2003, page 23

## **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Volunteers who agree to serve in positions requiring management of troop, group, event, or product funds are required to report on an annual basis the state of those funds. Service unit managers or their designated team members and troop/group leaders are required to submit an annual financial report that accurately reflects revenue and expenditures during the previous membership year. Those reports are due to council offices no later than July 1. Product sales managers must meet deadlines set by the Product Sales Committee. Camp and event managers must have all funds accountable no later than 45 days following the camp/event.

Troop/group leaders failing to submit year-end financial reports will not be allowed to re-register for the next membership year. An audit of funds will occur. Product sales managers failing to submit amounts due the council will be contacted and provided with an opportunity to pay the amount due; if they do not comply, their account will be turned over for prosecution. Volunteer leaders mismanaging funds could be relieved of their volunteer responsibilities.

Council Policy F1 states, "Any registered Girl Scout volunteer who assumes stewardship of any Girl Scout monies within his/her jurisdiction is accountable to Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council for those monies, and those monies shall be held in a checking or interest-bearing account at an accredited financial institution." See Council Policies for further information regarding fiscal responsibilities.

## **RELEASE FROM POSITION**

When the release of a volunteer from a position is the result of a breach of a council policy, the release shall be effective immediately. Operational volunteers or their supervisors may initiate release of services with or without cause at any time.

The procedure is as follows:

### **A list of some examples for the release of a volunteer, but this list is not exclusive:**

- Refusal to follow written policies and/or standards of GSUSA and/or GSVSC;
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of a child;
- Mishandling of funds and stealing of troop or council money;
- Irresponsible management of funds such as frequent writing of checks for insufficient funds;
- Documented evidence of emotional instability to the degree that the position performance is impaired.

### **Steps to follow:**

- Gather the facts **quickly** from all persons directly involved. When separation possibilities are indicated, take no action on the basis of unsubstantiated information. Involve as few people as possible in the fact-gathering and decision-making process.
- Fill out an incident report form (#1089).
- Inform your immediate supervisory volunteer and/or appropriate council staff of intentions to release the volunteer. If any type of conflict develops, these individuals will have had prior knowledge of the facts.

- Reach the decision with regard to the quality of position performance on the basis of a thorough review of the situation with particular attention to behavior and attitudes that have a direct and adverse effect on the girls or the Girl Scout image in the community.

Discuss the intent to release with the individual concerned. Explain why the volunteer is considered not qualified for the assigned position.

- Be objective, tactful, and honest.
- State the facts.
- Be clear and concise.
- Maintain confidentiality.

Indicate action to be taken.

- Give the individual an opportunity to resign or withdraw voluntarily and with dignity by submitting a written resignation when facts indicate that release is necessary.
- Relieve the volunteer immediately from the duties of the position.
- Assure the volunteer that release from the position does not cancel membership in the Girl Scout movement. Membership is not canceled; it expires.
- Answer carefully any questions raised in the community about the situation but do not disclose confidential information.

If further recourse is desired by the individual, follow the steps outlined in the Volunteer Grievance Procedure.



# **Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council Volunteer Grievance Procedure**



## **GSVSC Volunteer Grievance Procedure**

A grievance is a complaint related to a volunteer's position not being properly administered. The grievance procedure is a systematic process to ensure the objective hearing and orderly handling of a volunteer grievance. All volunteers may use the grievance procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her/his grievance without fear of jeopardizing her/his volunteer status. The council also maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns. Volunteers are encouraged to keep open communication in an effort to resolve problems as they arise. If a volunteer has contacted her/his supervisor and is unable to resolve the grievance, the following steps can be taken. **A grievance must be filed within 30 days of the alleged incident.**

**Step 1:** The volunteer initiates the process by filling out the grievance form (#3486) and requests a conference with her/his supervisor. The volunteer cites the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated. The conference is to take place within 10 business days from receipt of the grievance form.

If the supervisor is not a council staff member, the appropriate staff member is informed of the complaint and the date of the conference prior to the meeting. The council staff member informs her/his supervisor of the complaint and conference prior to the date of the meeting. The CEO is also informed of the complaint and the scheduled meeting date.

Following the meeting, the disposition of the grievance is documented on the grievance form by the supervisor.

**Step 2:** If the conflict is not resolved in Step 1, the council staff member or, if appropriate, the council staff member's supervisor will meet with the volunteer within 10 business days following the initial conference. The CEO is informed of the follow-up meeting and the status of the grievance.

Following the meeting, the disposition of the grievance is documented on the grievance form by the supervisor. In the event the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member or her/his supervisor, as appropriate, prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations, and sends a copy to the CEO within 10 business days.

**Step 3:** In the event the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the staff supervisor and the CEO decide on what additional action to take, using one or more of the following options within 30 business days:

- Accept the staff member's report and recommendations.
- CEO meets with the volunteer to hear the grievance and resolve the grievance.
- CEO appoints a Grievance Review Team to meet with the volunteer and resolve the grievance.

The Grievance Review Team is comprised of:

- A management representative – someone in a supervisory position or a board member,
- An employee not involved in the conflict resolution process, and
- A council volunteer selected by the complainant.

### **Procedure for Grievance Review Team**

The Grievance 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 Grievance Review Team will provide the CEO with a written report of its findings and recommendations within 10 business days of the review hearing. This is the council's final decision.

The CEO will communicate the final decision from the Grievance Review Team to the volunteer and implement the decision.

**VOLUNTEER GRIEVANCE FORM**

Name of grievant:	Position:
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Please describe as factually and clearly as possible the situation for which this grievance is being filed:

Is there a specific council policy, volunteer policy, or procedure that you feel as been breached or not fairly administered?

Date of most recent incident:    /    /

Signature of grievant:	Date submitted:    /    /
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Address:

Phone number: (    )    -

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Step 1: Conference**

Grievance received on (date):    /    /

By:	Position:
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The following have been notified of the grievance (please check and insert name and date):

<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer supervisor:	Date:    /    /
<input type="checkbox"/> Council staff member:	Date:    /    /
<input type="checkbox"/> Council staff member supervisor:	Date:    /    /
<input type="checkbox"/> CEO:	Date:    /    /

Date of conference:    /    /

Outcomes of conference and details of follow-up:

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Step 2: Conference**

Grievance received on (date):    /    /

By:	Position:
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The following have been notified of the grievance (please check and insert name and date):

<input type="checkbox"/> Council staff member:	Date:    /    /
<input type="checkbox"/> Council staff member supervisor:	Date:    /    /
<input type="checkbox"/> CEO:	Date:    /    /

Date of conference:    /    /

Outcomes of conference and details of follow-up:

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Step 3: Conference**

Grievance received on (date):    /    /

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

The following have been notified of the grievance (please check and insert name and date):

Council staff member supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:    /    /

CEO: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:    /    /

Indicate action to be taken:

- Accept the staff member's report and recommendations.
- CEO meets with the volunteer to hear the grievance and resolve the grievance.  
Date of conference:    /    /  
Recommended outcome of conference and details of follow-up:

- CEO appoints a Grievance Review Team to meet with the volunteer and resolve the grievance.  
Date of Grievance Review Team meeting:    /    /  
**Grievance Review Team**
  - Management representative:
  - Employee:
  - Council volunteer (selected by the grievant):Recommendations of the Grievance Review Team:

Actions taken by CEO:

Signature of grievant:

Signature of CEO: