

## Troop Meeting Guidelines

Updated August 13, 2021

*These guidelines are in effect until further notice and are to be followed by all members of GSCCC. (May change as needed to comply with federal and state safety guidelines). Our preferred method of meeting remains virtual, however, we understand that girls would like to meet in-person. We have made a few allowances to accommodate in-person activities and meetings. Please read the document in its entirety.*

### I. In-person Troop Meetings (Indoors)

Troop meetings can be held indoors at approved locations. Starting November 23, 2020, meetings can be held at Council reserved sites, if all safety guidelines are met. **Troops are NOT allowed to meet indoors at personal residences.** Troops must carefully adhere to GSCCC, GSUSA, CDC, state, and local health authority protocols as outlined in this document.

#### A. Masks

- Masks are not required for unvaccinated girls and adults when outdoors and proper physical distancing is maintained. Distancing requirements are 10 feet when active (swimming, etc.) and 6 feet when stationary (crafts, eating, etc.). If distancing is not possible and cannot be maintained, masks are required.
- Masks are required for all girls and adults when indoors and maintain distance (3 feet for girls/ 6 feet for adults).

#### B. Indoor Safety Instructions

- Leaders must have proper first-aid supplies as listed below.
- Please have cleaning supplies available to clean areas before and afterwards.
- Caregiver permission slips MUST be filled out each time the troop meets for a troop meeting or day trip. Caregiver permission slips are available on [www.gsccl.org](http://www.gsccl.org) on the [Forms page](#).
- Leaders should communicate proper hygiene and risk mitigation procedures as outlined in section IV. Remind all parents that girls or adults should not attend meetings if they are not feeling well.
- Contact meeting location in advance to ensure they are following CDC and local health authority guidelines on face coverings, social distancing, and cleaning protocols.
- Leaders must keep detailed rosters of attendees and follow proper reporting procedures as outlined below.
- Troop meetings on Council premises, as with normal Girl Scout programs, should abide with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) in terms of two unrelated adult volunteers, adult-to-girl ratios, etc.
- Social distancing and other requirements regarding gatherings must be followed along with wearing face masks indoors. (Must follow state guidelines.)

#### C. Reserving Inside and Outside Meeting Spaces on Council Properties

Troop meetings on Council premises, as with all normal Girl Scout programs, should abide with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) in terms of two unrelated adult volunteers, adult-to-girl ratios, etc.

**How to make a reservation:**

- Leaders can reserve inside and outside meeting spaces at a variety of Council properties at no cost.
- For safety reasons, capacities are posted for each location. Troops should only reserve spaces that accommodate their size – do not exceed capacities. Capacities include all participants and not just girls.
- Leaders must ensure attendees wear face coverings when outside if social distancing is not possible.
- Leaders must bring their cleaning/sanitizing supplies. Shared and/or frequently touched areas (including, but not limited to, door handles, light switches, tables, chairs, and restrooms) should be wiped down before girls enter and upon girls leaving.
- Reservations must be made no later than Thursday by the end of business day.
- Reservations are made through the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK).
- Leaders must have signed permission slips from each caregiver prior to each meeting.
- Leaders must keep accurate rosters of girls and adults in attendance at in-person meetings.
- Archery range, axe-throwing range, ropes course and canoes – these resources cannot be rented online. You need to make these reservations through [customercare@gsgcc.org](mailto:customercare@gsgcc.org).
- There is a fee to rent outdoor activities. Volunteers should reserve their spot, then contact [customercare@gsgcc.org](mailto:customercare@gsgcc.org) to pay.

**Properties and Capacities of Available Meeting Spaces**

**Effective immediately except where noted otherwise.**

*(Must adhere to guidelines and restrictions.)*

**A Place for Girls-**

**All rooms effective 10/1/2021**

Beazley--16

Fun Room--20

Lodge--12

Parsons Amazing Room--24

Young Performers Room--20

**Camp Apasus (includes field area)**

Sertoma--12

**Camp Burkes Mill Pond (includes field area)**

Treakle Lodge--15

**Camp Darden**

Dining Hall--30

Union Lodge--20

**Elizabeth City Office--capacity 15**

**Franklin Hut--capacity 20**

**Camp Skimino (includes field area)**

Armacost Building--30

Enmeier- Downstairs--20

Enmeier- Upstairs--40

## II. **In-person Troop Meetings (Outdoors)**

Regular troop meetings are permitted to be held outdoors. If your meeting space does not have outdoor accommodations and you are seeking a new location, please contact your volunteer support team members or staff support at [customercare@gscgcc.org](mailto:customercare@gscgcc.org).

### **A. Troop Meetings in Backyards**

Indoor troop meetings in homes are not allowed out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure. However, we will temporarily allow use of personal home outdoor settings (backyards) as a meeting space. If having outdoor meetings at a home, the following are required:

- The home must be the residence of a registered, background checked, and Council-approved volunteer.
- Girls may not meet in a home where a registered sex offender resides.
- Non-registered and background checked household members are not permitted to interact with the girls at any time.
- Leaders or a parent must personally accompany a girl into the home to use the restroom or for other emergency reasons.
- Homeowners may be liable for injuries and accidents that occur during meetings at their home. Please consider any personal homeowner insurance implications. The homeowner should ask their homeowner's insurance carrier if there are any insurance exclusions regarding holding troop meetings at the home, in the event an accident or injury occurs.
- If the troop leader has rental insurance because they do not own the home, they will need to make sure their insurance covers liability.
- Before meeting, troop leaders must submit proof of homeowner's liability insurance to their Council Volunteer Support Specialist.
- Animals should be secured indoors, separate and away from the girls' meeting space.
- Girls are prohibited from playing on trampolines.
- Weapons must be completely out of view and stored in a locked space.
- Medication, dangerous cleaning products, or any poisonous substance must be stored in a secure space out of sight, preferably locked.
- Meetings **ARE ONLY PERMITTED OUTDOORS** at personal residences.

### **B. Troop Day Trips (Indoors & Outdoors)**

Troops are permitted to take day trips both inside and outside the Council boundaries. Troops must follow all guidelines (social distancing, wearing mask). The standard trip requirements and notifications apply. Review [Volunteer Essentials](#) and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for guidance. Travel and overnights are not permitted at this time. This will be in effect until further notice.

### **C. Day Trips and Activities**

In conjunction with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), the guidance for Troop Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation (see section IV) in this interim guidance should be used for day trips and special activities. Call ahead to the facility or vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines. If activity or sporting equipment is being provided, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in between uses, similar to wipe downs in between uses for equipment at the gym. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer or disinfectant wipes if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

#### **D. Travel and Overnight Stay**

GSCCC will be permitting travel and overnight stays in limited capacities. As always, regardless of COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers must follow guidance in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). Prior to making travel arrangements, volunteers must seek Council approval for all overnight activities and continue to practice the Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance outlined in section IV.

#### **Additional Travel Information**

- No international travel permitted at this time.
- Follow the current trip approval process to submit trip requests.
- Trips and travel are approved on an individual basis. Approval must be granted by the Vice President of Member Engagement.
- Additional adult supervision may be needed.
- Travel coordinators must know and comply with all state safety guidelines for the state in which they are traveling.
- 75% of girls in the troop must be participating in the trip.
- Girls must have their own bed if they are sharing a room with a non-family member.
- Girls may share a bed if all room occupants are from the same family.

#### **E. Food, Dining and Snacks**

Be careful when handling and serving food and have girls be careful with each other when eating. Safety recommendations for food, dining and snacks include:

- Encourage girls to bring their own foods to eat (bag lunch or dinner).
- Encourage girls not to share their food after having touched it, such as a bag of chips.
- Individually wrapped items are recommended.
- If providing snacks, especially if unwrapped, have one person, wearing gloves, hand out items to each person, such as cupcakes or cookies.
- Use a serving spoon or scoop rather than reaching into a bag or bowl of snacks.
- Use a buffet line only if staffed with a safety protected server with mask and gloves.
- Avoid “serve yourself” buffets.
- Public dining only as permitted in your local jurisdiction.
- If serving family style, have one person wearing clean gloves serve everyone on clean plates.
- Use disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc., when possible.
- Encourage girls to bring foods they can easily cook themselves (a prepacked foil pack) or hotdog for outdoor cooking.
- Ensure everyone handling food, those serving girls, and adults, wash hands (even if they will be wearing gloves) prior to any food prep or meals, following CDC handwashing guidelines.
- If sharing outdoor cooking utensils (roasting forks), they should be washed and sanitized between each use or bring enough utensils so that each person gets their own.
- Continue recommendation for 6-foot spacing during meals.

**All troops are to submit trip requests to their trip coordinator with trip details ahead of time.**

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. Take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and [national directives](#). Discuss plans with families.

**F. Transportation (Carpooling)**

It is imperative to take all safety precautions when girls are travelling in motor vehicles. Coronavirus transmission risk is high when people are in close proximity, less than 6-feet apart. The risk increases when people are in a closed-in area or indoors for longer than 10 minutes. Individual parent drop-off and pick-up is still recommended.

If possible, girls from different households should not carpool. When transporting girls, avoid overcrowding, wear a mask at all times, do not eat or drink in the vehicle, and keep the windows partially open to provide ventilation. Make sure parents are aware ahead of time if girls will be in a car together. Always, for every in-person event, meeting or transportation arrangement, conduct the pre-screening process prior to attending.

Remember:

- There must be an empty seat between each person at all times in the vehicle.
- Only registered members should be in the vehicle when carpooling.
- Everyone over the age of 5 should wear masks at all times while in the vehicle.
- Do not eat or drink in the vehicle.
- Keep the car window open, at least partially, to circulate fresh air.
- Consider the personal situation of your girls:
  - Are they, or a member of their household, at high risk? If so, make other accommodations for her with her parents.
  - Pre-screen and keep a roster of all passengers when carpooling.
- Have the families been isolated, and free from contagion? If so, the troop may essentially be a safe bubble.

Again, sustained contact within 6-feet for longer than 10 minutes, even when masked, creates high risk for virus transmission, so carpooling should only be used when necessary and all safety precautions are followed.

**III. General COVID Guidelines**

**A. Personal Contact**

Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle can transmit COVID-19 from person-to-person. Create a safe way for girls and

volunteers to greet and end meetings instead (like tapping elbows). *Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials and resources.*

#### **B. Troop Spending**

All families may not be ready to have their daughters meet with the troop in-person. The ideal troop experience during these times would be to have some virtual opportunities. When planning a day trip, make sure to determine if the majority of girls are able to attend the event. All girls worked really hard to sell cookies and we want all to enjoy the outings that had been previously cancelled.

#### **C. First Aid Supplies**

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable face masks, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Disposable or no-contact thermometers may be added to supplies if available and not cost-prohibitive.

#### **D. Restrooms**

Be very careful in public restrooms. Most public restrooms will regulate the number of people using the restroom at the same time, depending on the size. If there is no regulator or signage, have volunteers ensure girls take appropriate turns to maintain social distancing and that they wear their masks in the restrooms. It is ideal to have automatic flushers and sensory faucets to wash hands. If these are not available, girls and adults should get in the habit of using tissue or paper towels to open doors and latches, touching as little as possible. If the restroom is large, have girls use every other stall and avoid using stalls with a person in the stall next to them at the same time. Restrooms and toilets are fraught with germs normally, and more so now, considering the contagion of coronavirus.

### **IV. Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation**

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

Signs should include:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Wash hands if you do touch.
- Volunteers, girls and parents should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Members with fever or temperature higher than 98.6 should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal.

### **Reporting and communicating a positive COVID-19 test**

In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, DO NOT contact the parents or troop members. Promptly contact the Council in this situation.

A **Council staff member** and NOT volunteers, will be responsible for:

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

**Let other volunteers know that Council staff, NOT volunteers,** will notify parents and others about a positive test result and that the **tester's identity is confidential.**

Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should be only shared on a need-to-know basis with a Council staff member.

**Please call GSCCC staff on emergency number 757-560-4110.**