

## **GSHPA COVID-19 GUIDANCE**

\*Please note, all guidance and information is subject to change at any time due to state and federal mandates.

Girl Scouts are resilient! And here at GSHPA, our girls, volunteers, and members demonstrate this over and over again as we all continue to navigate this ever changing situation. As we continue with Girl Scout activities, the safety and well-being of our girls, volunteers, and staff will continue to be our top priority. We understand that guidance is important for our troops and groups as they continue to safely participate in Girl Scout activities.

GSHPA continues to monitor state, federal and GSUSA guidance and safety protocols, to include the CDC and the PA Department of Health, as well as GSUSA guidelines. GSUSA and GSHPA reserve the right to require additional safety requirements above and beyond state and federal requirements to continue to ensure the safety of our members and their families. Please note, we will modify any all recommendations to align with state and federal mandates and update our members in a timely manner.

GSHPA will continue to keep the safety and well-being of our members and their families our top priority. We understand that each Girl Scout family must determine what is right for them. We encourage our Troop Leaders and Service Unit Leads to continue to stay connected with families to understand their engagement levels as activities are being planned.

### **GSHPA Members and Positive COVID-19 Cases**

In the event a member tests positive for COVID-19, the member cannot participate in any in-person activities or events for a period of 10 days from the positive test result.

If a GSHPA member receives a positive COVID-19 test result and was in attendance at a GSPHA meeting or event two days prior to the onset of symptoms or positive test result, the troop leader should promptly notify GSHPA and the parents of troop members who were in attendance. **At all times, the tester's identity will remain confidential.** Troop leaders should simply state facts regarding the timing of symptoms and positive test results without providing names.

GSHPA staff can provide an email template to use when contacting parents if needed. 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 GSHPA staff member.

## **Girl Scout Activity Safety Recommendations**

**Face Coverings:** All girls and adults are **recommended** to wear disposable or cloth face coverings (masks) for Girl Scout activities. Face masks will be optional; however, GSHPA supports a Troop Leader's discretion in using additional safety precautions, such as face masks, for in-person Girl Scout activities.

*In the event a troop meeting location should require face masks, GSHPA members are expected to fully comply with the facility's requirements.*

**Troop Meetings:** Troops must follow the guidance of the facility where meetings and gathering will be held regarding their maximum capacity allowed. Volunteers should consult the property owner to find out their occupancy guidance, in addition to any COVID-19 specific requirements they might have for the location.

Volunteer to girl ratios must be maintained throughout the duration of the gathering.

If you have a large troop, stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so stay together! Some ideas:

- Host virtual troop meetings (see below).
- Gather up in smaller groups—such as age-level groups, patrols, or groups of girls with a particular badge they'd like to work on.

In the event a girl is unable to attend an in-person meeting, GSHPA encourages the use of virtual platforms to engage these girls and invite them to participate in the meeting virtually.

**Virtual Troop Meetings:** Online troop meetings are a great option for keeping girls and troops connected!

Discounted Girl Scout Zoom licenses are available just for GSHPA leaders for \$36/year. To purchase a Girl Scout Zoom license, complete the following forms:

- [GSHPA Zoom User License Agreement](#)
- [GSHPA Zoom Purchase Request](#)

GSHPA has resources for Troop Leaders to keep our Girl Scouts engaged and learning.

- [Tips & Tricks for Facilitating Virtual Troop Meetings](#)
- [Virtual Meetings Playbook](#)
- [Virtual Meetings Safety Activities Checkpoint](#)
- [GSHPA Girl Scouts at Home](#)

**Troop Meeting Space:** Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location.

For meetings held at public facilities, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?

- Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your troop. Another example: if faucets are manual, take some time to show girls how to shut them off with a paper towel. Use paper towels for doorknobs whenever possible.

Meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist. Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.

**Troop Meetings in the Home:** GSHPA strongly discourages troops from meetings in homes. In the event this is your only option for an indoor meeting space, please contact your Volunteer Support Coordinator for additional requirements.

**Transportation To and From Meetings/Activities:** Individual parents/caregivers should drop off and pick up their own girls. Public transportation should be avoided. If possible, girls from different households should not carpool.

In the event that carpooling is unavoidable, we recommend volunteers take the following safety precautions:

- Girls and Adults are encouraged to wear masks when inside of a motor vehicle.
- Keep car window opened, at least partially, to circulate fresh air.
- Consider the personal situation of your girls:
  - Do they live with an immune compromised person that they can put at risk? If so, other accommodations should be arranged with her parents/caregivers.

**Day Trips and Activities:** In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance found in the Troop Meetings and Hygiene sections of this document. 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. Make whatever appropriate accommodations are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

**Overnight Trips:** Overnight trips are permitted. Camping and outdoor overnights are preferred. Troops must follow the guidance of the facility regarding maximum capacity allowed. Before booking any trips, please contact the facility to ensure they are following all CDC and state guidelines as well as to confirm occupancy limits. Also, take note of their cancellation policy as GSHPA reserves the right to modify our guidelines to align with federal and state recommendations.

All troops must submit a [Troop Travel Application](#) at least two weeks prior to the trip.

**Supplies:** Encourage girls to bring their own supplies such as crayons, markers, etc. Provide a list to parents/caregivers ahead of activities. Avoid sharing common supplies. Have pre-packaged supplies on hand for any girl who needs them. At the conclusion of the meeting, encourage girls to wipe down items with a disinfectant wipe.

## **Health and Safety Practices**

**Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation:** Follow 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 or have a temperature.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and wash or sanitize your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash hands if you do touch.
- 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.

**Be Prepared:** Be prepared with first aid supplies including COVID-19 prevention items such as hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Easily accessible 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, however, parents should be checking temperatures and allowing their girl(s) to join group activities only when temperatures are normal.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting:** [Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, etc.). Use a household cleaner, or see the [EPA's list of effective cleaners](#) approved for use against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). See the CDC's website for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

**Personal Contact:** Hugs, handshakes, "high-fives," and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze may transmit disease. Instead, create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead.

**Singing:** If you normally close your meetings with a song, make certain girls and adults are all wearing masks. Singing and shouting both project germs farther than talking, ask your girls to either hum their closing song, or sing quietly, and always, of course, with their masks on.

**Vaccinations:** Members who are eligible to receive the vaccination are encouraged to do so, but are not required.

## **GSHPA Service Centers and Properties**

**GSHPA Service Centers:** All offices will remain closed to the public. All GSHPA staff is working hard to continue to provide service, support, and programming to our girl and adult members. Our business hours are 8:30am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. If you need assistance, please feel free to contact Member Services at 1-800-692-7816 or [memberservices@gshpa.org](mailto:memberservices@gshpa.org).

**GSHPA Camp Properties:** GSHPA has re-opened all camp properties. Hand sanitizing stations have been added to all properties. GSHPA will sanitize property facilities and refill hand sanitizing stations between each use.

- All troops/groups on property agree to follow the guidelines set forth in this document as well as the property reservation agreement.