Troop Handbook

Troop #: _____

Troop Leaders: _____

Meeting Location: _____

Troop Email: *(if applicable)* _____

BAND/Facebook/Rallyhood: *(if applicable)* _____

girl scouts
heart of new jersey

Welcome to our troop and the largest girl-led organization in the world!

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls, with proven results. It is based on time-tested methods and research-backed programming that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

Girl Scouts is a place where she'll practice different skills, explore her potential, take on leadership positions—and even feel allowed to fail, dust herself off, get up, and try again.

Benefits of Girl Scouting to Parents

National Girl Scout research has shown that Girl Scouting provides benefits to not only the youth involved, but their caregivers as well. As a Girl Scout caregiver you may spend more quality time with your Girl Scout enjoy a strengthened relationship, build lasting friendships with other adults, and develop leadership skills.

Girl Scouts gives caregivers and Girl Scouts the opportunity to be involved in an activity that benefits the community and gives them a sense of personal satisfaction by achieving a goal together.

Responsibility of Girls and Parents

Girl Scout's Responsibility to the Troop:

- To attend meetings and outings.
- To fulfill obligation of dues (if applicable) and know that permission slips are signed by a parent or guardian.
- To complete any missed activities to earn petals and badges.
- To pass along important information to caregivers or leaders.
- To respect other Girl Scouts within the troop.
- To respect troop leaders and troop caregivers.
- To participate in the meetings.
- To conduct themselves in a safe manner.
- To listen to others in the troop and show respect for what they are saying.

Caregiver's Responsibility to the Troop:

- To ensure your Girl Scout arrives and is picked up on time for all meetings and outings.
- To help your Girl Scout fulfill troop responsibilities (dues, permission slips, uniforms, etc.).
- To be supportive of your child in their Girl Scout endeavors.
- To notify the leaders ahead of time if your child will not be at a meeting if possible.
- To check with your Girl Scout's leader for any important news or permission slips that may need to be signed and to return completed paperwork promptly.
- To assist the troop and the troop leaders during meetings or activities on a rotating or as needed basis.
- To keep in contact with the leaders and give them respectful feedback.
- To discuss any issues that arise privately with the leader, not in front of the troop.
- To help the troop leaders establish and maintain a positive environment within the troop, by talking with your Girl Scout about acceptable behavior and by setting a positive example yourself.
- To let your Girl Scout know that you consider participation in Girl Scouting to be important and special.
- To attend family meetings, group activities and special ceremonies.
- To reimburse the troop for any events that were paid by troop funds for no shows.
- To not share any pictures or videos of the troop on our personal social media pages unless permission was given by each Girl Scout's guardian.

Membership

- GSHNJ Youth Membership - annual fee is $80 ($60 Membership and $15 Council Fee)
- GSHNJ Support Volunteer Membership - annual fee is $30 (One caregiver per girl is encouraged to register as a support volunteer. Only registered and background checked adults can interact with our troop.)
- Financial aid is available for both youth and adults. During the checkout process, you may choose the financial aid option and then submit acceptable documentation through a secure link which will be emailed to you by GSHNJ staff.

Paperwork

Parents must complete the following forms:

- Health History Form
- Annual Troop Girl Permission Form
- GSHNJ Photo Video Release Form
- Activity Permission Slip for special trips as applicable - no slip, no trip!

Parent Communications

The main form of communication will be via

Text messaging or phone calls will be used when there is an emergency or there is something extremely important.

Please, keep in mind that troop leaders are volunteers and be respectful of our time. If you cannot find the answer to a question you have after searching our posted resources and event calendar, we're happy to help answer your question. Please give us at least 24 hours to respond to you unless it's an urgent matter. Thanks in advance!

Volunteers are the Lifeblood of Girl Scouting

Girl Scout volunteers make a difference in the lives of Girl Scouts, in the success of families and in the growth of communities. The strength of Girl Scouting rests on the shoulders of adult volunteers who are committed to helping all Girl Scouts develop into strong, confident, capable women. Remember that the troop leader is a volunteer. They attend training sessions and plan engaging meetings for the troop. Supporting your Girl Scout's troop and encouraging active participation ensures your child gets the most from this experience. Girl Scouting thrives when leaders, Girl Scouts, and parents work together as a team. There are many ways you can help your Girl Scout's troop:

- Troop Treasurer (helps maintain and budget the troop bank account)
- Special events manager (arranges trips and other events)

- Recordkeeper (keeps all troop records, including registration and individual girl records)
- Fall Sale Manager (helps answer questions about the Fall Nuts & Magazine Sale. Sorts products and rewards for the troop).
- Cookie Manager (helps answer questions about the Cookie Sale. Works with leaders to manage cookie inventory, cookie booths and rewards for the troop. This role can be divided between several helpers.)
- Emergency contact (remains available for leaders and parents to contact in case of an emergency while the troop is on a field trip.)
- Troop Shopper (purchases or sources supplies for activities.)
- Co-Leader
- Don't see something you want to volunteer for? Let us know!

To ensure the safety of all troop members, all adults working directly with the girls must be registered as support volunteers, complete an online criminal background check and online child abuse prevention training.

Service Unit and Council

Our troop's council is Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey. Our troop is part of Service Unit

Our Service Unit will share important information via

Troop Finances

Our troop maintains a bank account. The money in the account belongs to the troop, not the leaders, caregivers, or individual girls. It is used to fund troop activities. Money for the troop comes from council-sponsored troop Product Programs (Fall Product Sale and Cookie Sale) and troop dues (if applicable). Troop funds can also be used to help pay for badges, patches, pins, troop events, any training that is required, or any expenses related to the troop.
If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of troop funds, please contact our troop treasurer or one of the troop leaders.

Annual dues (if applicable):

Troop Meetings

We keep track of attendance at each meeting. We ask for your cooperation in making sure that Girl Scouts are on time for meetings, field trips and other activities. This means to have your Girl Scout arrive before the start of the scheduled meeting. Arriving late could mean missing out on important information. We appreciate you picking up your child promptly when meetings are over. If you know you are running late, please call or text both troop leaders or let us know if someone else will be picking up your Girl Scout. We will NOT allow another person to take your child unless you have told us specifically. We will ask for ID for the person picking up your child if we do not know them.

Troop meetings have been scheduled to take place

If anything changes, it will be communicated.

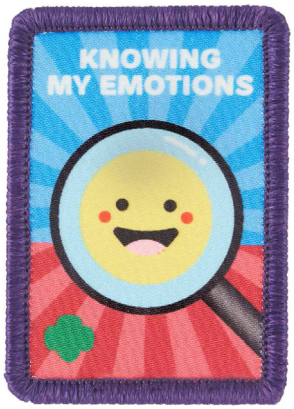
Additional outings/events/activities may be scheduled.

Girl Scout Awards/Badges

Our troop will be earning all kinds of badges. Each badge or patch has different requirements. Girl Scouts can also earn “fun patches” for special activities or events that we may attend.

A badge is an official, earned award for completing the skills required of that badge. These go on the front of your tunic, vest, or sash.

A patch is often received by participating in an activity or attending an event. These are not earned by completing a required set of activities or learning experience and are more like a souvenir to remember the activity. All fun patches go on the back of your tunic, vest, or sash.



RSVPs and No Shows

It is extremely important to check your schedule before committing to any activity or event. Registration will be submitted based on RSVPs.
If you reserve your Girl Scout's space and she does not attend the event, you will be responsible for the full purchase price. We want to ensure the troop's funds are spent wisely.

We look forward to a fantastic year of Girl Scouting with you!

As always, please reach out with any questions you may have!

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