

# Parent Guide to Girl Scouting

[girlscoutsgwm.org](http://girlscoutsgwm.org)

## Why Is Girl Scouts a Good Investment of My Child's Time?

*The Girl Scout Promise and Law are shared by every member of Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Promise is the way Girl Scouts agree to act every day toward one another and other people, and the Law outlines a way to act towards one another and the world.*

### The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:  
To serve God and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

### The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be  
honest and fair,  
friendly and helpful,  
considerate and caring,  
courageous and strong, and  
responsible for what I say and  
do,  
and to  
respect myself and others,  
respect authority,  
use resources wisely,  
make the world a better place,  
and  
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**Why Girl Scouts?** Girl Scouts has always been a leadership-driven organization for girls, adults and volunteers. Today, Girl Scouts has a membership of more than 3.3 million girls and adults, and over 50 million women in the United States are Girl Scout alumnae. You can belong to this powerful network!

All experiences in Girl Scouting incorporate the **Discover**, **Connect**, and **Take Action** keys to leadership. Girls **Discover** themselves and their values and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world. They **Connect** with other girls and adults. And they **Take Action** to make the world a better place. Girl Scout experiences also use key processes that help girls to plan, help girls to do and help girls to work together. These three processes promote the fun and friendship that have always been so much a part of Girl Scouting.

Developing into a purposeful leader is as much about the journey as the destination. Throughout their experience, girls develop a variety of skills and characteristics, such as positive values, conflict resolution abilities and resourceful problem-solving skills. The long-term result is a generation of girls who lead with courage, confidence, and character.

Girls will use two resources to get the most out of their Girl Scout experience— their *Journey* book, one of three themes, and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* for their program level. A *Journey* is a coordinated set of leadership activities grouped around a theme. In *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, girls earn badges which teach them specific skills.

**Belonging to Girl Scouts sets girls on a lifelong path to...**

- **Lead with courage** by speaking out on issues they care about and taking active roles in their communities
- **Lead with confidence** by making the most of their strengths and feeling empowered to make a difference in their lives and beyond
- **Lead with character** by acting with integrity and compassion, making decisions that promote the well-being of themselves and others

*...as they continue to make the world a better place.*

## What are Pathways?

Girls today have many opportunities for activities. As parents, you may sometimes feel that your daughter is overloaded with school requirements, sports, family and religious activities and question whether she should be involved in Girl Scouting.

Most girls in grades K–5 still participate in biweekly or monthly troop meetings; however, there are many options for girls. They may choose to take part in just Girl Scout camp activities, travel opportunities, or special events geared to a specific interest such as college preparedness, photography, or ecology just to name a few.

You and your daughter decide which is best for her, which meets your schedule and allows her to enjoy the benefits of being involved in an all-girl organization with the mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place!

*Pathways is a description of the six different avenues or ways girls can participate.*



- **Series**
- **Events**
- **Troop**
- **Travel**
- **Camp**
- **Virtual**

## What will my child do in Girl Scouts?

*Girl Scouts enjoy a variety of activities that are fun, educational and safe.*

All activities reflect our core values as outlined in the Girl Scout Law and are flexible and adaptable to meet the needs and interests of all girls with grade-level appropriate guidelines.

**Make New Friends** She'll interact with girls in her school, place of worship, or community.

**Service Projects** Troops usually plan a variety of service projects to benefit their local community. These projects are chosen by the girls in the girl-led environment of Girl Scouts, with grade-level appropriate guidance from adults.

**Camping** Troops may choose to plan a picnic, hike, or camp at any one of our camp properties. Whether it's working with horses, crafts, or water sports, our camp properties offer beauty and great outdoor adventures for girls with diverse interests. To learn more about events, and day and resident camp opportunities, please visit: [www.girlscoutsgwm.org](http://www.girlscoutsgwm.org).

**Badges** Girls will learn many new skills in a variety of areas, including STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), nutrition/fitness, ecology, criminal justice, forensic science, financial literacy and much more!

**Trips** Many troops plan field trips, camping, overnight trips and even vacations abroad. Older troops may retain troop product sale programs' proceeds over a period of several years for a great trip to Our Chalet in Switzerland or the Pax Lodge in England; even trips to New York to see a Broadway play or to Catalina Island to the Marine Biology Institute! There are as many opportunities as your daughter and her troop work to make happen!

**Ceremonies** Special events are used to celebrate major transitions, such as bridging to another level (i.e., Daisy bridging to Brownies) or earning Girl Scout Bronze, Silver or Gold Awards. Flag ceremonies may be incorporated into other ceremonies or at the beginning of each meeting, teaching girls respect for the flag, what it stands for and how to handle it. Your daughter's troop will create their own special memories.

## As a Girl Scout, your child will:

- Experience a sense of belonging by being a member of the world's largest organization for girls.
- Have fun while building friendships.
- Develop leadership skills and self-awareness through interaction with girls her own age
- Participate in educationally sound program activities under trained adult leadership.
- Gain an understanding and appreciation of many people and cultures.
- Prepare for her future through career exploration, community service, and skill building.
- Strengthen understanding of herself and the world around her through the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

## Who pays for what?

**Troop Funds** Money earned by the girls in the troop is the property of the troop and not the property of individual members. Girls, with guidance from adults, decide how troop funds are used. Leaders keep financial records and share with parents regularly.

**Cost for Membership** The annual national/GSUSA dues for the 2013-2014 year are \$15.00, with an additional \$15.00 for girls only as a Council Service Fee. The Council Service Fee (CSF) supports the operation of our local Girl Scout council the same way the national membership dues support the operation of GSUSA.

**One-time Startup Fee** Many troops have a one-time startup fee to assist with material/ refreshment expenses. Additional troop dues of \$.50 to \$2 per meeting are allowed. The troop dues are set by each individual troop. Field trips and other activities may require an additional fee. Permission forms are required.

**Troop Money-Earning Opportunities** All troops are encouraged to participate in the Council-sponsored financial literacy programs for girls. The Girl Scout Cookie Program (January–March) and the Fall Product Sale provide valuable funds that assist girls and troops with their needs. Parent involvement is necessary for each troop's success! Ask how you can help!

**Cookie Dough** Cookie Dough (CD) is an earned reward for each Girl Scout who participates in the cookie program and sells a minimum of 100 packages of cookies.

**Camp Sessions/Jump-In** CD may be used to pay for up to 100% of a camp session fee, excluding the registration fee. When mailing in your camp registration form, include the CD form with "camp" option circled.

**Destinations** CD may be applied to the expenses incurred for these activities, and must be submitted prior to departure.

**Council Program Events** Girls may use CD to pay up to 50% of the per-person fee for Council-sponsored programs.

**Our Store** CD may be used to make purchases in Our Store for all items except earned recognitions. Cookie dough expires in December the year it is earned.

# The Girl Scout Shop

## *Does my daughter have to wear a uniform?*

Girl Scouts at each level have one required element (tunic, sash or vest) for the display of official pins and awards which will be required when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent the Girl Scout Movement.

For girls ages 5 to 14, the unifying look includes wearing a choice of a tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards, combined with their own solid white shirts and khaki pants or skirts. Girl Scouts in high school can also wear a scarf that unites their look with the sisterhood of Girl Scouts around the world. For adult members the unifying look of the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf or tie for men, worn with the official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue business attire. Girl Scouts at the Daisy and Brownie levels will continue to have a full uniform ensemble available.

## *Where can I buy Girl Scout uniform items and books?*

Whether you want personalized help in making purchases or if you would rather shop from your computer in your pajamas— *we have the option to fit your needs!*

*Visit one of our shops below, or visit our online shop: <http://girlscoutshopping.com>.*

GSGWM Corporate Office  
1 Commerce Dr.  
Bedford, NH 03110-0832  
603.627.4158  
Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm

GSGWM VT Service Center  
60 Knight Ln.  
Williston, VT 05495  
802.872.5887  
Mon-Fri: 9:00am-4:30pm

## What program level will my child be?

*To ensure the best experience for your daughter, Girl Scout programming is divided by program levels. Some troops may be multi-level, with girls in more than one program level making up a troop. Troop leaders will be attentive to promoting activities that are age appropriate for all.*

Daisy  
Girl Scout  
Grades K-1



Brownie  
Girl Scout  
Grades 2-3



Junior  
Girl Scout  
Grades 4-5



Cadette  
Girl Scout  
Grades 6-8



Senior  
Girl Scout  
Grades 9-10



Ambassador  
Girl Scout  
Grades 11-12



## Parents' responsibility to the troop

**As a parent or guardian, I am committed to ensuring the success of my child and acknowledge my role in her participation in Girl Scouts. I agree to:**

- Have a genuine concern and interest in your child's participation and, knowing I have the biggest influence on her, reflect on the Girl Scout Promise and Law to be a positive role model and exhibit cooperative behavior in my interaction with others. Uphold the Girl Scout Promise and Law by demonstrating positive support and encouragement for my child and her troop.
- Recognize that troop leaders are trained volunteers. Support those who are working with my child in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable Girl Scout experience for all.
- Expect a Girl Scout environment for my child that is free from profanity, drugs, tobacco and alcohol. I will refrain from their use at all Girl Scout events.
- Refrain from using any form of social media to share Girl Scout concerns, complaints, or disagreements.
- Address any concerns with the appropriate person as quickly as possible. Take problems or concerns to the person with whom the issue originated and not openly talk about it with others. Agree to be direct and honest and willing to listen to others' honest and direct opinions. If needed, refer to the Troop Pathway Coordinator and the Community support team, not in front of the girls.
- Check with the leader for any important news or paperwork that needs to be completed and returned promptly.
- Help my daughter fulfill her troop responsibilities (dues, permission slips, snack, uniforms, etc.)
- Attend parent meetings, group activities and special ceremonies.
- Be supportive of my daughter in her Girl Scout endeavors; help her complete any missed activities, and help her understand and follow troop rules.
- Bring my child to the troop meeting regularly and on time, pick her up promptly after meetings and notify the leader when she will not be attending meetings/trips. I will not send her to a meeting/trip if she is not well.
- Inform the leader if there are any circumstances that may affect your child's welfare or behavior. This may include information about who may or may not pick her up, supported with legal documentation if required. Maintain a current emergency contact person and phone number with the leader.
- Give feedback to the troop leader about my daughter's experience.
- Let my daughter know that you consider her participation in Girl Scouting to be important and special.
- Be responsible for helping my daughter deliver and turn in funds received for product sales when due.
- Honor all commitments I make to the troop.

## Your daughter's responsibility to her troop

- Attend and participate in meetings and outings
- Fulfill obligation of dues and know that permission slips are signed by a parent or guardian
- Complete any missed activities to earn badges
- Pass along important information to parents or leaders
- Treat each member of the troop as a sister and respect sister Girl Scouts
- Respect troop leaders and troop parents
- Conduct herself in a safe manner
- Listen to others in the troop and show respect for what they are saying

## Troop leader responsibilities

- Work with girls, plan and implement quality, safe troop program activities.
- Recruit parent support for troop activities (product sales, etc.)
- Ensure that all troop members are registered as members of GSUSA.
- Attend training as necessary
- Participate as an active member of the Community and attend regular volunteer meetings.
- Participate in all Girl Scout events
- Ensure that all adults who volunteer for the troop as money managers, product sale managers, helpers, drivers or overnight chaperones are approved through the Council's volunteer screening system.

## Troop leaders are NOT responsible for:

- Transportation to and from meetings
- Serving as a babysitter
- Completing paperwork for parents

## Volunteers are the heart of Girl Scouts.

Your child's Girl Scout troop leaders are volunteers. Without their time, talents, and resources, Girl Scouting would not be available. They share their sense of adventure with today's girls, and they spend a great deal of time attending training and preparing for and leading meetings. Girl Scouting is a team effort among leaders, girls, and parents working together.

## Me, a Girl Scout volunteer? Absolutely!

### *Why be a Girl Scout volunteer?*

- Make a positive impact on lives of girls
- Build self-confidence
- Develop leadership skills
- Give back to your community
- Enjoy being respected and appreciated
- Make new friends—*enjoy an instant network*
- Learn new skills, experience new adventures
- Make a difference!

### *To be a Girl Scout volunteer, you must:*

- be at least 18 years old
- be willing to become a Girl Scout member
- submit a volunteer application and a criminal background check
- be willing to share time, expertise and friendship with girls and adults
- be passionate about building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place!
- complete our leadership training (it's free!)