

Volunteer Policies

Table of Contents

Girl Scouts Mission, Promise & Law	1
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of Volunteer Policies	5
A. Nature of the Volunteer Relationship	5
B. Purpose of Volunteer Policies.....	5
C. Girl Scouts of Western Washington’s Commitment to Volunteer.....	6
D. Volunteer as Role Model.....	6
E. Health & Safety	6
F. COVID-19 Statement	7
III. Volunteer Selection and Placement	7
A. Inclusion & Non-Discriminatory Policy	7
B. Membership with Girl Scouts of the USA.....	8
C. Check for Criminal Background History	8
D. Placement.....	9
IV. Volunteer Preparation, Training and Management	9
A. Preparation and Training.....	9
B. Expenses and Financial Assistance.....	9
C. Feedback and Evaluation.....	10
D. Recognition.....	10
E. Resigning from Volunteer Position/Role	10
V. Volunteer Performance Expectations and Conduct	11
A. Child Abuse and Neglect.....	11
B. Discipline	12
C. Sexual Conduct	12

D. Anti-Harassment.....	12
E. Alcohol and Drugs.....	13
F. Tobacco Use	13
G. Firearms and Other Deadly Weapons.....	13
H. Aggressive Behavior	14
I. Non-Solicitation/Conflict of Interest.....	14
J. Representation of Girl Scouts	15
K. Confidentiality.....	15
L. Transportation.....	15
M. Agreements/Contracts.....	15
N. Uniforms.....	15
O. Service Animals.....	16
VI. Procedures for Reporting Suspected Cases of Child Neglect or Abuse	16
VII. Girl Scouts of Western Washington Office and Contact Information	20

Girl Scouts Mission, Promise & Law

Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

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.

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.

* The word "God" can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on one's spiritual beliefs. When reciting the Girl Scout Promise, it is okay to replace the word "God" with whatever word your spiritual beliefs dictate.

I. INTRODUCTION

Volunteers have been the support of the Girl Scout Movement since its founding in 1912. The contributions of volunteers at all levels of the organization have been, and continue to be, extraordinary. Girl Scouts of Western Washington (GSWW) could not fulfill its commitment to girls and the community without the dedication and excellent performance of its volunteers. Volunteer policies are developed, approved and implemented for the protection and support of volunteers. These policies ensure that GSWW reaches its organizational goals through meaningful and satisfying adult volunteer involvement in serving girls.

Volunteer management is more than a series of forms and procedures. It is a systematic and strategic way to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all adults in which their needs and interests can be matched to volunteer positions. A volunteer management system values the contributions of volunteers. Volunteers can use their skills, time and talents to further GSWW's mission. Volunteers receive training, support and resources to perform their volunteer position in a successful and productive manner.

II. OVERVIEW OF VOLUNTEER POLICIES

A. Nature of the Volunteer Relationship

Anyone who donates his or her services under the direction and on behalf of GSWW without compensation is considered to be a volunteer. Volunteers are not employees of GSWW. Before performing any tasks as a volunteer, you may be required to apply for and be accepted and appointed to a volunteer position by GSWW. Either the volunteer or GSWW may end the volunteer relationship at any time and for any reason.

B. Purpose of Volunteer Policies

Volunteers are expected to work within the framework of the charter, bylaws, policies, standards, procedures, corporate goals and annual objectives of GSWW and/or Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). Volunteer policies provide overall guidance and direction to GSWW volunteers as they perform their duties. They are not in any way a personnel agreement nor do they create any binding obligation on GSWW. Further, these volunteer policies do not create an employment relationship of any kind between the volunteer and GSWW. GSWW may change the policies at any time and expects that volunteers will respect and implement any such changes.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), or her/his delegate, has discretion to resolve situations involving volunteers that appear to be outside the scope of these policies.

C. Girl Scouts of Western Washington's Commitment to Volunteers

GSWW volunteers -- supported, directed and assisted by GSWW staff -- make Girl Scouting available to girls within a 17-county jurisdiction. GSWW is firm in its commitment to create an organization that values diversity among its volunteers. We cherish the rich traditions of Girl Scouting while challenging ourselves to be innovative in approaching programs and services to meet the current needs of our girls and volunteers.

GSWW encourages and supports your open and respectful communication with other volunteers, your volunteer supervisor, Girl Scout members, GSWW staff and community members.

D. Volunteer as Role Model

As an adult volunteer, you are a role model for adults and girls involved in Girl Scout programs as you work in partnership planning and implementing these programs. You are expected to honor the diversity of all people in all areas including race, ethnicity, religion, age, national origin, gender, veteran status, sexual orientation, marital status, or the presence of any physical, sensory, or mental disability. Please note that Washington state law defines sexual orientation as including heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and gender expression or identity.

E. Health & Safety

Health & Safety best practices are critical to our programs. The standards and program criteria in GSWW's COVID-19 Member Guidelines, Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity checkpoints must always be followed to ensure safety and risk management precautions are at the forefront of all programming. Volunteers that do not adhere to these policies are subject to suspension and/or removal from GSWW's program and/or volunteer responsibilities.

GSWW also has additional policies and standards, including training and certifications, required for some higher risk activities and will provide volunteers with any additional materials that may apply to their specific activities.

In addition, all volunteers are required to comply with all relevant federal, state, or local laws regarding safety, including laws regarding seat belt use and use of cell phones while driving.

F. COVID-19 Statement

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is reported to be extremely contagious. The state of medical knowledge is evolving, but the virus is believed to spread from person-to-person contact, by contact with contaminated surfaces and objects, and possibly in the air. People reportedly can be infected and spread the disease even if they do not show any symptoms.

Girl Scouts of Western Washington (“GSWW”) is committed to taking precautions to mitigate that risk as well as to following applicable federal, WA State, local and GSUSA COVID-19 directives and guidelines. Our council is also committed to having in-person activities as allowed and in accordance with those mandates. GSWW’s operations and programs occurring while COVID-19 is circulating in our community may expose our members, volunteers, and employees to the risk of infection.

GSWW cannot prevent you from becoming exposed to, contracting or spreading COVID-19 while attending (which includes being present in any capacity) any GSWW in-person programming. Therefore, any interaction with others in connection with in-person programming may expose you and your family to and increase your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. GSWW has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 at its in-person programming; however, GSWW cannot guarantee that you will not become infected with COVID-19.

By participating in these in-person activities, participants will be viewed as: 1.) Understanding that COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus, easily spread including through in-person contact; 2.) Acknowledging that GSWW cannot guarantee that infection will not occur; 3.) Choosing to accept the risk of contracting COVID-19 for the participant and their family in order to attend the in-person activity; and 4.) Agreeing to release GSWW from responsibility in the event of COVID-19 infection. Participants who do not agree to these statements should not join in-person GSWW activities.

III. Volunteer Selection and Placement

A. Inclusion & Non-Discrimination Policy

Volunteers at all levels of GSWW shall be selected regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, national origin, gender, veteran status, sexual orientation (including gender identity), marital status, or the presence of any physical, sensory, or mental disability.

GSWW’s inclusion policy extends to all areas of volunteer activities including recruitment, selection, placement training, working together, recognition, suspension, and termination.

GSWW selects volunteers on the basis of their qualifications for membership, their ability to perform necessary duties, and their availability and willingness to participate in required training. To ensure that all volunteers and prospective volunteers have equal access to the activities and opportunities of the organization, we affirm our commitment to diversity in recruiting, selecting, placing, and recognizing volunteers.

B. Membership with the Girl Scouts of the USA

GSUSA requires that Girl Scout volunteers become registered members of GSUSA, unless they are very short-term, temporary advisors or consultants. If you have questions about whether you are required to become a registered member of GSUSA, please contact your volunteer supervisor.

C. Check for Criminal Background History

Washington State law requires a criminal background history for all volunteers working with youth. GSWW conducts such histories before placing a volunteer and then periodically thereafter. You may request a copy of your criminal history report.

Although GSWW reserves the right to refuse to place a prospective volunteer for any reason, GSWW also reserves the right to refuse placement of any prospective volunteer with a criminal history, regardless of the nature of crime or date of offense. Factors that may be taken into consideration include, but are not necessarily limited to: what the conviction was for, the volunteer's age at the time of the conviction, and how long ago the crime was committed. Information about any criminal history will be shared only with relevant GSWW staff or volunteer supervisors. Failure to disclose any criminal conviction at the time of application may bar an applicant from volunteering.

If, during the time period that you are a volunteer with GSWW, you are arrested and/or convicted of a crime (including any criminal driving infractions such as a single DUI), or if you receive two or more moving violations within a two year period, you must notify GSWW staff immediately. This includes all such convictions or violations, whether or not they occurred while on Girl Scout business.

Registered sex offenders will not be considered for volunteer positions in which they are involved, or could be involved, with girls. Additionally, any registered sex offenders residing, staying or visiting in the household of a volunteer applicant or current volunteer must be disclosed and identified in the volunteer's application. In addition, GSWW must be notified immediately of such situations, should they arise at any point during the volunteer's tenure with GSWW.

D. Placement

GSWW makes every attempt to place volunteers in positions that match the skills of the volunteer and the needs of both GSWW and the volunteer. However, final placement decisions will be made by GSWW in its sole discretion. Placement in a volunteer position can be terminated at any time by either party for any reason.

Note: All volunteers who are the primary leader or advisor for their girl group (e.g., troop, Series) must be at least 21 years old. Limited exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for AmeriCorps, college practicum and other volunteers working under close staff supervision.

IV. VOLUNTEER PREPARATION, TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT

In your role as a volunteer there is certain information regarding your training and the oversight of your work that is important for you to know. If you have any questions regarding anything described in this section, please consult with your volunteer supervisor or a GSWW staff person for more detailed information.

A. Preparation and Training

Preparation or training is required for most volunteer positions and will be discussed with you upon placement. Required classes or training must be completed within the time frame specific to a position. Volunteers may also be asked to take additional training to update or improve skills in certain areas. GSWW values training not only as a method of maintaining the high-quality programs and experience we strive to provide girls, but also as an opportunity for adult volunteers to continue their own personal development.

The GSUSA and/or GSWW's Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints outline minimum standards regarding what specialized training is required before undertaking certain activities. GSWW has additional standards, including additional training and certifications, required for some higher risk activities.

B. Expenses and Financial Assistance

Volunteers must obtain approval from their volunteer supervisor before incurring any expenses to be reimbursed. We also suggest that you keep accurate records of your expenditures because some non-reimbursed expenses associated with your volunteer activities may be tax deductible.

GSWW recognizes there may be people qualified and eager to volunteer in Girl Scouting but whose economic situations do not allow them to cover expenses directly related to

their volunteer activities. If this describes your situation, we encourage you to consult privately and in confidence with your volunteer supervisor to determine whether GSWW is able to assist you with some or all of the incidental expenses necessary to fulfill your volunteer role. Financial assistance is available for qualified applicants to support membership registration, training and other volunteer related expenses.

C. Feedback and Evaluation

A volunteer supervisor may evaluate a volunteer's performance. The purposes of such evaluations are to:

- 1) Review the volunteer's performance in her or his volunteer role.
- 2) Give the volunteer an opportunity to provide feedback to GSWW.
- 3) Determine the volunteer's interest in continuing as a volunteer in either the current or another position.

Reappointment to a volunteer position may be dependent on the completion of a satisfactory review. We look at this as an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between you and GSWW and recognize the important work you are doing. Your supervisor may make a recommendation for future placement. A written summary of the evaluation will be placed in your volunteer file.

D. Recognition

In Girl Scouting we feel it is very important to recognize the work of our volunteers. GSWW follows a system of recognition that is outlined in GSUSA's publication, Adult Recognition in Girl Scouting.

E. Resigning from Volunteer Position/Role

Volunteers may occasionally need or want to resign their positions prior to the end of their terms. If you elect to leave your volunteer position, GSWW requests that you notify your supervisor with as much lead time as possible to assure a smooth transition.

V. VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND CONDUCT

A. Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. Washington laws require staff to report incidents of suspected abuse or neglect to the Department of Social and Health Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) or to the local law enforcement agencies. GSWW staff who become aware of a suspected case of child abuse involving any child participating in GSWW activities or events, are guided by GSWW staff policies, procedures and Washington State Law. For volunteers' responsibilities in this regard, see Volunteer Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect, p. 15, below.

Abuse and neglect include but are not limited to the following:

- Emotional mistreatment of girl members or other children participating in GSWW activities or events, including verbal abuse or verbal attacks.
- Physical neglect of girl members or other children participating in GSWW activities or events, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care or appropriate supervision of activities.
- Any form of sexual abuse of a child, including sexual touching, inappropriate bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, or any involvement of girl members or other children participating in GSWW activities or events, with pornographic materials.
- Physical abuse of girl members or other children participating in GSWW activities or events, including all types of corporal (physical) punishment, e.g. spanking, slapping or shaking.

Although GSWW may terminate a volunteer at any time for any reason, abuse and neglect is unlawful and will not be tolerated. As a result, GSWW reserves the right to:

- Suspend from her/his volunteer position any volunteer during investigation of allegations of abuse or neglect. This includes instances where the volunteer was aware of potential abuse or neglect by another and did not report it to staff, CPS or local law enforcement officials.
- Refuse membership endorsement or re-appointment to any volunteer accused of, arrested for, or convicted of child abuse or child neglect, or is a registered sex offender.
- Dismiss or exclude from affiliation with GSWW any volunteer who has been accused of, arrested for, or convicted of child abuse or neglect or is a registered sex offender

Volunteer Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

As a volunteer you are strongly encouraged to report any suspected incident of child neglect or abuse directly to Child Protective Services (CPS). However, even if you choose not to make a report directly to CPS, you must report any suspected incidents to GSWW

staff. For information about how to report suspected child abuse or neglect, and relevant phone numbers, refer to pp. 15-18, below.

B. Discipline

GSWW will not tolerate, permit or condone any form of physical discipline or verbal abuse, such as sarcasm or name calling, at any time. Assistance with motivation and coaching techniques is available through GSWW training and/or from your volunteer supervisor as necessary.

C. Sexual Conduct

During Girl Scout activities, we do not condone or allow sexual displays of any sort, nor do we allow volunteers to publicly advocate for sexual practices or activities. Discussion of sexual issues is a private matter between girls and their families. If information on sexuality is part of a Girl Scout program, it is to be presented in an informational, objective and non-biased manner with prior written consent of a parent or guardian.

D. Anti-Harassment

GSWW is committed to and supports an environment in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment. It is the express policy to provide all volunteers, employees and girl members or other participants at GSWW events and activities an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or express forms of sexual harassment. We do not condone and will not tolerate any harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, age, national origin, gender, veteran status, sexual orientation (including gender identity), marital status, or the presence of any physical, sensory, or mental disability.

With specific regard to sexual harassment, GSWW strives to provide volunteers with an environment free of sexual harassment, which is a form of sex discrimination. It is expressly forbidden for any volunteer, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, Girl Scout member or other participants at GSWW events and activities, of the same or opposite sex.

If you feel you have been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, GSWW staff member or any agent of GSWW, promptly report the incident to your supervisor, the next level supervisor, the Vice President for Volunteer Services, or the Chief Executive Officer. GSWW will investigate the report promptly. GSWW will not tolerate any retaliation as a result of making a good faith complaint.

E. Alcohol and Drugs

If you are supervising in a capacity as a Girl Scout volunteer or adult while girls or other children are participating in GSWW activities or events you may not be using or under the influence of illegal drugs, marijuana, or alcohol. The consumption of alcohol on or off GSWW properties is limited to adults-only events planned and organized by GSWW staff, or volunteers. Written parental permission is required for girls to participate in events hosted by GSWW when alcohol is served. Non-member use reservations of an entire camp property may include use of legal substances on camp property per the rental agreement.

The use of prescription, or over-the-counter drugs in a manner not prescribed by a medical professional or the drug manufacturer is also prohibited. However, over-the-counter drugs, or prescribed medication may be used for their stated purposes if the recommended dosage is not exceeded. In addition, the medication should not prevent you from performing necessary duties in a safe and effective manner. Check with your physician or pharmacist to determine whether the medication could inhibit your effective performance, including driving.

F. Tobacco Use

Volunteers may not consume tobacco in the form of cigarettes, vape or chewing tobacco in the presence of children while in their capacity as Girl Scout volunteers. In all cases, Washington State laws regarding tobacco use must be observed, whether or not children are present. (No girl member or other children participating in GSWW activities or events are allowed to use tobacco products at any Girl Scout event or while conducting any Girl Scout business, even if the participant is of legal age to use tobacco.)

G. Firearms and Other Deadly Weapons

Firearms: Possession of any firearm is prohibited, whether carried on the person, or stored in a vehicle, by volunteers or non-members attending any Girl Scout activity or event, regardless of whether the volunteer has a license to carry a concealed weapon. However, this policy does not apply to law enforcement officers who are acting in an official capacity or are required to carry weapons even when off-duty, or to any GSWW-approved rifle and/or gun-safety programs subject to program rules. At troop meetings or event sites not owned by GSWW, all firearms must be secured to ensure that children cannot access them.

Deadly weapons: Subject to exceptions noted above, use or possession of a deadly weapon, as defined below, by girls or adults is prohibited at any Girl Scout activities.

Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 9A.04.110 defines a deadly weapon as "any explosive or loaded or unloaded firearm, and shall include any other weapon, device, instrument, article, or substance... which, under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted to be used, or threatened to be used, is readily capable of causing death or substantial bodily harm."

NOTE: Pocket knives and archery equipment, when used for their intended purposes and under trained adult supervision for program activities, are allowed under this policy.

H. Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior, by girls or adults, which may result in bodily, emotional or mental harm, is unacceptable.

When the aggressive behavior is displayed by a child toward another child or adult, the leader will discuss the behavior with the child and notify the child's parent or guardian. If the behavior continues or results in injury, a GSWW staff member must be contacted and the child may be removed from the premises, activity or event.

When the aggressive behavior is displayed by an adult ("aggressive adult") toward another adult or a child, the aggressive adult will be temporarily removed or suspended by a GSWW representative from any Girl Scout position and/or activity. GSWW must be contacted and a review is conducted by GSWW staff, which could result in the adult being removed from the premises, activity or event or in the volunteer's termination.

I. Non-Solicitation/Conflict of Interest

No volunteer or any member of his/her family shall utilize his/her position or contact information acquired as part of that position for monetary gain, to advocate for positions and causes not directly related to Girl Scout business, or to solicit for fund-raising for other organizations, including their children's schools, sports programs, etc. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of in-person requests, regular mail, telephone, email, text messaging, or any other electronic or other form of communication.

A volunteer who has a conflict of interest with any GSWW activity or program-- whether personal, philosophical or financial-- will not serve nor be accepted as a volunteer with GSWW or will be limited in their participation to volunteer positions which are clearly outside the area of conflict.

J. Representation of Girl Scouts

Prior to taking any action or making any statement which might effect or obligate GSWW or GSUSA, volunteers must seek approval from appropriate staff. These actions and statements may include, but are not limited to, a public statement to the press, accepting or soliciting donations (other than from troop sponsors), a coalition or lobbying effort with another organization, or an agreement involving contractual or other financial obligations. As a volunteer, you are only authorized to act as a representative of Girl Scouts as specifically outlined in your written position description.

K. Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be exposed to proprietary or privileged information about GSWW, its business, its staff, its volunteers, other Girl Scout members (including girls), or their families. It is your responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of this sensitive information. Failure to do so may result in termination of your volunteer position or other corrective action.

L. Transportation

Drivers for Girl Scout activities, business, etc. must be adults, 21years or older, have been licensed drivers for at least three years, and be licensed and insured to drive the vehicle they are using. Note: the three years' experience requirement begins at the time the driver becomes licensed. It does not include the period during which s/he had an instruction (learner's) permit

M. Agreements/Contracts

Volunteers may not enter into or sign any agreements or contracts that contain a hold harmless agreement or obligate GSWW to assume any liability or financial responsibilities.

N. Uniforms

A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities. Volunteers who are conducting Girl Scout business or representing Girl Scouts are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when not otherwise in uniform.

O. Service Animals

Service Animals are always welcome at all Girl Scout activities, per public access laws. Volunteers and staff may choose to allow Emotional Support, Therapy Animals, Service Animals In Training or other animals for program purposes. During the Cookie Sale, please confirm site-specific animal policies with your troop and service unit volunteers before bringing non-Service Animals.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CASES OF CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE

Volunteer Reporting Guidelines for Disclosure of Abuse & Neglect of a Minor

Take the Following Steps to Help:

1. **Know the signs** of child abuse and neglect.
2. When children have the courage to tell you about abuse or neglect, **take them seriously and maintain confidentiality.**
3. When you suspect or know of incidents of child abuse or neglect, report it within 24 hours:
 - **Inform Girl Scouts of Western Washington** via the standard [Incident Report Form](#).
 - **Make the Report.** Either contact your local Child Protective Services (CPS) [office](#) or law enforcement agency yourself OR request GSWW make the report on your behalf.

Best Practices for Responding to the Child

- **Do** use the child's vocabulary.
- **Do** reassure the child that they are not in trouble.
- **Do** support the child: "I'm sorry that happened to you."
- **Do** put the child at ease by sitting near them, not behind a desk.
- **Do** remain calm and be conscious of your body language so the child doesn't stop talking.
- **Do** find a private place to talk without interruptions, out of earshot & within sight of adult.
- **Do** respect the child's personal space. Ask permission before touching the child. Touch may be associated with physical or emotional pain in children who have been abused.
- **Do** let the child know what you'll do: "We need to tell (name). They know how to help children and families."

- **Do not** ask leading or suggestive questions.
- **Do not** make the child feel different or singled out.
- **Do not** investigate a case yourself. Call the police or CPS.
- **Do not** press for details. You do not need to prove abuse or neglect.
- **Do not** disclose information indiscriminately, keeping in mind the child’s right to privacy.
- **Do not** ask “why” questions requiring children to explain actions they may not understand.
- **Do not** promise you will not tell anyone about the disclosure of possible abuse or neglect.
- **Do not** make critical comments about the alleged perpetrator. The child often knows, loves, or likes this person.

As you make the decision of whether to report, know that while studies show that there is no difference between races in the likelihood a parent will abuse or neglect a child, more children of color are reported to CPS. Help address racial disproportionality by being culturally aware and sensitive to your own bias.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I report?

The purpose of mandated reporting is to identify suspected abused and neglected children as soon as possible so they can be protected from further harm. CPS cannot act until a report is made. Mandated reporters play a critical role in preventing any future harm to children. Without detection, reporting, and intervention, a child may die as a result of severe abuse or neglect or remain a victim for the rest of their life.

Reporting should be regarded as a request for an intervention into a suspected incident of abuse or neglect; a report does not necessarily constitute a proven fact – it is the raising of a question about the condition or state of a child. Making a report can begin a process that can help parents learn to care for and protect their own children.

Who must report?

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect can, in good faith, report. If you are identified as a mandated reporter, you are required by law to report your concerns to the local Child Protective Services (CPS), Child Abuse Hotline or law enforcement.

When should I report?

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect, the report must be made at the first opportunity, and in no case longer than 48 hours later. The report must include the identity of the accused, if known.

What if I'm not sure I should make a report?

You should first call your supervisor or the emergency responder staff if after normal business hours or on the weekend. If you are in doubt about what should be reported, it is better to make your concerns known. The supervisor or emergency responder staff will either walk you through making the call or make the call themselves.

What if the abuse occurred in the past?

The reporting requirement does not apply to abuse or neglect that occurred during childhood if it's discovered after the child has become an adult. However, if there is reasonable cause to believe other children are or may be at risk of abuse or neglect by the accused, the requirement does apply.

To whom do I make a report?

You must report suspected incidences of abuse and neglect to GSWW within 24 hours, and ensure a report is made to Child Protective Services within 48 hours. You may either call Child Protective Services yourself or request a GSWW staff member make the call on your behalf. CPS intake staff receive and assess reports to determine if the report meets the legal definition of abuse or neglect, and how dangerous the situation is.

How do I make a report?

Submit an **Incident Report Form** to Girl Scouts of Western Washington **within 24 hours**. Decide whether to call CPS yourself or request GSWW make the call.

If you want GSWW to contact CPS:

During Business Hours: Call Customer Care at **1 (800) 541-9852**

After-Hours: Call the Emergency Response team at **1 (800) 303-9963**

If you choose to contact CPS yourself:

During Business Hours: contact your local CPS office, which can be located using this link: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/child-safety-and-protection/how-report-child-abuse-or-neglect>

After-Hours: you can reach out to CPS by phone at **1-866-EndHarm (1-866-363-4276)**. Hearing impaired inquiries may be directed to: **TDD: 360.902.7906** (Weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) **TTY: 1.800.624.6186**.

What information will I be asked to provide?

Reports to CPS or a law enforcement agency **MUST** contain the following information, if known:

- The name, address, and age of the child and parent(s).
- The nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect.
- Any information about previous incidences of abuse or neglect.
- Whether the parent/guardian is of Indian ancestry, to correctly direct tribal reports.

As known, it is also extremely important to provide information about risk and protective factors. Examples include:

- History of substance use.
- Extended family members.
- Parent's(s') response to interventions.
- Previous history of mental health disorder.
- Parent's(s') resources and family strengths.

Must I give my name?

The name of the person making the report is not a requirement; however, mandated reporters must provide their name in order to satisfy their mandatory reporting requirement and facilitate follow-up as needed.

Can I be sued for making a report?

Any person who in good faith makes a report or gives testimony in regards to possible child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability. (RCW 26.44.060)

Should I tell the parents I made a report?

The law does not give you a choice about reporting, but you don't have to tell the parents about your CPS report. Neither GSWW staff nor volunteers are mandated to report to parents and because we are not a mental health organization or equipped to support parents in this fashion, we are not implementing this practice.

How can I learn more about mandated reporting?

Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families provides both video and written guide about mandated reporting. The video can be accessed at this [link](#). The guide to 'Protecting the Abused and Neglected Child' can be accessed at this [link](#).

VII. Girl Scouts of Western Washington Office Contact Information

Seattle Administrative Office

(No store at this location)
5601 6th Avenue South
Suite 150
Seattle, WA 98108

Bremerton Girl Scout Program Center and Satellite Store

1600 NE Winters Road
Bremerton, WA 98311

North Regional Office and Satellite Store

3224 Wetmore Avenue, Suite A
Everett, WA 98201

DuPont Girl Scout Center and Store

1000 Davis Place (or PO Box 770)
DuPont, WA 98327

Toll Free 1-800-541-9852

For updated store and office hours, please visit our website at:

<https://www.girlscoutswa.org/en/Our-Council/contact-us.html>

After Hours:

FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY – 1(800) 303-9963

If this is a life-threatening emergency, please dial 911.

For all other Girl Scout emergencies, please be aware that this is an after-hours service line. When you call this number, a Girl Scout emergency team staff member will be contacted. Please do not use this number for general inquiries.