

In-Person Girl Scout Activity Guidance

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic

This guidance may be modified at any time by GS-NCCP and/or GSUSA as circumstances change.

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

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, state, and [national](#) regulations and guidance.

Girls and volunteers are not required to participate in any activity. It is the sole discretion of each individual family and their comfort level with the planned activity. Anyone participating in any in-person activity must complete a [Family Agreement](#) form and [Assumption of Risk, Release and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19](#).

Good communication between families and volunteers is vital. Discuss plans with families and volunteers and be flexible and patient as you work together to decide the best course of action.

Inclusion and access continue to be critically important as Girl Scouts considers planning activities. Make sure that you have considered access, inclusion and sense of community as you make your plans. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- Do all girls have access to transportation? How about internet and devices?
- Are all families comfortable being in person?
- Are there immunosuppressed girls or family members in your group or troop?
- Are there girls living in multi-generational households in your group or troop?
- Consider planning meetings that girls can participate in virtually or in person, according to each family's circumstances and comfort level.
- Be creative about ways to engage girls who can't meet in person or online – providing activity packets or kits, sending emails, writing letters, etc.

The sections below will help you decide how and when to return to in-person activities.

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MEETING OPTIONS

The mandate for face coverings has been lifted. They are strongly recommended for all people (vaccinated and unvaccinated) in settings that are crowded, dense, and higher risk.

Some ideas of how you can stay connect if you are not able to meet in with a larger group.

- 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 would like to work on.
- Stay connected via mail, email, or sending or delivering program kits.

Resources for virtual meetings. Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk and the possibility of limited meeting locations. Troops that want or need to meet online or supplement their in-person meetings are welcome to do so. GS-NCCP will be offering Zoom accounts to troops/groups at a deeply discounted rate. If interested, please click here: <https://gsnccp.wufoo.com/forms/gzoom-account-request-for-service-unit-troops/>. Financial assistance is available.

Use the [Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings](#) to guide your meeting plans. Other virtual meeting resources can be found at the [Girl Scouting at Home](#) page.

MEETING SPACES

Outdoor spaces where 6 feet social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. Keep safety a top priority when selecting your meeting location. Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location. Troops and service units should complete and submit the [Troop/Group Meeting Status Update form](#). If you need assistance in identifying a meeting space, please reach out to your [Membership Director](#).

For meetings held at public facilities (indoors or outdoors), contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Are outside groups like Girl Scouts allowed on the premises?
- 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)?
- Does the space allow for adequate social distancing?

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.

Do not assume public spaces are cleaned and sanitized. Consider arriving 30 minutes in advance and clean high-touch surfaces.

When choosing a location, consider its proximity to families' homes. Is it within walking distance or near public transportation? That will help making the meeting accessible to all families.

TRANSPORTATION

It is imperative to take all safety precautions when girls are travelling in motor vehicles. If possible, girls from different households should not carpool. Coronavirus transmission risk is high when people are in close proximity, less than six feet apart. The risk increases when people are in a closed in area or indoors for longer than 10 minutes.

When transporting girls, always space out the girls to avoid crowding, have girls wear a mask 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 to ensure that coronavirus does not touch Girl Scout gatherings. Individual parent drop-offs and pick-ups are also an option. Public transportation should be avoided and not encouraged.

Remember:

- Girls and adults should 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, perhaps make other accommodations for her with her parents.
- Prescreen all passengers
 - Have the families been isolating, and free from contagion? If so, the troop may essentially be a safe bubble.

Again, sustained contact within less than six (6) feet for longer than ten (10) minutes within an enclosed area creates high risk for virus transmission, so be very careful with carpool decisions.

DAY TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

In conjunction with [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings, Transportation, and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in 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 that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer or soap if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

TRAVEL AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

Travel and overnight activities come in a wide variety of formats. Review the below requirements regarding Girl Scouts travel at this time. As always, complete the [TP103 form](#) when appropriate, and follow guidance in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) and guidance outlined throughout this resource.

Travel approvals must be considered on a case-by-case basis, factoring in the risk associated with the specific type of travel being requested. But, as with all in-person activities, all guidance outlined in this document should be implemented; for example, usage of COVID 19 forms and screening.

Always implement modifications to travel plans that make social distancing practicable. Again, sustained contact within less than six (6) feet for longer than ten (10) minutes within an enclosed area creates high risk for virus transmission. For travel that include girls and adults from multiple households who must be in close proximity, strategies to mitigate COVID risk may include breaking the group up into smaller cohorts, staggering time for arrival and departure.

Although travel plans and overnight stays are often arranged several months in advance, recognize that the COVID-19 risk is fluid; it can and will change, and contingencies should be planned ahead of time for re-scheduling, cancelling, or pivoting to a virtual activity. For all planned travel and overnight stays, create a timeline and identify a drop-dead date when decisions must be made about whether or not to move forward with the planned trip, based primarily on the safety of our girls, along with financial commitment deadlines and/or other factors. You should also consider purchasing travel insurance but be sure to read all fine print and ask questions to ensure COVID or pandemic-related cancellation is covered; it is often excluded.

Tent/outdoor camping

- Camping (in personal tents, cabins, platform tents, etc.) is allowed. Masks and physical distancing must be maintained while indoors, in many cases this means limiting occupancy in

sleeping areas (see Property Information on COVID 19 page at www.nccoastalpines.org for specific numbers and details.

- During overnight stays the [GS-NCCP Activity Sign-In and Acknowledgement](#) form must be completed upon gathering by families. A health check of all members must be completed each day of overnight stay.
 - If the individuals have a temperature or answer “yes” to any of the questions, please separate individual from group and send home.
 - Temperature Check
 - A new cough or sore throat?
 - New shortness of breath?
 - New chills?
 - Any flu like symptoms, such as such as gastrointestinal upset, diarrhea vomiting, headache, muscle pain or fatigue?
- **Indoor overnights:** Troop and group indoor overnights are allowed at this time when physical distancing and gathering guidelines can be followed. This includes activities such as one-night overnights and encampments.
- **Extended travel:**
 - US travel – Currently, travel is permissible. In the “green” status, troop and group travel should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Troops and groups should proceed cautiously with travel plans and consider current CDC guidance, group size, family expectations, destination, and safety plans. The TP103 form is required for all Girl Scout travel beyond two nights and/or for specific adventure activities. Girl Scouts staff will work with each troop/group to discuss your trip final details and COVID-19 travel safety plan to determine trip approval. Troops and groups must recognize that the COVID-19 risk is fluid, and contingencies for rescheduling and pivoting should be in place for last minute changes.
 - International travel – Travel plans should be considered on a case-by-case basis. CDC and Department of State guidelines should be reviewed and monitored. Trips can be [registered](#) with the Department of State to receive updates regarding changes in guidelines.
- **Curfews:** At times states and/or counties may choose to implement a curfew to help slow the spread. If a statewide curfew is in place, overnight stays are not permissible for member of GS-NCCP. If the curfew is not statewide, please refer to the guidelines of the county in which the overnight facility is in located in, if that county has a curfew restriction, overnight stay is not permissible.

FACE COVERINGS

As of May 14, 2021, the mandate for face coverings has been lifted; however, face coverings are recommended in for people who have not been fully vaccinated if individuals are unable to maintain six feet of social distance with non-household members.

For camp settings, NCDHHS recommends wearing a face covering when campers are outdoors and less than 6 feet away from others when not in a designated cohort/pod or participating in strenuous activities. Face coverings (masks) are not required but physical distancing should be adhered to during the following activities: eating/drinking, sleeping, showering, brushing teeth, and certain identified strenuous camp activities such as swimming, boating, and climbing the Alpine Tower. Activity areas (archery, boating, etc.) will be open as possible with additional safety protocols and cleaning guidance.

- **Cohorts/Pod:** A safe pod of girls to form cohorts who bunk together, eat together, and primarily stay together and distanced from other groups while performing activities.
 - Examples of pods/cohorts:
 - A troop of girls camping together
 - A cabin within a unit/entire unit
 - A group of day campers

Participants can bring their own face coverings and troops or event planners are encouraged to have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers or event hosts should also teach girls how to handle their face coverings so that the coverings are effective.

*Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks due to medical conditions. In addition, participants/children should only participate if they can reliably wear, remove, and handle the cloth face covering throughout their in-person activity.

MEETING FOOD AND SUPPLIES

Most forms of sharing should be limited at troop meetings to help ensure all girls can stay healthy and safe while being together and avoid the spread of the virus through surface contact. At all in-person gatherings, troops should limit sharing of food and activity supplies. Food can be brought from home, limited to pre-packaged or individual serving size food which can be safely distributed without cross contamination by individuals wearing face coverings and gloves. Activity supplies should not be shared between girls without proper sanitizing, if possible. As an alternative, supplies may be brought from home. (see suggestions for food while camping in the [March Outdoor Training updates.](#))

PERSONAL CONTACT

Hugs, handshakes, “high-fives,” and even activities like the friendship circle or squeeze can transmit COVID-19 from person to person. Refrain from these gestures for the time being. Create a safe way for girls and volunteers to greet and end meetings instead.

HYGIENE AND COVID-19 RISK MITIGATION

Follow the resources developed by credible public health sources such as the CDC or your local public health department. Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities.

Participants should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to drop off to confirm the individual is not running a fever and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees.

Members with fever or temperature higher than 100.4 should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal. Families should review the [Family Agreement](#) and at the start of each meeting complete the [GSNCCP Volunteer and Member Self Screening Procedures and In-person Sign-in/Acknowledgment sheet](#).

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.

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 towel 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.

FIRST AID

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable facemasks, and disinfectants. Trash baskets or bags should be supplied for meeting and activity spaces, if not already available. Make sure that the trash baskets (or bags) are easily accessible for girls. 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.

First Aid / CPR Training. Keep skills up to date for any emergency. We are currently offering two options to complete or renew your First Aid CPR certification. Our first option includes an online ONLY course from the American Red Cross. This self-paced online only course will take a minimum of two and a half hours (2.5) of online course work. Participants will be emailed the link to start the course and will have approximately 2 weeks to complete the course. As a second option, we have also begun a slow re-opening of our traditional blended learning First Aid CPR certification. This course includes two parts. The first part includes a self-paced online course that takes approximately two (2) hours of online course work. The second part includes an in-person skill session where individuals will practice skills and demonstrate competency. Social distancing measures will be in place during all in-person sessions. We recommend that the online only course only be taken if volunteers are not yet comfortable with training in-person and/or an in-person class is not currently available or conveniently located. The online only option will only be offered for a limited amount of time as we continue to evaluate our in-person training offerings as a result of Covid-19 to ensure the safety of our instructors and volunteers.

DISINFECTANTS AND DISINFECTING

[Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects](#) that are frequently touched (i.e., tabletops, 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.)

Household bleach is effective against COVID-19 for up to 24 hours when properly diluted. Check that the bleach is not expired and determine if it can be used on a given surface. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

To prepare a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

See the [CDC's website](#) for more on cleaning and disinfecting community facilities.

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 complete the [COVID-19 Notification Form](#) and submit it to the council office at COVIDReporting@nccoastalpines.org in this situation. Following proper protocols, a council staff member or in many instances the local health department(s) will be responsible for:

- Notifying the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers),
- Notifying a facility or homeowner where a troop has met, and
- Alerting the local/state department of health.

Let other volunteers know that council staff and/or local health department(s) 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.

COVID 19 Forms

To assist with the setting expectations and provide meeting guidelines for our girls, volunteers, families, and staff, we have implemented the following forms for the 2020-2021 Program year. (Please Note: Some forms are completed prior to your first in-person meeting and others are done at every meeting)

- **Family Agreement** - Families can assist in helping to maintain a safe environment for all girls and volunteers. An agreement should be completed by families prior to the first in-person meeting. It outlines what families can expect and how they can help. *(A hard copy of this physical form will be maintained by troop leaders)*
- **Assumption of Risk, Release, and Liability Related to COVID-19-** This [online form](#) should be completed for each participant (girls and adults) who are attending in-person meetings, leaders will receive notification that troop members have completed it. If you have question regarding completion, please contact [Customer Care](#).
- **Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines Volunteer and Member Self-Screening Checklist-** List of screening questions that should be done for self-screening prior to attendance at every in-person gathering and is to ensure that participants are following health screening guidelines to attend in-person meetings, events and/or activities. *(This information is NOT to be retained by troop/group/event leader and is for the participant only)*
- **GS-NCCP Activity Sign-In and Acknowledgement-** This sheet is to be completed for each troop, county/area/service unit, and council in-person gathering. It serves two purposes 1.) to indicate that participants acknowledge that screening guidelines have been met and 2.) and roster of those who were physically present for an activity. *(This form is to be retained by meeting organizer, see details on form.)*
- **COVID 19 Notification Report-** Use this form to notify GSNCCP if someone connected to your troop or service unit is diagnosed with COVID-19 and has potentially exposed others during a Girl Scout event or activity. To maintain the affected person's privacy, do not share health information with others; council staff will notify those potentially exposed in a manner consistent with healthcare privacy laws. After filling out the document, please email the completed form to covidreporting@nccoastalpines.org.