

COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Blue highlights denote updated information as of 5/13/21

- General Guidelines - Pg. 1-2
- **Covid-19 Vaccinations FAQs for Girl Scouts - Pg. 2-3**
- Meeting Space – Pg. 4
- Pre-Screening and Symptoms Check – Pg. 4-5
- Meetings/activities in the Home – Pg. 5
- **Troop Meetings on Council Premises - Pg. 5**
- Meeting Size – Pg. 5-6
- Food, Dining and Snacks - Pg. 6
- Transportation – Pg. 6
- Cookie Booths – Pg. 6
- Retail Shop- Pg. 6
- Virtual Meetings – Pg. 7
- **Day Trips and Activities – Pg. 7**
- **Travel and Overnight Stays – Pg. 7-8**
- Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation – Pg. 8
- Personal Contact - Pg. 8
- Singing - Pg. 8
- First Aid Supplies – Pg. 8
- First Aid/CPR Training – Pg. 8
- Disinfectants and Disinfecting –Pg. 8-9
- Face Coverings – Pg. 9
- Reporting and Communication a Positive COVID-19 Test – Pg.9

General Guidelines

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

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as infection rates rise and fall in different areas.

For the latest information on your specific location, please see [forward.ny.gov](https://www.forward.ny.gov).

While we encourage you to continue to be aware of [local](#) and [national](#) directives and recommendations, you are required to follow Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. guidelines while engaging in Girl Scout activities.

Exposure to COVID-19 is an inherent risk; any interaction with the general public poses an elevated risk of being exposed to COVID-19. Please note that the CDC advises that older adults and people of any age who

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Each family should evaluate and assess their risk in determining whether to participate in Girl Scout activities.

Use these guidelines to help decide how and when to return to in-person troop or service unit activities

- Leading in-person activities during COVID-19 is **optional**. Volunteers should first decide if they are comfortable offering in-person Girl Scout activities for their troop before proceeding.
- If the CDC, New York State and/or local health departments enact stricter safety guidelines than GSHH has required, GSHH and volunteers and girls must follow those stricter guidelines. In that case, GSHH will be updating the guidelines on the GSHH Coronavirus Updates webpage and communicating those changes to volunteers.
- All girls and volunteers must practice social distancing, wear face coverings (masks) at all times, and follow safety guidelines as outlined by the CDC.
- Leaders should share these guidelines with troop families, and make a collaborative decision with families based on comfort level, accessibility, and desired level of engagement.
- Anyone attending an in-person meeting should read and complete the [GSHH COVID-19 Waiver of Liability](#). The troop leader or meeting organizer should collect the waivers. Additionally, we have updated the [Pre-screening and Symptoms Questionnaire](#), now available in both English and Spanish. Click here for the new [In-Person Meeting Attendee COVID-19 Screening Form](#).
- The form will go directly to the email address of the troop leader or meeting organizer. The form can be easily filled out by computer or smart phone. Troop leaders will provide the email address to return the form and we suggest a separate folder is kept in your email account for completed forms. If you answer “YES” to any of the questions, you should not attend an in-person meeting.
- Additionally, volunteers and families should assess their ability to comply with required guidelines. For example, younger girls may find it difficult to remain socially distant and/or wear masks. If girls cannot comply with guidelines, troop activities should remain virtual at this time.

COVID-19 Vaccinations FAQs for Girl Scouts

1. Are volunteers required to be vaccinated before they can meet in person with girls?

No. Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) strongly encourages, but does not require, vaccination for volunteers. GSHH follows the recommendation from GSUSA and all NYS laws, regulations, and guidelines when it comes to vaccine requirements.

2. Can council staff members inquire about the vaccination status of volunteers?

No. Deciding to receive a vaccine is a personal decision and GSHH respects the privacy of fellow members and their families.

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

3. **Once vaccinations for children are available, can councils or troop leaders require girls to be vaccinated before they attend in-person activities?**

No. Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) strongly encourages, but does not require, vaccination for girls or volunteers. GSHH follows the recommendation from GSUSA and all NYS laws, regulations, and guidelines when it comes to vaccine requirements.

4. **Once someone is vaccinated, do they have to continue to practice the safety protocols as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), such as social distancing, washing their hands frequently, and wearing a mask?**

Yes. For the protection of all members as well as the families and communities we serve, GSHH will continue to practice, and require all members of the council to practice, all CDC-recommended health and safety protocols, regardless of whether or not an individual has received the vaccine.

Meeting Space

Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are strongly recommended for meetings. If you have a non-GSHH indoor meeting space in mind, please follow the following guidelines. 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 are touch surfaces (i.e. tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized at least daily?
- Who else uses the space (how often, how many people)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets/soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?
- Girls and volunteers must come prepared with masks or the troop must provide them. Girls without masks or proper face coverings must be sent home.

Then, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less than ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for you 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 might not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time. If your previous troop meeting place is no longer available, reach out to your service unit or GSHH Customer Care to identify other possibilities.

Meeting spaces may request a document outlining the steps your troop will take to be safe. You may share this document to fulfill that request.

Pre-Screening and Symptoms Check

Prior to in-person troop meetings and activities, all participants should be screened to ensure:

- They are healthy and that they have not experienced symptoms that are associated with COVID-19 in the previous **72 hours**.

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

- Have a normal temperature of below 100°
- That they have not knowingly been in contact with someone that has exhibited symptoms or has been confirmed positive with COVID-19.
- That they have not been to high-risk geographical regions, particularly those regions that require a 14-day quarantine period.
- Volunteers planning in-person troop meetings and activities need to complete the [In-Person Meeting Attended COVID-19 Screening Form](#) prior to each in-person gathering. This form must be filled out on the day of the in-person meeting prior to arrival and submitted to the troop leader using the email field. Please review at least one day before your next in-person meeting to make sure you have all of the necessary information. If an attendee answers a question that would indicate a likelihood or a known possibility that they could be a carrier of the virus, they should be asked not to attend the gathering. The Screening Form should be kept by the troop leader for 30 days from the date of the in-person meeting or activity.

Meetings/Activities in the Home

At this time, GSHH prohibits Girl Scout troop or service unit meetings or activities to take place in private homes, back yards, and private patios. This prohibition will remain in place until further notice.

Troop Meetings on Council Premises

GSHH is making available additional outside space at our properties listed. Only the properties listed below will be available. Meeting space will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis and open to all. Registration will be done via the calendar link below starting April 16th. All indoor facilities remain closed.

Please use the below calendar link to schedule a troop meeting. Identify the day, time, and location of interest. Click the highlighted box to open the registration portal. If the meeting time is available, you can use the red "REGISTER" button to reserve the space. If the meeting time is not available, you will see a message in red indicating that the last date for registration has passed, and you must choose a different meeting date or time.

Please use [this link](#) and select from the dropdown menu one of the properties listed below which are available for your reservation:

[Camp Addisone Boyce \(CAB\) outside meeting space – Porta Potty available](#)

[Camp Wendy outside meeting space adjacent to the Museum – Porta Potty available](#)

[Eastchester outside meeting space – Porta Potty available](#)

[Fanny Fay Lawn – Porta Potty available](#)

[Larchmont Lawn – Porta Potty available](#)

[Montgomery Office outside meeting space – Porta Potty available](#)

[New Rochelle outside meeting space](#)

[Pleasantville Office outside meeting space – Porta Potty available](#)

[Port Chester outside meeting space - Restroom available in the park](#)

[Rock Hill Camp outside meeting space- Latrines available](#)

[Rumsey Road Lawn – Porta Potty available](#)

[Scarsdale Betty Taubert outdoor pavilion – Porta Potty available](#)

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

All meetings must carefully adhere to all safety guidelines in accordance with CDC, state, and local health authorities.

Meeting Size

It is generally accepted that smaller gatherings are considered safer. GSHH recommends that you limit the size of gatherings as much as possible. For example, if you have 10 girls in your troop, limit activities to the 10 girls plus the required number of approved volunteers to fulfill supervision ratios. We strongly recommend small gatherings. Utilize all social distancing practices and follow all preventative guidance (such as face coverings).

If you plan an in-person meeting, please visit [forward.ny.gov](https://www.forward.ny.gov) for the most up to date New York State guidelines on indoors and outdoors capacity guidance. We strongly recommend that you continue to meet outdoors when possible, all GSHH properties remain closed for indoor meetings at this time. If you are meeting at a non GSHH facility, please be sure to check with the facility ahead of time to be sure that all safety and social distance guidelines are followed. At GSHH we will continue to provide a full array of virtual activities to meet the needs of girls and families who may not be ready to meet in person.

Some Ideas:

- Host virtual troop or service unit 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.

Food, Dining and Snacks

Be careful when handling and serving food and have girls be careful with each other when eating. Safety recommendations for food, dining and snacks include:

- Encourage girls to bring their own foods to eat (bag lunch or dinner).
- Encourage girls not to share their food after having touched it, such as a bag of chips.
- Individually wrap or package snacks for each girl prior to the activity.
- Have one person, wearing gloves, hand out individually wrapped or packaged items to each person.
- Avoid buffet style meal set up
- Public dining only as permitted in your local jurisdiction.
- Use disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc. when possible.
- Ensure adults handling food wash their hands (even if they will be wearing gloves) prior to any food prep or meals, following CDC handwashing guidelines.
- Continue recommendation for 6 foot spacing during meals. Masks should be worn except while eating and drinking.

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

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

indoors for longer than 10 minutes.

The parent/guardian should make the final decision as to whether or not their girl(s) should carpool.

Public transportation should be avoided and not encouraged.

Remember:

- Conduct the pre-screening process for in person meetings.
- Girls and adults should wear masks when inside of a motor vehicle.
- Always space out the girls to avoid crowding.
- Keep car window opened, at least partially, to circulate fresh air.

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.

Cookie Booths

For troops that will conduct in-person cookie sales, always opt for outside booths whenever possible. Also, think about the structure of booths. Consider building in a protective barrier to act as a sneeze guard and help to prevent girls and customers from breathing the same air before it can circulate. Try to create contact-free ways to accept payments, especially cash, while maintaining a safe distance. Also consider operating cookie tables vertically instead of horizontally to ensure a greater distance is kept between girls and customers. Reach tools can be used to hand off cookies to customers. Remember that first aid, personal protective equipment and disinfectant should be in supply and easily accessible. Please review the GSHH 2021 Cookie Season In-Person Booth Sale Guidelines.

Retail Shops

Our retail shops are available for online/telephone shopping and curbside pickup protocol.

Virtual Meetings

Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops/service units that are able to run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should do so. Use the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for Virtual Meetings, to guide your meeting plans: [Virtual Troop Meetings](#). Other helpful resources can be found here: [Virtual Programs and Activities](#).

Day Trips and Activities

In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Meetings and Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance in this document. Consult the [NYS Forward website](#) for information on currently allowed activities.

- Day trips are now permitted. Please follow all trip activity guidelines.
- Call ahead to the facility of vendor to confirm that they are following CDC and state health department guidelines.
- We do not recommend any activity requiring shared sporting equipment or any shared materials. If engaging in such an activity, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

between uses, similar to equipment at the gym.

- Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.
- The parent/guardian should make the final decision as to whether or not their girl(s) should carpool. Public transportation should be avoided and not encouraged.

Travel and Overnight Stays

Overnight travel is permitted only within the state of New York. Overnight travel outside of New York state remains prohibited at this time.

Indoor and outdoor overnight troop activities are now permitted as long as troops meet the sleeping accommodation requirements below in addition to all of the other COVID-19 guidelines in this document. When troops submit their [Trip/Activity Notification Packet](#), they will be required to describe the sleeping accommodations that will be utilized with indications of how the requirements will be met.

COVID-19 Liability Waivers must be attained for all participants, regardless of their current Girl Scout membership status.

Sleeping accommodations must provide at minimum six feet of space between participants who do not reside in the same household. Family members of the same household do not require the six foot distance from one another. For a camping trip, only participants who reside together in a single household may share a tent. Participants should not sleep in or enter the tents of others during the overnight trip.

All other guidelines provided by New York State and in this document must be followed during the overnight event. Refer to the other sections of this document when planning your overnight activities. [Trip/Activity Notification Packets](#) must be submitted to your Service Unit designee at least ten business days before your planned event.

Overnight reservations of GSHH properties are not available at this time.

Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

Follow the [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 mind 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 not feeling well.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. 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.
- Volunteers, girls, and parents should be reminded to make sure temperatures are taken prior to group interaction to confirm the individual is not running a fever. Members with fever or temperature higher than 100° should not attend.

Parents and girls should consider their answers to the [In-Person Meeting Attendee COVID-19 Screening Form](#) when deciding whether to attend each in-person activity.

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

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.

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.

First Aid Supplies

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. 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 (the same guidance applies to volunteers).

First Aid/CPR Training

Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency. Follow the GSHH troop and trip guidelines.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting

[Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (e.g. 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 (Concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Household bleach is effective as a cleaning agent 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 (1/3rd 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.

Face Coverings

Girls and volunteers must wear face coverings (masks) when participating in in-person events and must also practice social-distancing. Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but also to protect others. Face coverings are a civic responsibility and a sign of caring for the community. Girls can bring their own face coverings. Have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Volunteers can teach girls how to handle their face coverings so that

Returning to In-Person Troop and Service Unit Meetings and Activities
Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Volunteers

Edition date: 5/13/2021

the coverings are effective.

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 contact your council in this situation. This is important for medical confidentiality compliance. Call Customer Care during business hours at 1-855-232-4744 and the Emergency line after hours at 1-845-558-9436. A **council staff member** and NOT volunteers will be responsible for:

- Confirming and tracing the positive tester.
- Contacting the parents of anyone who may have been exposed (or other volunteers)
- Notifying a facility where a troop has met, and
- Alerting the state department of health.

Let other volunteers know that council staff, NOT volunteers, will notify parents and other 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.

Please note that the above guidelines may change based on the New York State and CDC requirements. Continue to go to our website at girlscoutshh.org for the most updated guidance available.

Please contact Customer Care if you have any questions: customercare@girlscoutshh.org. In an emergency, please call 1-845-558-9436.

Thank you for all that you do.