

## Returning to In-Person Girl Scout Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers Edition date: 12/20/2021

As COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community, the safety of our members must be at the forefront as we continue to hold in-person Girl Scout activities. Please read the information provided carefully to ensure that your troop is following all requirements 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. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow local and national directives. Discuss plans for the Troop with families. Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains may modify this guidance as circumstances change.

### General Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Procedures

Share these with girls and volunteers and ensure that they are practiced during meetings and activities.

- 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.

### Required Procedures for all Girl Scout Activities

- Masks are not required outside when social distancing of 3 feet can be maintained. Masks may remain off for short periods of close contact (under 10 minutes of time) for instruction or photos. Masks are required inside when social distancing cannot be maintained. Girls can bring their own face coverings, but when possible have disposable masks on hand for those who need them. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma and anxiety. Contact council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.
- When girls leave the meeting area to use the restroom, they should use hand sanitizer when returning to the meeting location.
- Individual parents should drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.
- All materials for activities need to be packaged in advance, and should be pre-portioned for each individual girl.
- Each girl's belongings should be separated from others in individually labeled containers, cubbies or areas. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials.
- Girls should be seated 3 feet apart, in assigned/designated seats to maintain physical distancing.
- Please see section below regarding food and snacks. Please contact Customer Care if you have specific questions regarding food/snacks.
- 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 (like tapping elbows). Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

### Pre-Meeting COVID-19 Monitoring

All girls, their families, and staff should conduct self-monitoring for COVID-19 exposure and symptoms at home prior to attending troop activities. Exposure is defined as close contact with a person who has had COVID-19 within the last 14 days. Based on our current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated.

COVID-19 symptoms include the following:

- Cough
- Fever (100.4 or greater)
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (diarrhea is defined as frequent loose or watery stools compared to child's normal pattern)

Girls and members who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are not permitted to attend in-person meetings. Girls and members who are unvaccinated and have had a COVID-19 exposure are not permitted to attend in-person meetings based on state health guidelines. Girls and members who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine after an exposure and can participate in Girl Scout activities following all safety guidelines.

### Facilities & Meeting Locations

For meetings held at public facilities, troop leaders must contact the facility ahead of time to ensure the following procedures are in place or to make the necessary adaptations.

- Indoor or outdoor space should provide enough space for girls and adults to participate in activities with 3 feet social distance.
- Spaces must be cleaned and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized at least daily by facility staff. If not, volunteers must arrive early to sanitize space before girls arrive.
- Facility must be able to provide their own written requirements for COVID safety. Volunteers should review to ensure they can follow.
- If space is used by multiple groups in a day, facility must be cleaned between uses.
- If restrooms are available, they must also be cleaned between group use either by facility or volunteers.
- Troops may meet in private homes that have been approved for Girl Scout activities by GSGWM if the space meets the requirements of this document. If a troop wishes to meet in a home that has not already been inspected, please reach out to Customer Care for more information on how to begin the home inspection process.
- Meetings may not be held in fitness centers or gyms, where a greater risk for contracting the virus may exist. Schools or churches may not permit outside groups on premises, so always check and confirm ahead of time.
- For outdoor meetings, make sure that the grounds are completely safe for children. For example, be careful that pools are fenced or otherwise safely sectioned off. The same goes for any equipment or tools or recreational apparatus that is deemed unsafe for girls such as outdoor trampolines. Make sure that pets are kept separate from the girls meeting space. Ensure that both the troop leader and co-leader can see girls and monitor their whereabouts

at all times. Maintain the use of the buddy system for errands or bathroom breaks. If the property is large, ensure that the meetings space is kept distinctly separate from non-members.

### Large Gatherings

If your jurisdiction permits larger gatherings, confirm the number of people that are permitted and remind volunteers to allow for proper girl-to-adult ratios. It is strongly recommended to meet outdoors as opposed to indoors, and only when social distancing can be maintained. Please be sure to follow CDC and local government guidelines for large gatherings. Contact Customer Care at least 2 weeks prior to your event if you have any questions.

### Virtual Meetings

Meeting options should be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops can run online meetings as needed or wanted. Please maintain a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means having virtual troop meetings at least 20% of the time to keep tech skills and virtual meeting habits fresh. Use the Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings to guide your meeting plans:

### 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 wrapped items are recommended.
- If providing snacks, especially if unwrapped, have one person, wearing gloves, hand out items to each person, such as with cupcakes or cookies.
- Use a serving spoon or scoop rather than reaching into a bag or bowl of snacks.
- Use a buffet line only if staffed with a safely protected server with mask and gloves.
- Avoid “serve yourself” buffets.
- Public dining only as permitted in your local jurisdiction.
- If serving family style, have one person, wearing clean gloves, serve everyone on clean plates
- Use disposable plates, forks, napkins, etc. when possible.
- Encourage girls to bring foods they can easily cook themselves (a prepacked foil pack) or hotdog for outdoor cooking.
- Ensure everyone handling food, those serving, girls, adults, wash hands (even if they will be wearing gloves) prior to any food prep or meals, following CDC handwashing guidelines.
- If sharing outdoor cooking utensils (roasting forks), they should be washed and sanitized between each use or bring enough utensils so that each person gets their own.
- Continue recommendation for 3 foot spacing during meals.

### Day Trips and Activities

In conjunction with Safety Activity Checkpoints, follow the same guidance as Troop Meetings 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, the provider should wipe down equipment in between uses. Make whatever appropriate accommodations that are necessary. For example, bring extra sanitizer if none will be provided for public use at the activity location.

### Travel and overnight stay

The timeframe for resuming travel will vary from state to state and even from county to county in some cases. As always, regardless of COVID-19 restrictions, volunteers must follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints. For the foreseeable future, volunteers must seek council prior approval before planning any overnight activities and continue to practice the Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation guidance outlined in this document. All Travel and overnight stays will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Drop-Off and Pick-up / Arrival and Departure

Leaders should develop a drop-off and pick-up routine that works for their families based on their facility while incorporating the following procedures:

- If possible, have parents pick up and drop off outside either by bringing troop to external door or using door to the outside from meeting location.
- Ensure that parents can pick up while maintain 3 foot social distance.
- All parents or guardians who need to enter the meeting location should follow the same procedures as troop members, including masks and sanitizing. If parents will remain for the troop meeting, they should also confirm that they have checked themselves with the pre- meeting COVID checklist.
- Individuals who are self-quarantining due to close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual should not perform drop-off or pick-up.

### Transportation (carpooling).

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 3 feet apart. We do realize that there are situations where carpooling cannot be avoided.

Please follow the approved guidelines below.

- 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 windows 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.
- CDC guidance for ride shares and drivers for hire may be helpful as an additional reference when evaluating motor vehicle transportation or car-pooling: Ride Shares and Drivers for Hire

#### Signs of Illness or Discomfort During Meetings

If signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness begin while participating in a troop meeting, the girl(s) or troop leader must be sent home as soon as possible. Keep sick individuals separate and limit contact as much as reasonably possible, while ensuring the safety and supervision of the ill person(s) until they leave. Please complete the COVID 19 Incident Report and Provide to Customer Care when suspected exposure occurs.

#### First Aid Supplies

Troop first aid supplies should include COVID-19 prevention items including hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), tissues, disposable face masks, 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.

#### 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 (1/3rd 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.

#### Reporting and Communicating a Positive COVID 19 Test

In the event of a COVID-19 positive test result, Troop Leaders may notify their Troop using the following e-mail template. Promptly contact your council in this situation to notify them of the exposure.

*Dear parents and guardians,*

*A participant at our troop meeting last (include date of exposure) has tested positive for COVID. The identify of the participant is confidential. Our troop followed all COVID guidelines from the health department and Girl Scouts: including masks worn by everyone throughout the meeting except while eating snack, maintenance of 3 feet of distance and*



*sanitizing of hands and materials as needed. Please utilize local health guidelines or speak to your family's health care provider to determine if any action is required. If your child starts showing any symptoms of COVID, please seek medical care and testing.*

*Sincerely,  
(Troop Leader name)*

If you need assistance in notifying Troop members, or additional Troop members test positive after the initial exposure, please contact Council promptly for support. Remember that the tester's identity is confidential. Remember that girl and volunteer health information is private and strictly confidential and should only be shared on a need-to-know basis with a council staff member in the event that contact tracing is necessary.