

GSCTX Chaperone Self-Study Course

Thank you so much for stepping up to be a chaperone for your Troop! This course is recommended for anyone that will be assisting the troop leaders and event planners during meetings, outings and events with Girl Scouts.

By volunteering to be a chaperone you get to be a part of the exciting escapades the girls have planned!! Your role will be explained in this course but rest assured that there is another volunteer on this adventure that has been fully trained in all the Girl Scout protocols, paperwork and procedures. You are joining in the fun to support the volunteer and the girls that have worked hard to plan the adventures you will enjoy.

What is a Girl Scout Chaperone?

A GS Chaperone is:

- A registered GS member
- Has a Criminal Background Check on file with GSCTX
- Involved and participates with the troop by helping where the leaders and girl need support

The Leader's Role

Every Girl Scout Leader must attend several trainings to help prepare for all the fun they get to be a part of with their Girl Scouts. Here is an overview of the training that the leaders attend:

- Jumpstart for new Leaders – Covers starting a new troop, how to stay connected to your support system, some of the basic paperwork and rules and an introduction to Girl Scout culture.
- Money Manager – covers how to set up the troop bank account, how to budget for the troop and how to help the girls learn the all-important skills of budgeting, goal setting and money management.
- Leadership Essentials – covers the Girl Scout program. This course is all about the GS Journeys and Badges. Leaders learn how to help their girls navigate all the opportunities that are available to them.

Once a leader is comfortable with troop meetings and ready to venture out on some field trips, day trips, overnights and camp outs there are a few more trainings available to help her prepare for the fun:

- *Let's Go! 1 – Out and About* – this course allows volunteers to lead girls on adventures including field trips, basic day hikes, and simple overnights.
- *Let's Go! 2 – Fire Food and Fun* – Allows Girl Scouts leaders to build fires cook simple meals and make s'mores. This two hour course is the second step on the path to camping adventures.
- *Let's Go! 3 – Outdoor Skills* – allows girls and volunteers to expand their horizons and move out of buildings and into the outdoors. It is the third step in outdoor training.
- *Let's Go! The Extra Mile* – Prepares girls and their advisors to explore beyond their local region. This course involves more work on budgeting, securing accommodations, and travel options.

So rest assured that the leaders coming along on your outing are well prepared to make this a safe, fun exciting time for the girls!!

Responsibilities of the Chaperone

- **Safety** – First and foremost you will help ensure the safety of the girls. Their physical and emotional safety is paramount in making this a good experience for everyone.
 - **Physical Safety**
 - Making sure they are following rules outlined by the leader and the location that you may be visiting.
 - Utilizing the buddy system at all times
 - Staying with the group (practice frequent head counts)
 - Help the girls remember to follow their own Troop/Group Agreement which is a set of rules that the girls have developed together to guide their behavior.
 - **Emotional Safety** – You are responsible for helping to create a safe space for girls to express themselves and feel secure and accepted
 - Monitor girl interactions to ensure there is no bullying or other behavior that needs intervention
 - Help all girls to feel comfortable voicing their opinion when decisions are made by the troop
 - Guide girls to follow the Girl Scout Law*
- **Support** – In the context of being a GS Chaperone support refers to being involved and participating in the activities that are planned.
 - **Girls Support** – GS is a girl led organization so the event that you are chaperoning has most likely been planned to some degree by the girls. Being supportive of their efforts means giving them positive feedback for great decisions and constructive feedback for decisions that could be better next time.
 - Example of positive feedback, “What an exciting day we have had!! Thank you, girls, for planning a great field trip to this museum!”
 - Example of constructive feedback, “So now that we know that parking is hard to find at this museum, what could we do next time to make this part of the trip go more smoothly?” When girls suggest carpooling or public transportation praise them for coming up with alternative solutions to make the next trip even better!
 - **Leader support** – The leader has helped the girls through the planning process and then continued on to iron out all the details. Supporting the leader means making sure she is not the only one taking care of the girls and has a hand in implementing all the exciting things that are going to happen on the outing.
 - Examples of supporting the leader include:
 - Staying with the group
 - Being aware of your surroundings
 - Conducting frequent head counts
 - Asking “What can I do to help?”

- Thanking the leader for all that she does to provide a positive experience for the troop.
- **Supervision** – Girl Scout of the USA regulates the ratios required for supervising girls in Girl Scout activities. The following table outlines the expectations.
 - You play a crucial role in making sure that the proper ratios are covered. Please stay with the group so that these numbers are maintained at all times.
 - Sometimes the leader is lucky enough to have a few extra Chaperones that have volunteered and may use that opportunity to make smaller, more manageable groups of girls or be able to give all the chaperones rotating shifts. Please follow her lead and support the leader with the supervision plan for the trip.

	Troop/Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<i>Two</i> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)	12	6	6	4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	8	12	6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	10	16	8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	12	20	10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	15	24	12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	30	15	24	12

- **Mentorship** – The chaperone should remember to be a role model while chaperoning. Those Girl Scouts are watching you and looking up to you. Make sure that you are showing them what leadership looks like. You will be a role model for every girl by showing them physically and emotionally how to behave when representing Girl Scouts.
 - **Physical Role Model**
 - GSCTX policy states “Possession or consumption of alcohol, illegal drugs or abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs is prohibited by anyone accompanying Girl Scouts on a girl or troop event or activity.
 - GSCTX policy states “No use of tobacco products including cigarettes, e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco is allowed in the presence of girls while participating in Girl Scout activities or accompanying girls.”
 - As a chaperone you have an opportunity to help the girls learn to make healthy choices while they are with you.

- Examples of healthy choices include: Choosing to drink more water, having a healthy snack, taking the stairs instead of the elevator etc.
- **Emotional Role Model** – GSCTX is committed to relationships characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect and fairness. GSCTX policy states “GSCTX will not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse of girl or adult members”. An emotional role model exhibits the following traits:
 - Flexibility – things may not always go as planned so being flexible and ready for change is a must when helping girls through the unexpected.
 - Sense of humor – being able to laugh at the silly things that girls do and the excitement of the group as well as in the face of a surprising turn of events is a quality that will be highly valued. Your sense of humor builds relationship with the girls and helps them see you as someone that understands them.
 - Grace under pressure - when working with groups of girls you will have to navigate sticky quarrels, emotional upset, homesickness, and other behaviors that may try your patience. Always remember that these are young impressionable minds that are watching **you** to learn how to negotiate trying times. Show them your best effort and remain calm. Guide them with a steady firm supervision that helps them feel secure and heard.

Being a Chaperone with the Girl Scouts has many rewards and a few challenges. Remembering how much the girls and the leader appreciate you, will help you in your role as a Girl Scout Chaperone.

Safety, Support, Supervision and Mentorship are the priorities of your role. Having fun and helping girls learn leadership skills will be the by-product of your efforts!

Volunteer Essentials

Volunteer Essentials is a policy document that guides leaders through the Girl Scout experience. If you would like more information on the safety and working with girls please refer to Chapter 4 of Volunteer Essentials. In this document GSUSA has outline the following twelve safety guidelines that we would like to share with you. We have covered most of these in the information above but it is all worth repeating.

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

Safety Guidelines

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be

- at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by GSCTX before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
 4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow the GSCTX's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
 5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
 6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Passengers in the car of any girl driver regardless of the girl driver's age, with the exception of siblings, must have written permission allowing them to be driven by a girl driver. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
 7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
 8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by GSCTX for group marksmanship activities.
 9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
 10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
 11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.

The Girl Scout Promise and Law

The Girl Scout Promise and Law are the guiding principles for the Girl Scout program. These are also good tools to reference when working with the girls.

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.
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Congratulations

Congratulations you have completed the GSCTX Chaperone training. Now that you have completed the Chaperone Self Study please review the key concepts and answer the questions on the last page. Turn the last page in to your Troop Leader and keep a copy of the certificate for your records.



Chaperone Self-Study Review:

Your Name: _____

Troop Number: _____

Level of the girls you will be working with: _____

Troop/Group Leaders name: _____



1. List the main responsibilities of a GSCTX Chaperone:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
2. How many Adults are required to attend a camping trip with 19 Girl Scout Juniors?

3. What is the name of the policy document that guides adults through the Girl Scout experience?

4. A GSCTX Chaperone:
 - a. Must be a registered GS member with a CBC on file and stay involved in the activities that are planned
 - b. Must be a registered GS member with a CBC on file and take the *Let's GO!* 1 training course
 - c. Does not need to be a registered Girl Scout member
5. List two ways you plan to support the leader on the next group outing:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

Thank you for stepping up to take on the role of GSCTX Chaperone. If you have any questions at all, your troop leader will be able to help you find the answer. Please don't hesitate to contact your Volunteer Support Specialist if you need clarification.

Enjoy your time with the girls in your group!

 <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p>Has successfully completed the GSCTX Chaperone Course</p> <p>Date: _____ Leader initials: _____</p>	 <hr style="width: 50%; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p>Has successfully completed the GSCTX Chaperone Course</p> <p>Date: _____ Leader initials: _____</p>
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