

FAQs: GSSC-MM Child Abuse Prevention & Supervision

1. What is Girl Scouts' abuse policy?

- a. Girl Scouts has a Zero Tolerance Abuse policy. Physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse, and/or neglect are forbidden. GSSC-MM is committed to providing an environment free from any form of retaliation to include reporting any concerns of child abuse and neglect. Examples of abuse are, but not limited to:
 - i. No sexual pressure
 - ii. No sexual advances
 - iii. No improper touching
 - iv. No sexual communications
 - v. No sexual activity of any kind
 - vi. No physical force, like hitting, shoving, kicking, or shaking
 - vii. No withholding of basic needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, education, inadequate supervision)¹
 - viii. No name calling, shaming, or yelling.

2. What are the requirements to become a GSSC-MM Volunteer as it relates to child abuse prevention?

- a. All volunteers must have an approved background check on record with the council, and renew the background check every three years.
- b. All volunteers must complete the required online training², which includes "Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course."
- c. Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course must be completed every three years, or simultaneously with the renewal of a background check.

3. Who must complete the screening and approval process to supervise children?

- a. Co-Leaders and any persons fulfilling any Service Unit or Product Program roles.
- b. Girl Scout employees
- c. Chaperones, drivers, and any adult participating in overnight activities
- d. Any supervising adult being counted towards adult/youth ratios for meetings, trips, activities, and events
- e. Volunteers handling money and/or large amounts of product
- f. Any other adult at the discretion of the council

4. What are the adult supervision requirements and ratios?

- a. There must be a minimum of two adults who are:
 - i. Registered members
 - ii. Approved volunteers (i.e. screened by the council and completed onboarding)
 - iii. Unrelated (e.g. not siblings, spouses, or anyone considered a family members)
 - iv. Do not live in the same residence
 - v. One must be female.
 - vi. All must be adults (i.e. older girls cannot count as chaperones or supervise younger girls)
- b. Girl Scout Co-Leaders can see approved volunteers by logging into their MyGS account.

¹ [Child Welfare Information Gateway – Definitions of Child Abuse and Neglect – South Carolina](#)

² [New Troop Leader Onboarding Part 1](#) ; [New Troop Leader Onboarding Part 2](#) ; [New Volunteer Onboarding](#)

c. Adult-to-Youth Ratios are as follows³:

Girl Scout Program Level	Troop Meetings 2 unrelated volunteers for up to this number of youth:	Troop Meetings 1 additional volunteer for each additional:	Camping, Outings, Overnights & Travel 2 unrelated volunteers for up to this number of youth:	Camping, Outings, Overnights & Travel 1 additional volunteer for each additional:	Cookie Booths
Girl Scout Daisies	12	1-6	6	1-4	For each troop cookie booth, a minimum of two adults (at least one of whom is a registered Girl Scout volunteer with the required background check), and one Girl Scout should be present at all times. ⁴
Girl Scout Brownies	20	1-8	12	1-6	
Girl Scout Juniors	25	1-10	16	1-8	
Girl Scout Cadettes	25	1-12	20	1-10	
Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors	30	1-15	24	1-12	

5. What about camping or overnight trips and travel?

- Always follow the above ratios for supervision of girls
- All adult participants of overnight activities must have an approved background check with the council and complete the screening process.
- Consult Safety Activity Checkpoints for sleeping arrangement guidance⁵.

6. What about reporting concerns of child abuse?

- Mandated Reporters⁶ are required, by South Carolina law, based on their occupation or position, to report all known concerns of child abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services.
- In Girl Scouts, we require all volunteers to report concerns of abuse regardless of if they are required by law.**
 - If a child is in immediate danger, call 911
 - Report the concern to South Carolina Department of Social Service⁷ available 24/7
 - Online:** <https://benefitsportal.dss.sc.gov/#/ran/home>
 - Phone:** 1-888-CARE4US or 1-888-227-3487
 - Notify GSSC-MM
 - [Accident/Incident report form](#) completed.
 - Email the completed Accident/Incident Report Form to COO@gssc-mm.org.

³ [Safety Activity Checkpoints – Adult Supervision](#)

⁴ [Safety Activity Checkpoints – Cookie & Product Program Checkpoints](#)

⁵ [Safety Activity Checkpoints – Sleeping Arrangements](#)

⁶ [Mandated Reporters by Profession – South Carolina Department of Social Services](#)

⁷ [Report Child Abuse and Neglect – South Carolina Department of Social Services](#)

7. What happens after a reporting concerns of child abuse?

- a. GSSC-MM will work with SC DSS and/or law enforcement to investigate allegations of abuse and take any necessary disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the assigned role(s). The council reserves the right to suspend a volunteer or employee under investigation by the DSS or other binding authority during the duration of the investigation. The council also reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer or employee participating in or facilitating a Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect.

This FAQ aims to ensure that Girl Scouts provide a safe and supportive environment for all members. If you have any further questions, please contact customercare@gssc-mm.org.