**Girl Scouts San Diego COVID Guidelines**

Use these recommendations to help decide if and how you can host in-person troop or service unit meetings or activities during the pandemic. Girl Scouts San Diego (GSSD) guidelines are subject to change without notice. Keep up-to-date at sdgirlscouts.org/stayingconnected.

To safeguard our members, and to protect the opportunity to continue meeting in person, it’s important to follow the recommendations listed. Use the Girl Scout Promise and Law as a reminder to respect each other and make the world a better (and safer!) place.

**What’s new:** California is now experiencing high spread due to the virulence of the Delta variant.

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now advises all persons in high-spread areas to wear masks indoors.
- The CDC and the California Department of Public Health now require everyone in K-12 schools located in areas of high spread to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Those in California schools are not required to wear masks outdoors. Experts agree, however: use of distancing and cohort* groups help reduce spread and aid in contact tracing, if needed. GSSD uses school guidance as a model for protocols.

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**Use these "best practice" recommendations to make safer decisions about activities:**

Select outdoor locations whenever possible and follow the "Big Four" protocols:
- Ask Screening Questions + Wear Well-fitted Masks + Wash or Sanitize Hands Often + Keep 6 ft Apart

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you can do now</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Safer</th>
<th>Safest</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Troop meetings and field trips (day trips)</strong></td>
<td>Indoors, preferably with windows open, masks on.</td>
<td>Outdoors.</td>
<td>Virtual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inviting experts, guests, or facilitators.</td>
<td>Including occasional experts or facilitators.</td>
<td>Limiting attendance to the troop cohort* only.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpooling with masks on and windows open.</td>
<td>Carpooling with masks on and windows open, one person per row.</td>
<td>Each household provides own transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Mixed-group activities</em> (members from various troops)</em>*</td>
<td>Indoors, preferably with windows open.</td>
<td>Outdoors.</td>
<td>Virtual.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cabin or tent camping with 6’ between beds.</td>
<td>Separate or household-only tents.</td>
<td>Under the stars or in separate tents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eating outdoors at a restaurant.</td>
<td>Having one cook or server; no buffets.</td>
<td>Packaged snacks or each person brings her own.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Outdoors at full capacity, or indoors to 25% of venue capacity. Leave open seats between households.</td>
<td>Outdoors. Arrange small groups of seats, 6 ft. apart, for individual households.</td>
<td>Outdoors. Register guests in advance, arrange seats by household size, 6 ft. apart. Limit attendance to 67% of venue capacity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Camping; see Camping Info</strong></td>
<td>Follow CDC guidelines for testing, vaccines, and quarantine at departure, destination, en route, and return.</td>
<td>Adjust travel to open-air, uncrowded destinations, such as national parks.</td>
<td>Delay or adjust travel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food; see Camping Info</strong></td>
<td>Indoors with windows open. Masks on regardless of vaccination status.</td>
<td>Outdoors, up to 100 people.</td>
<td>Virtual--still a convenient option.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spectator (guest) events such as bridging or awards ceremonies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trips and travel; Obtain approval</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Adult-only or service unit meetings,</strong></td>
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*Note: cohort refers to a group of people who are in close contact on a consistent basis.
*Definitions and Details*

- **Masks**: Wear masks indoors and for additional protection outdoors. Masks are not worn when sleeping, eating, drinking, or swimming—so maintain social distancing during those times.
- **Cohort/Stable group**: A troop, special-interest group, or Take Action patrol that gathers regularly without additional participants joining in. Up to 14 girls and 2 adults (or other combination, up to 16 individuals) are recommended. If your troop is slightly larger, include all girls in the cohort. But do not combine troops. Keep the number of adults as low as possible.
- **Mixed-group activities**: Badge workshops, service unit events, etc., where participants are not part of the same, stable group. Must have a defined participant list/tickets and assigned seating. Take additional time to understand and manage participant comfort levels. Encampments are not permitted at this time.

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**Step 1. Decide whether to host an in-person activity**

- Poll your group and gauge interest in the activity. Find out what precautions would help everyone feel safe and included. Can you accommodate those needs? If not, consider another approach, rather than leaving people out. **Hybrid meetings** might help.
- Plan to follow all protective measures outlined in this document, including the Big Four protocols. Vaccine status does not change the need to follow protocols. Read our **Vaccine FAQs** for information.
- Plan for outdoor activities when possible. Indoor activities are permitted but discouraged. Spaces that are open on at least three sides can be considered “outdoor.”
- Find an appropriate meeting place. Girl Scouts of the USA recommends against meeting at private homes. In some areas, however, public spaces are not available or adequate. If you must host meetings at a home, **request an exception** in advance.

**Step 2. Check and follow GSSD instructions**

- Follow all safety guidelines in **Volunteer Essentials**.
- Follow **safety activity checkpoints** if they are written for your specific activity.
- Request approval at least one month in advance if **approval** is required for your specific activity.
- Groups should be as small and stable as possible, and not interact with other groups.
- Make sure all girls’ parents or guardians have given permission to participate with a Trip or Event Permission form or Annual Permission, using the Girl Health History and Annual Permission form. Make sure the form is current (dated after Sept. 30, 2020), and refers to COVID. Find the form here in **English** and **Spanish**.
- Send meeting details to all participants. Include the following:
  - **COVID Girl and Adult Participation Guidance and Waiver**—ask parents/guardians to sign the waiver.
  - All attendees should bring and wear their own masks.
  - All participants will be asked **screening questions** as they enter the meeting.
  - All attendees should bring their own food and drink, or use single-serving foods, when possible. Our **Camping Info** guide has ideas on other food serving methods.
  - Maintain social distance while eating or drinking. Remove face coverings as briefly as possible.
  - Information on contingency plans. Consider poor weather, changing pandemic conditions, or a local outbreak. Any of these may require cancellation.

**Step 3. The day before the activity**

- Send a meeting reminder. Include the link to the **Guidance and Waiver** so the information is handy. Remind attendees that they should not attend if they answer yes to any of these screening questions:
  - They are or have been exhibiting signs of illness such as fever, coughing, sneezing.
  - They or someone in their household has been recently exposed or notified that they may have been exposed to COVID within the previous two weeks.
  - They or someone in their household has been diagnosed with COVID and they are not yet cleared as non-contagious.

**Step 4. On the day of the activity**

- Collect **COVID Participation Guidance and Waiver** if you have not done so already (collect page 3).
- **Optional**: print this **COVID Reminders poster**, with protocol reminders for Girl Scouts on one side, and the screening questions on the reverse.
Bring a COVID health and safety kit with the following supplies:

- Extra disposable face masks in case a mask is forgotten or damaged.
- Handwashing and sanitizing supplies—extra soap and paper towels for handwashing and hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol as a backup.
- Disinfecting supplies such as rubber gloves, sanitizing wipes or sanitizing solution, and paper towels. For information on best sanitation practices and products, review CDC’s cleaning and disinfecting guidance.
- Trash bags.

Ask these screening questions as participants arrive. Have caregivers wait until you’ve screened their Girl Scout so that you can send a girl home, if needed. Ask the questions each time you have an activity. Keep the roster or log with answers for at least 3 months. You may use a digital version on a tablet or phone.

Clean high-touch surfaces at least once a day. High-touch surfaces include pens, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets and sinks. Avoid sharing equipment whenever possible.

Ensure that a first aider--a person trained in first aid and CPR--is on hand.

Bring a first aid kit with adequate protective equipment. The suggested items for your troop first aid kit now include face shields and HEPA CPR masks.

At the start of the meeting, review COVID health and safety expectations with the group:

- Maintain social distance. Help girls understand a six-foot distance, by using masking tape where they should sit, pool noodles between them, or by marking off areas they should not use.
- Do not share food or drink.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after eating, and after using the restroom.
- Be sure that all adults are monitoring COVID precautions during the meeting. Adults not actively engaged in leading the group should leave the area.

**Step 5. After the activity**

- Evaluate the success of the day. Did safety plans work well? Did girls have enough self-discipline to follow important directions? Did they have fun? Did adults work well together? Use your reflections to inform future decisions.
- Let families know:
  - Contact GSSD staff immediately if anyone connected to your troop (or service unit, for service unit activities) is diagnosed with COVID and has potentially exposed other participants. Email accidentreporting@sdgirlscouts.org or call 619-298-8391. After business hours, press two (2) when prompted to reach our emergency line.
  - Follow instructions from your health care provider, as well as any directives by contact tracers.
  - Do not share health information with others. Council staff will notify those potentially exposed in a manner consistent with healthcare privacy laws, in conjunction with county contact tracers.

**More about the Guidelines**

- K-12 school and camp guidance remain more restrictive than the guidance for the public. To align with school protocols and to maintain American Camp Association accreditation, GSSD must comply.
- Everyone has different levels of comfort in group settings. Be a sister to every Girl Scout and help each person feel valued and welcome.
- Many government guidelines rely on vaccine status to guide activities. But, most of our youth membership is not yet eligible for the vaccine.

**Vaccinations**

- All eligible members of the community are encouraged to get a COVID vaccination. Ask your health care provider.
- Girl Scouts does not require vaccination in order to participate. Vaccine status is private health information, and the decision to vaccinate or not is highly personal. Be sure to respect individual decisions.
- Girl Scout members or guardians may voluntarily disclose their vaccination status. Members and guardians may ask fellow members’ status—but no one is obligated to answer. Girl Scout staff may not ask status.
- If all agree, groups of adults may use the state guidance for vaccinated persons, when youth are not present. But, be careful not to pressure others. Disclosure of vaccination status is "on my honor."
See Vaccine FAQs for additional details.

For more information on COVID safety and Girl Scouts, please visit sdgirlscouts.org/stayingconnected. If you have questions as you consider your options and plans, please contact GSSD at customercare@sdgirlscouts.org or 619-298-8391.

SS:ms
TR-1852W 7/30/2021