



Returning to In-Person Troop Meetings and Camp Activities Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Volunteers

Edition date: 6/11/2020

This guidance is being provided as of the Edition Date above (when a vaccine has not been made readily available). Girl Scouts of Louisiana Pines to the Gulf (GSLPG) may modify this guidance from time to time as circumstances change. As a Girl Scout volunteer you must adhere to any guidance and protocols provided by GSLPG and GSUSA. Please read this document in its entirety and contact info@gslpg.org with any questions.

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. There may be regional differences or developments since this guidance was published. Continue to follow [local](#) and [national](#) directives. Discuss plans with families.

Use these questions and reminders to help decide how and when to return to troop activities.

Troop Meeting Space. Outdoor spaces where social distancing can be maintained are required for meetings. Get advance permission from the property owner or the jurisdiction that provides the location. ***Staying in line with government recommended safety measures, through July 15th, GSLPG will only allow troop meetings to be held in outdoor spaces. This decision will be re-evaluated in July.***

For meetings held at public facilities, contact the facility ahead of time and ask:

- Can social distancing be maintained?
- Is the space cleaned, and touch surfaces (i.e., tabletops, light switches, chairs, etc.) sanitized, at least daily?
- Who else uses the space (how often, what size is the group)? Is the space cleaned between groups?
- What type of faucets / soap dispensers are available in the restroom (sensory or manual)?

Then, consider whether you can supplement any practices that are less ideal. For example, if you will arrive after another user group, plan to bring sanitizing wipes to get the space ready for your 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.

Note: Do not assume public spaces are cleaned and sanitized. Arrive 30 minutes in advance and clean high-touch surfaces.

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.

Drop-off, Pick-up, & Transportation Processes

- Establish curbside drop-off and pick-up to limit direct contact between parents and staff members/leaders.
- Individual parents drop off and pick up their own girls from meetings. Carpooling and public transportation should be avoided, where possible, to maintain social distancing.
- If you anticipate getting out of your vehicle, please be sure to maintain social distancing and wear a mask if you will be around any individual outside of your household.
- **Additional Camp Processes:**
 - Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort (group) or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and with other campers' guardians as much as possible.
 - Conduct screening of campers upon arrival using the following guidance:
 - Screening for the presence of symptoms (fever higher than 98.6°F, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, nausea, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, vomiting, etc.) within the past two weeks.
 - Determining if, within the past two weeks, the individual has traveled nationally or internationally.
 - Determining if the individual has been in close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with, tested for, or quarantined as a result of COVID-19.

Note: A temperature checker will be available for use upon arrival at *camp properties*.

Troop Meetings in the Home

GSLPG is not allowing meetings in the home out of concern that there would be greater risk of exposure to other family members. Please stay away from in-home meetings for the time being.

Troop Meeting Size

While in Phase 2, group sizes should be limited to 25 people (23 girls and 2 unrelated adult volunteers). However, [check your local restrictions](#) for small gatherings. If more restrictive, follow the local restriction. Restrictions vary greatly from state to state, parish to parish, and even from town to town--and frequently change. Please utilize all social distancing practices and follow all preventative guidance (such as face coverings). **As a reminder, troop meetings will only be allowed outdoors in effect through July 15.**

If you have a large troop, stay connected while you wait for a safe time for everyone to gather. Large troops are wonderful, so stay together! Some ideas:

- Host virtual troop 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.

Virtual Meetings

Meeting options may need to be flexible based on the fluid nature of COVID-19 risk. Troops that are able to run online meetings as needed (or wanted) should do so. GSUSA recommends maintaining a virtual to in-person ratio of at least 20/80, which means to maintain 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: [Virtual Troop Meetings](#).

Other helpful resources can be found [here](#).

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, ask the provider if they wipe down equipment in 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.

Travel and overnight stays

Overnight trips for GSLPG members are not permitted until further notice. Council decisions and updates will be released as necessary, pending review of State Official proclamations. Timeframes will vary from state to state and even from parish to parish in some cases. As always, contact GSLPG for prior approval before planning any overnight stays and follow guidance in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

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 remind girls and volunteers to engage in [everyday preventive actions](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Leaders, girls, and their families should:

- Stay home if they are sick or recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19.
- 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.
- 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 and temperature is a normal 98.6 degrees. Members with fever or temperature higher than 98.6 should skip the in-person gathering until their temperature is normal.
- Follow social distancing standards set by local officials, to include remaining a six-foot distance when possible and remaining in cohorts at all times. When this is not possible, all members should wear face masks.

A self-symptom check should be conducted prior to attending any meeting. If you are experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms, please do not attend any in person meetings. You can view symptoms of COVID-19 [here](#).

Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among campers and staff.
- Encourage staff and campers to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- When handwashing is unavailable, utilize hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- All girls and adults must engage in hand hygiene at least every two hours and at the following times:
 - Arrival and exit of the facility and after breaks
 - Before and after using outdoor play equipment
 - Before and after preparing, eating, or handling food or drinks, or feeding children
 - Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
 - After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluid
 - After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
 - After playing outdoors or in sand
 - After handling garbage
- Teach and reinforce the use of cloth face coverings. Face coverings may be challenging for campers (especially younger campers) to wear in all-day settings such as camp. Face coverings should be worn by adults and campers (particularly older campers) as feasible and are **most** essential in times when physical distancing is difficult.

Note: Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:

- Babies or children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without help

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 instead (like tapping elbows).

Sharing

Most forms of sharing are limited at troop meetings in the current environment to help ensure all girls can stay healthy and safe while being together and avoid the spread of the virus through surface contact. At all in-person gatherings, do not permit girls to share food or activity supplies. Food can be brought from home or limited to pre-packaged, individual serving size food which can be distributed without cross-contamination. Activity supplies should not be shared between girls. As alternatives, supplies may be brought from home or each girl can have a unique personal supply kit which the leader safely stocks in advance and is used at each meeting.

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 for girls. 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.

First Aid / CPR Training

Keep skills up-to-date for any emergency. The Red Cross is currently offering an online [120 day certification extension](#) to ensure that leaders who have had recently expired certifications can stay certified. The 120-day certification enables an existing enrollee to extend their current American Red Cross certification by 120 days from the original certification expiration date. This extension certificate is for student or base level certificates from instructor-led and blended learning courses.

Disinfectants and Disinfecting

[Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces](#) and objects that are frequently touched (i.e., table tops, markers, scissors, door handles, light switches, sinks, faucets, 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.

Face Coverings

Volunteers should remind girls that Girl Scouts wear face coverings (masks) not only to protect themselves but 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 the coverings are effective. Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks, due to medical conditions such as asthma. Contact your council for guidance on how best to handle these exceptional circumstances as they arise.

Reporting & 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 Troop Support Specialist. 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 or homeowner where a troop has met, and
- Alerting the state department of health.

Council staff, NOT volunteers, will notify parents and others about a positive test result. 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.

Camp Activities

Camp Bon Temps and Camp Wawbansee are open for day troop activities beginning July

7. The following indoor communal spaces may open, with strict regard and adherence to the *Troop Meeting Space* and *Troop Meeting Size* sections above in conjunction with the *Hygiene and COVID-19 Risk Mitigation* procedures listed above.

- Troop House (Wawbansee)
- Main Halls (both properties)
- Kitchen and dining areas (both properties)

Space is limited – please view availability and submit a request for reservation at [Camp Bon Temps](#) and [Camp Wawbansee](#) for Site Manager approval.

Creating Cohorts

Keep girls together in small groups with dedicated adult volunteers and make sure they remain with the same group throughout the day. Use best practices below:

- Organize camp into the smallest practical group sizes and to the extent possible keep groups consistent throughout the camp program.
- Organize girls and adults into “households” that eat, wash, and do most group activities together or within subgroups.
- If “households” mix for programs or activities, consider other mitigation measures such as physical distancing or face coverings if appropriate and practical for the activity.
- Consistently construct larger gatherings of the same smaller groups or “households.” Note that group sizes must still comply with state and/or local requirements for proper adult to camper ratios.
- Larger gatherings, especially inside buildings, increase the potential of communicable disease spread. Mitigation for these and any mass gathering could include splitting large assemblies into smaller groups (by “household”), outdoor programming, dining and programmatic changes to minimize mixing, physical distancing between “households” and facial coverings (as age and developmentally appropriate) when distancing cannot be accomplished.
- Staggered dining times is recommended depending on the size of the dining facility and its ability to allow social distancing between “households.” Consider dining outside in “households” if possible and weather permits.
- Always keep a record of members in cohorts, including contact information, to make members of the group easily identifiable.

Guiding Principles to Keep in Mind

Lowest Risk	Small groups of campers stay together all day, each day. Campers remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects. Outdoor activities are prioritized. All campers are from the local geographic area (e.g., city, town, county, community).
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More Risk	Campers mix between groups but remain at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects. Outdoor activities are prioritized. All campers are from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
Even More Risk	Campers mix between groups and do not remain spaced apart. All campers are from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
Highest Risk	Campers mix between groups and do not remain spaced apart. All campers are not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, tabletops, cabinet handles, railings, etc.) within the camp facility and in any shared transportation vehicles at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., art supplies, nap mats, toys, games) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children, and all adults and volunteers should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes. When using cleaning products, follow instructions and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) thoroughly and never mix chemicals.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands after removing gloves.

Provided supplies include: Gloves, hand soap, hand sanitizer stations, surface cleaners and paper towels. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own gloves and personal hand sanitizer. *Visitors are expected to bring their own face masks and will be asked to leave if not prepared with one.*

Ensure Healthy Food Preparation and Meal Service

- Have campers bring their own meals as feasible and eat in separate areas or with their smaller group, instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria.
- Use disposable food service items (utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- If food is offered at any activity, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.

Note: Ensure the safety of children with food allergies.

Isolation Measures

It is important to establish a space to isolate girls who become sick and be prepared with a cleaning and disinfecting process.

- Camp Wawbansee: The Infirmary
- Camp Bon Temps: First Aid Room in Main Lodge
- Ensure proper adult supervision of an isolated child as needed and based on age.

- If a child becomes sick close off areas used by the girl.
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in those areas.
- Keep member isolated until they can be transported from the camp properties.
- Contact Camp Site Manager for further instructions.

Swimming

Swimming pool usage is prohibited until further notice.

Small Craft

Campers should follow physical distancing and proper hand hygiene practices prior to/following any small craft activity (e.g., individual canoes, etc.). Consider keeping activities together to include the same group of campers each day and consider keeping the same instructors per group. Limit the amount of shared supplies and equipment per activity.

- All shared and used equipment (e.g., oars, lifejackets, boats) should be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Hand wash life jackets in hot soapy water. Spray lifejackets with alcohol-based disinfectant spray before use.
- Designate certain equipment (e.g., lifejackets) to individuals for the duration of camp, to decrease the quantity of shared items.
- Commonly-touched surfaces of boats should be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Do not use bleach products on ropes or lifejackets.

Archery

Campers should follow physical distancing and proper hand hygiene practices prior to/following any archery sessions. Consider keeping activities together to include the same group of campers each day and consider keeping the same instructors per group. Limit the amount of shared supplies and equipment per activity.

- All shared and used equipment (e.g., bows, arrows) should be cleaned and disinfected between each use.

Thank you for doing your part to keep our Girl Scout community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are stronger together, even when we are six feet apart.