



Parent Handbook

2009 - 2010

Council: Girl Scouts of Central Texas
Service Unit: Greater Waco

First United Methodist Church of Hewitt
600 1st Street | Hewitt, TX

Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Meeting Days: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month

Parent Law: A Girl Scout parent . . . understands the true program of Girl Scouting. Gets her daughter to and from meetings on time. Knows a troop is a team effort. Sees the job through to the end. Sets a good example at all times. Is enthusiastic and cheerful. Does not consider the leader a baby-sitter. Brings troop problems to the leader first. Always does his or her part willingly and is aware that Girl Scouting is for all girls.

Parent Promise: On my honor, I will try to encourage and support my Girl Scout daughter. To help her troop at all times. And to obey the Girl Scout Parent's Law.

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Welcome to Girl Scouts!

GSUSA Mission:

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Promise and Law

The Girl Scout Promise and Law are shared by every member of Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Promise is the way Girl Scouts agree to act every day toward one another and other people, and the Law outlines a way to act towards one another and the world. ***Becoming familiar with the Promise and Law is the first activity of every new Girl Scout.***

The 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.

The 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.

"The Girl Scout Movement shall be open to all girls and adults who accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law"

-- The Constitution of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

About Girl Scouts . . .

About Girl Scouting:

Girl scouting was founded in the United States in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low. There are four program goals that, as we move through the different Girl Scout Levels, we will strive to achieve:

- Girls will develop to their full potential.
- Girls will relate to others with increasing understanding, skill and respect.
- Girls will develop a meaningful set of values to guide their actions and to provide the foundation for sound decision
- Girls will contribute to the improvement of society through the use of their abilities and leadership skills, working in cooperation with others.

How does my daughter fit into the world of Girl Scouting?

- **WAGGGS** - All Girl Scouts are part of a worldwide movement that has members in more than 100 nations, all belonging to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).
- **GSUSA** - Girl Scouts USA is the National organization.
- **Council** - Within GSUSA, we are represented by our local Girl Scout Council, Girl Scouts of Central Texas, Austin, TX
- **Service Unit** - Within GSCTX Council, there are many geographical divisions called Service Units that serve several troops. We belong to the Greater Waco Service Unit.
- **Troop** -- That's us!

Our Leaders, Parents & Scouts . . .

Brownie Troop Leaders – _____

Junior Troop Leaders – _____

Cadette Troop Leaders – _____

As Leaders, we have volunteered for this position because it is rewarding and gives us a chance to spend time with our daughters and yours! We attend on-going Leader meetings, trainings, and activities so that we can stay “in tune” with the mission of Girl Scouting. We look at Girl Scouting as a positive, long-term experience for all the girls in our troop and plan to stay with the troop until they graduate from high school. If you ever have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Troop Leaders’ responsibility to the troop:

- ❖ To ensure that all girls in the troop are registered members and ALL adults are registered and have a current *Volunteer* Application on file at the council.
- ❖ To ensure that troop financial records are maintained and reports are submitted on time.
- ❖ Attend or appoint a representative to attend Service Unit meetings monthly.
- ❖ To ensure that National and Council policies, standards and procedures (to include Safety Wise) are upheld
- ❖ To maintain a balanced program of activities based on the girls’ interests, keeping in mind the Program Goals of self potential, relating to others, values and community service.
- ❖ To attend all required trainings.
- ❖ To be familiar with resources available to both the parents and the girls in the troop.
- ❖ To attend meetings and outings and be prepared for them, or to appoint a representative to attend meetings and outings as needed
- ❖ To fulfill obligation of paperwork and troop funds as needed.
- ❖ To use effective communication skills and communicate often with parents and girls.

It is the RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY ADULT participant at troop activities to respect the role of the leader, listen to each and every Girl Scout and other attending parents and to be a role model for all attendees.

Parent Participation in Troop Committee . .

Our troop cannot run with one Leader doing all of the jobs. In order for our troop to run smoothly and not wear out your Leaders physically or emotionally, we need your help.

Please consider the following committee positions for our troop:

- ❖ Event Committees – _____
 - Will coordinate special troop events, organize award ceremonies and assist in planning Holiday affairs.
- ❖ Event Registrar – _____
 - Keep track of event deadlines and provide registration form to troop for events.
- ❖ Field Trip Coordinator – _____
 - Support girl planning to make arrangements for field trips.
- ❖ First Aider – _____
 - Maintains current certification in CPR and First Aid.
- ❖ Newsletter Editor – _____
 - Product or support a parent/girl newsletter and submit articles to local news media.
- ❖ Parent Communication Coordinator – _____
 - Man parent table at meetings, direct parents to check folders/forms/event registrations and answer any questions. Must arrive early to meeting to setup.
- ❖ Emergency Contact Person (ECP) – _____
 - Serves as emergency contact person when the troop goes on field trips / outings.
- ❖ Troop Historian – _____
 - Takes pictures at troop activities and publish to online sharing website.
- ❖ Fall Product Sale Coordinator – _____
 - Manage Fall Product Sale efforts for the troop and attends mandatory Service Unit training in order to comply with GSCTX Council guidelines.
- ❖ Cookie Sale Coordinator – _____
 - Manage Cookie Sale efforts for the troop and attends mandatory Service Unit training in order to comply with GSCTX Council guidelines.
- ❖ Troop Website Administrator – _____
 - Maintains information on website, including calendar and event postings.
- ❖ Troop Treasurer – _____
 - Maintains troop checking account, audits and tracks troop spending, and tracks each girls' individual savings accounts.

Parents' Responsibility to the Troop . . .

- ❖ To help your daughter fulfill her troop responsibilities
- ❖ To monitor her progress in badge completion and ensure that badge completed at home meets the activity specifications
- ❖ To make every effort to be punctual to meetings and outings
- ❖ To aid your daughter in all fundraising activities and turn in money promptly
- ❖ To check the parent table at each meeting for important news or permission slips that may need to be signed after every meeting
- ❖ To keep the parent socializing at meetings to a quiet level and supervise any tag-a-longs
- ❖ To respect your Leaders' time by honoring deadlines and making payments promptly
- ❖ To assist the troop and troop leaders during meetings / activities
- ❖ To consider being a member of the Troop Committee
- ❖ To contact us in advance if you are unable to help out as scheduled and letting us know who you have found to replace you
- ❖ To communicate problems or concerns to the Troop Leaders immediately

Girl Scout's Responsibility to the Troop . . .

- ❖ To attend meetings regularly and outings, events and field trips as you can
- ❖ To record attendance at each meeting on the Attendance Chart
- ❖ To wear the appropriate uniform to every Girl Scout activity
- ❖ To fulfill obligations of dues, uniforms, and tracking Girl Scout accomplishments
- ❖ To complete any missed activities or assigned homework on her own or with a parents help
- ❖ To honestly complete the Badge Completion Form when a badge has been earned
- ❖ To pass along important information to parents and Leaders
- ❖ To respect and treat each member of the troop as a sister
- ❖ To respect Troop Leaders and Troop Parents
- ❖ To participate in the meetings
- ❖ To conduct themselves in a safe manner
- ❖ To listen to others and show respect for what each girl is saying

Membership . . .

All girls and adults who attend meetings, events and troop trips must be registered members of GSUSA. Adults MUST have a Volunteer Application of file. Membership forms and volunteer applications must be turned into the Troop Leader as soon as possible, with a check written to the troop for the amount of **\$12.00 (as of 8-1-09)**.

Basic Troop Policies & Info . . .

Tag-a-longs are what Girl Scouts call non-member siblings. Tag-a-longs are always welcome at our regular troop meetings; however we must have a copy of a liability form on file and they are not allowed to be outside without an adult. Tag-a-long presence at events other than regular meetings will be based on the activities involved and safety considerations. If we are attending a council event, tag-a-longs are usually not allowed per council policy.

Cleaning up our areas is the **responsibility of EVERY TROOP MEMBER** to make sure that the areas we use are left cleaner than when we found them.

- ❖ All food trash or trash in large quantities must be taken outside to the dumpster.
- ❖ Bathrooms must be checked for cleanliness before we leave the building.
- ❖ If the kitchen is used, we are to not touch what belongs to others.

Leader, Parent and Girl Communication will be handled via emails and written agendas at meetings. Additionally, a parent table is set up at every meeting for Event Registration, to check the Troop Binders, Troop Forms and any flyers or other information for parents and girls to take home. Parents are asked to check these tables during each meeting to ensure you have all the information you need. A zipper pouch will be available for making payments.

- ❖ **Troop Binder** – will contain a copy of the Parent Handbook, Troop Roster, Attendance and Dues, Troop Schedule / Volunteers / Snacks, Check Register and Bank Statements, Fundraising Information, GWSU Team Roster and Info, Extended Trip Information
- ❖ **Troop Forms** – will contain GS Shop Order Form, Troop Reimbursement Form, Parent Permission Slips, Try It / Badge / IP Completion Forms, etc.

Council and Service Unit Events will be registered for through the troop based on leader availability and girl interest. Most events require an additional fee that is *not refundable* once troop registration has been completed. If number of chaperones is limited, the allowed chaperone spots will be open to leaders first, followed by assistant leaders, committee members and then registered parents. Every girl may register for and attend council or service unit events individually, if the troop does not attend as a whole.

Troop Schedules will be based on a 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. Occasionally, special troop events or field trips may be planned for days or times other than our usual meeting day or time. Special Interest groups, such as Program Aide for Cadettes, Bronze Award Project groups will take place at a day, time and location that is convenient to the adults leading the meetings and the girls participating.

Troop Website will be the same – www.troop7092.com . We will utilize the site by keeping an active calendar and event information. There are also links for the girls to visit that are proven to be youth friendly, educational and entertaining. There are links that are for adults that will assist you in finding information you are looking for from the Council, GSUSA and even our school district.

If you see something that you feel does not belong or something that you would like to add, please email Michele with the information.

Troop Funding . . .

Troop funds consist of all monies paid to the troop by parents and girls, monies raised during product sales and other fund-raising efforts, and donations made to our troop from community businesses and organizations. Troop funds are managed by the girl members of the troop, with the advice and guidance of the Troop Leaders. Troop funds are budgeted to cover costs of meeting, supplies, patches and partial expenses for girls and required chaperones for troop activities, trips and camping. Special programs and GSCTX / Service Unit Events are not budgeted and are considered extracurricular and will often require additional registration fee.

The money you pay for your Girl Scout registration (\$12) covers administrative costs, accident insurance and helps fund our Council. The money does NOT go to our troop.

As a group, our troop decides what to do with the troop funds in our account. We discuss budget on an age-appropriate level following the Girl Scout program level guidelines. All members are invited to bring ideas for outings to the troop business meeting where our voting and choices are made. We follow the majority rules concept.

Troop Accounts: An account is created for each family in the troop into which all payments are recorded; checks are preferred. As expenses occur, funds will be deducted from that account resulting in either a positive balance or an amount due. *For example, you register for a council event which costs \$10 and leave a payment in the zipper pouch for the amount of \$40. The \$40 will be recorded into your family account when the deposit is made. When the event registration is processed, a \$10 deduction will be entered into your account, resulting in a positive balance of \$30 remaining for future expenses.*

An account balance sheet will be in the Troop Binder on the parent table at each meeting. Parents are responsible for checking their account balance / amount due at each meeting and making payments into their account promptly.

Troop Dues: Troop dues are paid by parents at the start of the year and cover the cost of purchasing badges and patches, program supplies, awards and gifts and leadership tools. The cost of these dues will be determined by each troop annually by averaging the cost of the previous year's expenditures amongst the girls. This amount will be set during the annual Parent Meeting held prior to each school year.

Patrol Dues: The Patrol dues are to allow the girls to take direct responsibility for some of the troop finances and to provide the opportunity to develop budgeting, record keeping, and other financial skills. The amount will be set by each patrol and tracked by the girls at each meeting. This money will be kept within each patrol and they will decide how to spend it. If your daughter missed a meeting, it is up to her and her patrol whether her dues for that meeting should be paid or not.

Please allow your child to bring her dues in cash each meeting. Perhaps you can assign her the task at home to "earn" her dues.

Product Sales and other Fund-Raisers: Our troop will be participating in product sales twice per year – Fall Product Sale begins October 1 and Cookie Sales begin Jan 16.. Our troop earns a portion of the proceeds from each product sold. You are not required to participate in these fund-raising events; however, your participation is important to our being able to achieve our program goals, provides opportunity for girls to obtain funding for their own activities and ultimately keeps our program affordable for all families. Any money earned through our efforts belongs to the troop as a whole – not each girl. It is all for one and one for all! If your daughter leaves the troop, all funds raised will stay in our troop fund. Nut Bucks and Cookie Dough earned during product sales can be used to pay for any money due to the troop or council, except for Patrol Dues. Just turn them in as if they were cash and your account will be credited or you can take them to a council shop for purchases.

Reimbursement for Troop Expenses: Before purchasing items for your daughter's patrol, for a troop activity or troop event, please make sure that you have permission from your troop or adult patrol leader to do so. We may already have the items you need! When you do make a purchase, to receive reimbursement from our troop funds you must submit your receipt(s) attached to the Troop Reimbursement Form. All reimbursements must be signed off by the Requestor, Troop Leader and Treasurer. Reimbursements can be paid using a troop check or as a credit to your troop account.

The Girl Scout Uniform and Handbooks . . .

Although girls enjoy and take pride in wearing their uniforms, **uniforms are not required** in Girl Scouting. Our troop uniform consists of a Girl Scout vest or sash with an American flag and Council ID patches, Troop Number, Membership Tab and pin and a Troop Crest as needed. Formal uniform also includes a white shirt and khaki bottoms.

Girls should wear uniform vest or sash to every meeting and event, unless otherwise specified. Wearing the uniform is a great way to keep Girl Scouting visible in the community.

Patches / Badges . . .

Patches and Badges are purchased by Troop Leaders, not parents. If a parent would like to purchase a participation, or "fun" patch, for the girls, please speak with the Troop Leader and plan to purchase the patch for entire troop or those who participated in that particular activity.

Girl Scout badges, patches, awards, and other insignia that are earned for the accomplishment of skill-building activities or any set requirements should be presented, worn, or displayed only after Girl Scouts have completed the requirements outlined in the appropriate program materials.

Badges: These are EARNED by completing specific achievements in the appropriate program level resources. Most badges will require more than one meeting to complete and girls may have some activities to complete on their own (badge homework) to finish each badge. Badges are placed on the FRONT of the uniform vest or sash.

Patches: These are for PARTICIPATION! They vary widely in size, shape and appearance. They are special patches awarded for participation in a specific Girl Scout activity or event. They can go on the BACK of the uniform vest or sash.