



## **Inclusion and Accommodation Policy**

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, Inc. (the “Girl Scouts”) is committed to ensuring that all girls have the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting, whose mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

In order to effectuate this mission, the Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities and backgrounds, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion. Each girl – without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion – is an equal and valued member of the Council, which reflects the diversity of the community.

The Girl Scouts believe that inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of rigid rules. Inclusion is all about belonging, about all girls being offered opportunities to experience the core values of Girl Scouting, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all.

The majority of our girl members experience Girl Scouts through participation in troops led by adult volunteers. Appointed troop leaders participate in Council-provided training appropriate to their position. This training includes a review of our mission, instruction regarding policies and procedures (including this Inclusion and Accommodation Policy), and techniques for effective program delivery. Furthermore, during this session troop leaders are instructed regarding their accountability for compliance and consequences for non-compliance.

Although most girls’ special needs are successfully addressed through informal collaborations between troop leaders and parents/guardians, occasionally situations arise which require a more formal approach. Accordingly, the Girl Scouts has adopted this Inclusion and Accommodation Policy, which provides a more formalized collaboration between Girl Scout staff, troop leaders, and parents/guardians to benefit a girl’s participation in Girl Scouts and address her special needs. The result of this collaboration will be a shared and documented understanding of each party’s role and accountability in supporting the girl’s unique Girl Scout journey.

## **The Inclusion and Accommodation Team**

The Inclusion and Accommodation Team will include at a minimum the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator, who is trained on principles of inclusion and providing accommodations for individuals with special needs, the Girl Member’s parent/guardian, and the Girl Member’s Troop Leader. As members of the Inclusion and Accommodation Team, these stakeholders will work together to address the special needs of the individual Girl Member and develop and document an Inclusion Plan to enhance her participation in Girl Scouting. Other team members with specialized knowledge may be identified and included as appropriate and agreed to by the core Inclusion and Accommodation Team members.

## **The Inclusion and Accommodation Process**

### **Step 1: Initial Request**

The parent/guardian or Troop Leader of any Girl Member with special needs who anticipates or experiences challenges which may prevent the Girl Member from fully participating in Girl Scout activities may contact the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator for consultation and solution identification. This Initial Request should be made by contacting the staff member who serves as the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator, Chris Ward, by telephone at (219) 472-1960 or by e-mail at [everygirl@girlscoutsgcnwi.org](mailto:everygirl@girlscoutsgcnwi.org).

If no immediate and satisfactory solution is identified during the consultation, the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will proceed to Step 2.

### **Step 2: Initial Meeting**

If no immediate and satisfactory solution is identified in Step 1, the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will use her best efforts to assemble the Inclusion and Accommodation Team (either in person or, if that is not feasible, by conference call) to discuss the Girl Member's special needs and the potential accommodations to facilitate her enhanced participation in Girl Scouting. The Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will contact the Inclusion and Accommodation Team within ten (10) calendar days after receiving the Initial Request to schedule an Initial Meeting.

The purpose of the Initial Meeting is to ascertain the special need(s) that may limit the Girl Member's participation in Girl Scouting, identify feasible and mutually acceptable accommodation(s) that may enhance her participation in Girl Scouting, and develop a preliminary Inclusion Plan for implementing such accommodation(s). During or after this Initial Meeting, the Girl Scouts may request that the Girl Member and her parent/guardian provide documentation from a physician or other health care professional verifying the Girl Member's special need(s) and any limitations on the Girl Scouts activities in which the Girl Member can participate. This documentation will be kept confidential and will be shared only with the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator and, if necessary, the other members of the Inclusion & Accommodation Team.

Upon the conclusion of the Initial Meeting, the Inclusion & Accommodation Coordinator will draft a preliminary Inclusion Plan that identifies feasible accommodation(s) that could be provided to the Girl Member, and which individuals and/or organizations (including the Girl Scouts) will be responsible for providing them. Although the funding allocation for any accommodation, if needed, will be agreed upon by the Inclusion and Accommodation Team, the Girl Scouts recognizes that it will be presumptively responsible for funding any agreed upon accommodation for the Girl Member.

### **Step 3: Implementation Meeting**

Within twenty-one (21) calendar days after the Initial Meeting, the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will schedule an Implementation Meeting with the Inclusion and Accommodation Team in order to finalize the Inclusion Plan. At the Implementation Meeting, the Girl Member's preliminary Inclusion Plan will be reviewed and the logistics and responsibilities of implementing the accommodation(s) referenced in the Inclusion Plan will be discussed. Any questions or concerns regarding the implementation of the Inclusion Plan will be addressed during the Implementation Meeting and, if necessary, modifications may be made. Because of the collaborative and individualized nature of this process, all members of the Inclusion and Accommodation Team may offer suggestions, identify any limitations on implementation, and discuss feasible alternatives that will further enhance the Girl Member's participation in Girl Scouting activities.

After the conclusion of the Implementation Meeting, the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will document in the final Inclusion Plan the agreed upon feasible accommodation(s), the logistics for implementation, the role and accountability of each Inclusion and Accommodation Team member, and the date the accommodation(s) will be provided. Additionally, a schedule or dates for future follow up and review may be identified as desired.

The Inclusion Plan shall be implemented within twenty-one (21) calendar days after the Implementation Meeting. An original copy of the Inclusion Plan will be maintained by the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator and copies of the Inclusion Plan will be provided to the Girl Member's parent/guardian and the Troop Leader. All information contained in the Inclusion Plan will be kept confidential and only members of the Inclusion and Accommodation Team and, if necessary, emergency personnel may have access to the Inclusion Plan.

### **Step 4: Review Process**

If set forth in the Inclusion Plan, the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator will confer with the Inclusion and Accommodation Team at the frequency set forth in the Inclusion Plan regarding the continuing effectiveness and need for the Inclusion Plan. The Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator may modify the Inclusion Plan as agreed upon by the Inclusion and Accommodation Team. The Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator may schedule a Reevaluation Meeting with the Inclusion and Accommodation Team as desired.

## **The Amendment and Appeals Process**

### **Step 1: Amendment Process**

Any member of the Inclusion & Accommodation Team who has reason to believe that the Inclusion Plan is not enhancing the Girl Member's participation in Girl Scouting or requires revision, may contact the Inclusion and Accommodation Coordinator at any time to discuss revising the Girl Member's Inclusion Plan. If the Inclusion & Accommodation Coordinator believes that a Reevaluation Meeting is advisable to discuss the matter, she may schedule a Reevaluation Meeting with the Inclusion and Accommodation Team members within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the request for amendment or revision. If the Inclusion & Accommodation Team agrees to amend the Inclusion Plan, the Girl Member's Inclusion Plan will be amended and copies of the amended Inclusion Plan will be provided to the Girl Member's parent/guardian and the Troop Leader.

## **Step 2: Appeals Process**

If, after the Implementation Meeting or any Reevaluation Meeting, the Girl Member's parent/guardian or Troop Leader disagrees with the accommodations provided in the Girl Member's individualized Inclusion and Accommodation Plan, he or she may file an Appeal in writing with the Girl Scouts' Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), Nancy Wright, by letter or e-mail at [NWright@girlscoutsgcnwi.org](mailto:NWright@girlscoutsgcnwi.org). The CEO will contact all members of the Inclusion and Accommodation Team within ten (10) calendar days after the request for an Appeal to schedule an Appeal Meeting. At the Appeal Meeting, the CEO will listen to the concerns of the Girl Member's parents or guardians and Troop Leader and determine what changes, if any, should be made to the Girl Member's Inclusion Plan. The CEO's decision on the matter will be final and binding.