

In-Person Girl Scout Activity Guidance

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic

This guidance may be modified at any time by Girl Scouts River Valleys and/or Girl Scouts of the USA as circumstances change.

Any time you are in a gathering with other people, you are putting yourself and others at risk of exposure to COVID-19, which can lead to serious medical conditions and even death for people of all ages. We cannot predict who will become severely ill, although we know that older people and those with underlying health conditions are at higher risk. We do not yet know what the long-term effects of COVID-19 are; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications. People with and without symptoms can spread COVID-19. The masking, distancing, and other guidance provided here is intended to reduce the risk of transmission; it does not eliminate it.

COVID-19 is an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community. This guidance recognizes the need to take all reasonable precautions to limit potential exposure for girls, volunteers, and families.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to change as new variants arise and 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, state, and [national](#) regulations and guidance.

Girls and volunteers are not required to participate in any activity. It is the sole discretion of each individual family and their comfort level with the planned activity. All participants should be supported, included, and welcomed and their personal safety choices honored and respected.

Good communication with families and fellow volunteers is vital. Discuss plans with families and fellow volunteers and be flexible and patient as you work together to decide the best course of action.

Inclusion and access are critically important as Girl Scout groups consider planning in-person activities. Make sure that you have considered access and inclusion as you make your plans. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- Do all girls have access to transportation? How about internet and devices?
- Are all families comfortable being in person?
- Are there immunosuppressed girls or family members in your troop or group?
- Have girls and other volunteers been vaccinated against COVID-19?
- Consider planning meetings that girls can participate in virtually or in person, according to each family's circumstances and comfort level.
- Find creative ways to engage girls who can't meet in person or online.

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MASKS

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued new guidelines for masking. The CDC now classifies counties according to the levels in the community as low, medium, or high.

As of March 3, 2022, most of the counties River Valleys serves are classified at either low or medium levels, **we will no longer require universal mask usage while indoors**. Instead, mask requirements will depend on the community level your county is assigned. [Visit CDC: COVID-19 by County](#) to find your county's status.

- If you are in a county with low community levels, **masks are not required**.
- If you are in a county with medium community levels, **masks are recommended while conducting Girl Scout activities indoors**, including carpooling, buses or mass transit, and indoor activities.
- If you are in a county with high community levels, **masks are required while conducting Girl Scout activities indoors**, including carpooling, buses or mass transit, and indoor activities.
 - Exempted indoor activities where masks can be removed include eating, sleeping, and showering. Maintain distance of 6 feet during these times.
- **Masks are not required outside**; however, it is recommended that participants in counties at high community spread level should wear masks if distance of at least three feet cannot be maintained or in a group larger than 25 people. In those situations, masks are recommended while cooking or washing dishes outdoors for a group.

Some participants may choose to continue to wear masks even when it is not required. Please respect the personal safety choices of others when leading or participating in in-person activities.

Masks should be well-fitting, and cover both the nose and mouth. KN-95 or N-95 grade respirator style masks are recommended. Participants can bring their own face coverings, and troops or event planners are encouraged to have disposable masks on hand for those who need them.

**Some girls or volunteers may not be able to wear masks due to medical conditions.*

GROUP SIZE

Indoor activity recommendations:

- Indoor meetings, events, and activities led by volunteers (troops, service units, or other Girl Scout groups) do not have a size limit; however, it is recommended to limit split large groups into pods of 25 people or less (including adults and facilitators) with at least three feet of distance between them.

Outdoor activity recommendations:

- Outdoor meetings, events, and activities do not have a size limit; however, it is recommended to split large groups into pods of 25 people or less with at least three feet of distance between them.
- Any time more than 25 people gather in a space, when groups/pods combine for an activity, or when at least 3 feet of distance cannot be consistently maintained, masks are recommended.
- In outdoor groups of any size, participants should maintain at least 3 feet of distance.

GIRL SCOUT MEETINGS, ACTIVITIES, & DAY TRIPS

Indoor meetings and activities are allowed, following all Girl Scouts River Valleys masking requirements explained above. It is recommended that meetings and activities be held in outdoor spaces when possible, or in indoor spaces where 3-6 feet of social distancing can be maintained.

Some troops may wish to continue meeting virtually, or supplement in-person activities with virtual gatherings. Use the [Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Meetings](#) to guide your meeting plans. Other virtual meeting resources can be found at the [Girl Scouts at Home page](#).

Public facilities:

For meetings or activities held at public facilities (indoors or outdoors), check on the facility's group size requirements and that groups like Girl Scouts are currently allowed on the premises. Follow all COVID requirements of the facility.

Private homes:

Having meetings or activities in private homes is not recommended in general, and especially during a pandemic. It increases the liability risk to the homeowner and Girl Scouts.

Parades and festivals:

Participating in parades and festivals is allowed. Maintain distance of at least 3 feet and consider wearing masks if participants will be in close proximity to each other and the public.

Day trips:

Day trips (e.g., nature center, state park, Valley Fair, museum, rock climbing wall, etc.) are allowed, following indoor and transportation-related masking requirements, and maintaining social distancing of at least 3 feet. If distance of at least 3 feet outdoors cannot be maintained, masks are recommended following county-level CDC designations

TRAVEL & OVERNIGHTS

Tents/outdoor camping:

- Tenting/outdoor camping is allowed, following all [Girl Scouts River Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- One household per tent is recommended.
- If participants from more than one household share a tent, try to maintain at least 6 feet of distance (measuring from head-to-head) by sleeping head-to-toe or spacing out.

Indoor overnights:

- Indoor overnights are allowed, following all [Girl Scouts River Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- One household per sleeping space is recommended.
- If participants from more than one household are sharing a sleeping space, maintain at least 6 feet of distance (measuring from head-to-head).
- Masks are recommended following county-level CDC designations and except when eating, sleeping, or showering.

Extended travel (domestic & international):

- Troop, group, and individual Girl Scout travel will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis following the [Girl Scouts River Valleys travel planning and approval process](#).
- When making travel plans, consider current CDC guidance, group size, family expectations, destination, and safety plans. It is recommended to limit participant numbers to a maximum of 25

people per group/pod (including adults), maintaining at least three feet of distance and avoiding mixing groups.

- COVID-19 risk changes frequently, and contingencies for rescheduling and pivoting should be in place for last-minute changes.
- It is recommended that Girl Scouts and families participating in extended travel quarantine (staying home and away from others) beforehand to reduce risk, and that participants from different households consider sleeping at least 6 feet apart (measuring head-to-head).
 - Fully vaccinated adults and Girl Scouts may skip pre-trip quarantining and follow CDC guidelines for vaccinated persons.
- **International** trips are allowed, following all CDC travel guidelines, destination country guidelines, and [Girl Scouts River Valleys approval processes](#). Girl Scouts cannot participate in international trips unless the travel health notice is at a level 1, level 2, or level 3 for their trip destination. [Check for COVID-19 travel health notices here](#).

FOOD/MEAL PREPARATION

Indoor and outdoor shared cooking as part of Girl Scout program activities for troops and volunteer-led events is allowed. All cooking and meal preparation must follow Girl Scouts River Valleys [kitchen use and food preparation](#) requirements and the COVID-19-related guidance and recommendations provided here.

Food and meal preparation recommendations:

- Consider prepackaged, pre-plated, or “grab and go” meals and snacks when possible.
- While preparing meals, maintain distance when possible, wash hands or use hand sanitizer often, and wear masks to prevent contaminating food.
- While serving, ensure physical distancing and hand hygiene for those waiting in line.
- If meals are served “family-style,” be sure to address hand hygiene and the use of shared utensils. Consider appointing one person to serve food to participants.
- Use disposable food service items if possible. If using disposable items is not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are washed with soap, rinsed, and sanitized to meet food safety requirements.
- Sit at least 6 feet apart while eating.
- Prepare and serve meals outside when possible.

TRANSPORTATION

Carpooling:

- It is recommended that individual families drop off and pick up their own Girl Scouts from meetings or activities.
- If carpooling is necessary, masks are recommended following county-level CDC designations.

Buses:

- Bussing participants to troop activities or large volunteer-run programs, activities, and events (such as encampments or day camps) is allowed.
- Masks are recommended or required following county-level CDC designations.
- Keeping bus windows open whenever possible and spacing out riders to maintain 3-6 feet of distance is recommended.

Public transportation:

- Using public transportation during Girl Scout activities is allowed.
- Masks are recommended or required following county-level CDC designations.
- Maintain physical distance as much as possible while riding.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

- Girl Scouts River Valleys encourages all Girl Scouts and adult volunteers, parents, and caregivers participating in Girl Scout activities to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if they are able.
- Girl Scouts River Valleys may require proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a negative test result to participate in council events or camp sessions.
- With advance council staff permission, volunteers may require participants to provide either proof of COVID-19 vaccination or proof of a negative test result before participating in Girl Scout activities, events, or travel. Both options must be offered. [See requirements and instructions here.](#)
- Masking recommendations or requirements by county-level CDC designations apply regardless of vaccination status.

REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19 EXPOSURE OR POSITIVE TEST RESULT

Direct exposure to COVID-19 outside of Girl Scouts:

- The individual who was directly exposed should not attend Girl Scout activities for at least 5 days, starting at the date of exposure.
- If attending a Girl Scout activity within 5-10 days after the exposure, wear a mask that fits snugly and covers your nose and mouth (consider using KN-95 or N-95 respirator style masks) for at least 10 full days following the date of exposure. This applies to both indoor and outdoor activities, regardless of county community level.
- Testing and monitoring for symptoms is recommended. See below for guidance on receiving a positive test result or experiencing symptoms.
- No communication with Girl Scouts is necessary.

Direct exposure to COVID-19 at a Girl Scout activity:

- For **council events and programs**, inform Girl Scouts River Valleys of the exposure by calling 800-845-0787 or emailing girlscouts@girlscoutsvr.org. Girl Scouts River Valleys will inform other participants of possible exposure.
- For **troop or other volunteer-led activities**, inform the troop leader or event coordinator, who should then inform participants of a possible exposure and when they can return to Girl Scout activities.
- The individual who was directly exposed should refrain from attending Girl Scout activities for at least 5 days, starting at the date of exposure.
- If attending a Girl Scout activity within 5-10 days after the exposure, wear a mask that fits snugly and covers your nose and mouth (consider using KN-95 or N-95 respirator style masks) for at least 10 full days following the date of exposure. This applies to both indoor and outdoor activities.
- Getting tested for COVID-19 and monitoring for symptoms is recommended. See below for guidance on receiving a positive COVID-19 test result or experiencing symptoms.

Positive COVID-19 test result or experiencing symptoms:

- Stay away from others (isolate) and do not attend Girl Scout activities for 5 full days, starting at the date the COVID-19 test was administered or your symptoms began.
- If you are symptomatic, you may end isolation after 5 full days of isolation **and** if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.
- If attending a Girl Scout activity within 5-10 days after testing positive for COVID-19, wear a mask that fits snugly and covers your nose and mouth (consider using KN-95 or N-95 respirator style masks) for at least 10 full days following the date the test was administered or your symptoms began. This applies to both indoor and outdoor Girl Scout activities.

Member of your household tests positive for COVID-19, but you/your Girl Scout tests negative:

- Follow requirements above for “direct exposure to COVID-19 outside of Girl Scouts.”
- After 5 days (from the date of first exposure), you may attend Girl Scout activities as long as you continue to test negative for COVID-19 and are not experiencing symptoms. Proof of a negative COVID-19 test is not required.
- Wear a mask that fits snugly and covers your nose and mouth (consider using KN-95 or N-95 respirator style masks) when attending Girl Scout activities.
- Monitor for symptoms.