

Girl Scout Member Conflict Resolution

INTRODUCTION TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Girl Scouts – Diamonds staff and volunteers strive to provide a high-quality experience for our girls, while ensuring their safety and well-being. Our volunteers are active role models for our girls—who witness our actions, attitudes, and behaviors. Volunteers are instrumental in instilling the values that are clearly conveyed in the Girl Scout promise, law, and mission. Through these values, our leaders concurrently develop and grow in their own Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

One key aspect of leadership is the ability to work with others and effectively use communication and teamwork to achieve the desired goals and outcomes. Differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts are inevitable parts of life. Conflict can lead to new ideas and approaches—it brings important issues to light and provides an opportunity for people to come together and create a solution or mutual agreement. The following conflict management essentials should be favored when resolving a conflict.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS

- **Try to talk it out directly.** When conflict arises, parties involved are encouraged to sit down together and talk in a calm, nonjudgmental manner to resolve the disagreement. Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Direct communication results in a better outcome than email and text messages, which should be avoided.
- **Refrain from posting about conflict on social media.** Parties should refrain from posting comments on social media to maintain confidentiality and respect the dignity and rights of the individuals involved.
- **Keep it confidential.** Confidentiality is an important part of any resolution process. Discussing the situation with others who are not in a position to assist in resolving the issue can end up being a source of embarrassment and anger for those involved. Also, involving third parties could result in significant delay in working past the issue and focusing on ensuring future interactions are positive and productive.
- **Keep it positive and private.** Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and will not be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment. Children and youth should not be present at adult resolution meetings.

MEMBER-LED CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

When you experience a conflict within your troop, be it parent/volunteer, volunteer/volunteer, or parent/parent, make an appointment with the parties involved to work with them toward the shared interest of ensuring their girls have an excellent Girl Scout experience.

Remember:

1. Listen to what is being said. Be mindful of body language. Take notes and ask questions.
2. If you are mediating between two parties, hear both parties out separately prior to the meeting and then bring them together. If you are one of the parties involved, try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and work together to uncover solutions that could result in mutual gain and have the best possible outcome for all parties.
3. Be direct. Many girls have been told since they were young to "play nice." That might mean softening our speech or assuring someone that something "isn't a big deal" even when it is. Don't tiptoe around important troop matters or apologize for doing what needs to be done for your troop. You can be both polite and assertive at the same time.
4. Efforts to resolve conflict should focus on facts, not people. Focus on specific events and how they negatively impacted, or could have negatively impacted, a fellow Girl Scout.
5. Set clear expectations. Conflict often arises as a result of confusion regarding roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Create a written agreement that specifies what the expectation is and what will happen moving forward.
6. Focus on the positive! Working through and getting past these conflicts now means a stronger, healthier relationship later.
7. If all previous steps above have been taken to resolve the situation informally, but the matter is still not resolved, the member or volunteer will then need to complete the Conflict Resolution Request to start the conflict resolution process.

STAFF-LED CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Girl Scouts – Diamonds is committed to providing our volunteers with a satisfying experience that supports their efforts to provide a quality Girl Scout Leadership Program.

When the Conflict Resolution Request is submitted, a Girl Scouts – Diamonds Volunteer Specialist will begin the information gathering process and contact the member or volunteer who submitted the form within forty-eight(48) hours of receipt of the document. As we seek to resolve issues brought to our attention, we ask that the volunteer or members who submitted the form assist in containing the situation by not communicating to parties not involved or using social media to discuss the issue(s). Appropriate time will be needed for Girl Scouts – Diamonds staff to gather information and speak with necessary parties to aid in the resolution process. This process may include:

- phone calls
- emails
- in-person meetings with parties involved
- interviewing witnessing parties
- involvement of other Girl Scouts – Diamonds departments, such as Finance and Product Program, as needed

The Volunteer Specialist will act as an impartial mediator that supports all parties in creating a mutually agreed upon plan of action that outlines expectations for each party's future behavior with regard to the source of conflict. In the absence of mutual agreement, the Volunteer Specialist will work to establish a fair and balanced course of action. Should resolution fail after council staff mediation, other actions may be considered including the release from volunteer appointment of one or both parties involved. This decision will not be made lightly.

A volunteer may have their appointment terminated by Girl Scouts – Diamonds because of, but not limited to:

- Refusal to comply with Girl Scouts - Diamonds or GSUSA policies
- Conduct inconsistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement as indicated by the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Inability to perform or fulfill duties of the position as outlined in the Volunteer Position Description
- Unsatisfactory completion of objectives and corrective action regarding their role
- Refusal or failure to adhere to financial guidelines of Girl Scouts- Diamonds
- Status as a registered sex offender or convicted of crimes against a child

Girl Scouts – Diamonds staff will focus on defined resolution actions that are specific, achievable, comprehensive, and final. The solution will include an evaluation process and subsequent actions for non-compliance. In all resolutions, Girl Scouts – Diamonds will keep the girl in the forefront of the decision making process.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION

Girl Scouts – Diamonds is committed to providing our volunteers with a satisfying experience that supports their efforts to provide a quality Girl Scout Leadership Program. Before completing the form, please follow this chain for troop conflicts: Troop Leader (volunteer), Service Unit Director (volunteer), Volunteer Specialist (staff), Volunteer Experience Director (staff).

The submission form can be found here:

- <https://forms.office.com/r/pvzDaMaaAw>