

Freedom from Violence as a Girl Scout

Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania believes that all Girl Scout members should be able to enjoy a Girl Scout Leadership Experience free from threats, coercion, intimidation, and harassment. Harassment is defined as unwelcome behavior, physical or verbal, that might cause a reasonable person to feel uncomfortable, humiliated, or mentally distressed. It may include, but is not limited to:

- offensive jokes, slurs, or epithets,
- name-calling,
- physical assaults or threats,
- ridicule, mockery, insults, put-downs,
- the possession or display of offensive objects or images, and
- interference with a volunteer's performance of their responsibilities.

Minor slights and isolated incidents are not usually considered harassment unless they are part of a larger pattern of ongoing pressure and/or intimidation.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- unwelcome sexual advances,
- requests for sexual acts or favors,
- insulting or degrading sexual remarks or conduct,
- the presence of sexually explicit materials,
- touching or making sexual comments about another person's body or clothing,
- sexual comments or innuendos,
- asking personal questions about another person's social or sexual life, and
- staring, leering, or making sexual gestures.

Girl Scout members should never hesitate to contact law enforcement if they believe that criminal activity and/or threats to girl safety are occurring during any Girl Scout activity. They should never place themselves in peril or attempt to intervene during an incident.

Girl Scout members should report any direct or indirect threats of violence, incidents of actual violence, and any suspicious individuals or activities to the council as soon as possible. Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania will promptly and thoroughly investigate any such reports. No retaliation will be permitted against anyone who makes such reports in good faith.

Examples of conduct that may be considered threatening or violent include, but are not limited to:

- hitting or shoving another person,
- threatening another person, their family, friends, or property with harm,
- using Girl Scout resources, including any social media accounts affiliated with Girl Scouts, to threaten, intimidate, harm, stalk, or harass another person,

- harassing telephone calls, texts, messages, or emails,
- stalking by making regular, uninvited appearances at Girl Scout events or properties, and
- possession or use of firearms or weapons at Girl Scout events or properties (except at authorized and approved council events that necessarily involve the use of weapons, such as target-shooting activities).

The prohibition of these acts applies to all registered Girl Scout members, both girls and volunteers, and to anyone involved in any way with Girl Scout activities and/or on council property.

Confirmed violations of this policy could result in various consequences, including release from volunteer positions, restrictions on participation, and referral to law enforcement.

If you experienced an act of violence, or if you called emergency services for any reason, please complete an [Accident/Incident Report](#) as soon as possible.

If you are experiencing harassment, please follow our [Making a Formal Complaint](#) procedure so that we may help you.