



USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO) Anti-Bullying Policy for All Members:

USAGSO expects that all members will treat each other in a civil manner, with respect for differences and guided by all the facets of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. USAGSO is committed to providing all members with a safe environment, free from bullying and cyber bullying. While it is normal for young people to explore using their power in different ways, it is never okay for any of us to use our power to harm someone else. This is bullying and must be interrupted immediately in all Girl Scout troops and programs - including when harm is being caused by or amongst adults. Any volunteer who engages in any form of bullying or related behavior(s) may be asked to step down from their volunteer position until an investigation has been thoroughly completed.

“Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more USAGSO members of written, verbal or electronic expression, a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a member that:

1. Causes physical or emotional harm to the member or damages the member’s property.
2. Places the member in reasonable fear of harm or of damage to the member’s property.
3. Creates a hostile environment at Girl Scout related activities for the member.
4. Infringes on the rights of the members at Girl Scout related activities.
5. Materially and substantially disrupts Girl Scout related activities.

“Cyber-bullying” is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, and includes, but is not limited to, computers, cell phones, and the Internet.

Examples of Bullying and/or Cyber-bullying:

- Expressions of uncontrolled anger like mean words, discriminatory language, hostile tone of voice or yelling at someone (Yelling to get help with a safety problem is okay!) or acts of violence.
- Gossip or intentionally damaging someone’s reputation, including negative postings on social media.
- Any unfair treatment that would make someone feel “othered,” not welcome, excluded, or stigmatized.
- Failure to interrupt bullying, hateful speech, or microaggressions. When no one in a community speaks up to interrupt these moments, it condones the behavior.
- Revealing a child’s transgender and gender identity without expressed permission from the child and their family. *(Do not allow other parents or children to “out” anyone’s gender identity or expression either. Each person owns the decision of when and how to reveal their own gender identity.)*
- Encouraging others to engage in harmful behaviors against a person or a group of people because they harmed you first. Before reacting to harm, it is best practice to ask for help from a trusted adult ally or staff member. There are respectful and healthy ways to work out our differences without perpetuating negative behaviors.
- Microaggressions cause people to feel ridiculed or targeted for an aspect of their identity.

USAGSO will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation, in our troop/group meetings or in any Girl Scout related activities. USAGSO will investigate promptly all reports and complaints of bullying and retaliation and take prompt action to end that behavior and restore a sense of safety to all youth involved. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to promote girl leadership, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior between youth that can impede that process.

Procedure for reporting bullying:

Step 1:

- **For Girl Members:** A girl member should address their concern to their family/caregiver and/or troop/group volunteer. Scheduling a meeting between the members, their families/guardians and the troop/group volunteers, in many cases, will resolve the issue immediately.
- **For Adult Members:** An adult member should bring the behavior to the attention of the members of the OCMT, or alternatively, Membership Manager which manages that community. Scheduling a meeting between the members, in many cases, will resolve the issue immediately.

Step 2:

- **For Girl Members:** When the meeting and work of the members, their families/caregivers and/or troop/group volunteers does not stop the bullying behaviors, and/or retaliation through informal efforts, troop/group volunteers are required to contact the USAGSO Customer Care team or appropriate Membership Manager. The Membership Manager assigned to that community will work with the OCMT and family to resolve the issue.
- **For Adult Members:** When the adult members are unable to stop bullying behaviors and/or retaliation through informal efforts, troop/group volunteers are required to contact the Customer Care team who will inform the Membership Manager. The Membership Manager assigned to that community will work with the OCMT and family to resolve the issue.

Step 3:

- **For Girl Members:** If the girl(s) and/or their families/caregivers and/or the troop/group volunteers do not feel that previous steps have yielded appropriate response, they are encouraged to file a complaint with USAGSO Customer Care, which will put troop/group volunteers in touch with the Regional Director and/or Executive Director for final deliberation and decision.
- **For Adult Members:** If the members do not feel that previous steps have yielded appropriate response, they are encouraged to file a complaint with USAGSO Customer Care, which will put volunteers in touch with the Regional Director and/or Executive Director for final deliberation and decision.

Resources for further information:

- **Committee for Children:** <https://www.cfchildren.org/resources/bullying-prevention-resources/>
- **Teach.com Resources for Educators and Parents:** <https://teach.com/online-ed/counseling-degrees/online-masters-school-counseling/bullying-resources/>
- **Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools:** <https://gsafewi.org/resources/>
- **Learning for Justice:** <https://www.learningforjustice.org/topics/bullying-bias>
- **GSLearn:** [Productive Conflict Resolution - An Introduction](#)
- **Volunteer Policies Child Abuse Policy (from [USAGSO Volunteer Policies](#)):**

1. USAGSO supports and maintains environments free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the “Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act”. USAGSO will not tolerate any abusive, harassing, or demeaning situation within the Girl Scout setting.
 2. Volunteers shall not commit physical or mental injury nor sexual abuse such as: exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment. USAGSO will neither condone nor tolerate infliction of physically, mentally, or sexually abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities; and emotional maltreatment of members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.
 3. USAGSO shall reserve the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with USAGSO, any volunteer implementing or providing resources to Girl Scout programming who is suspected of, charged with, or convicted of child abuse and/or neglect.
 - **Procedure**
 1. Incidents of abuse should be reported immediately to the immediate supervisor and USAGSO Executive Director or her/his designee.
 2. Adults that suspect or know of a child being abused must also report such abuse to local authorities. Contact your OCMT or USAGSO staff for guidance on reporting abuse.
- **Volunteer Release Policy (From [USAGSO Volunteer Policies](#)):** A supervisor, either USAGSO staff or volunteer, may initiate release of service prior to the end of the period or term of commitment. An involuntary release requires documentation. A volunteer who has been released involuntarily for cause may not return as a volunteer for USAGSO in any capacity.