



## Frequently Asked Questions: Social Issues

### **What is Girl Scouts of the USA's position regarding human sexuality, birth control, and abortion?**

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) does not take a position or develop materials on these issues. We feel our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives.

Parents or guardians make all decisions regarding program participation that may be of a sensitive nature. Consistent with that belief, GSUSA directs councils, including volunteer leaders, to get written parental permission for any locally planned program that could be considered sensitive.

### **Does GSUSA have a relationship with Planned Parenthood?**

No, Girl Scouts of the USA does not have a relationship or partnership with Planned Parenthood.

### **Did GSUSA distribute a Planned Parenthood brochure at a United Nations event?**

No, we did not. In 2010, GSUSA took part in the 54th Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations. Our participation in that conference was the subject of numerous Internet stories and blogs that were factually inaccurate and troubling. Girl Scouts had no knowledge of the brochure in question and played no role in distributing it.

### **What is Girl Scouts' process for reviewing materials?**

Girl Scouts constantly reviews our materials based on feedback and suggestions we receive from our members, and we update our materials on a regular basis. As a result of this process, upcoming reprints of Journeys materials will not include playwright Josefina Lopez or links to the Women's Media Center or Media Matters. Our materials feature more than 200 women and girls from many walks of life who have worked to make a difference in the world, and while we may not agree with the opinion of everyone featured, we believe they embody the commitment to leadership that we strive to teach our girls.

Additionally, we are making changes on our corporate Web site to ensure appropriateness of content.

### **What is Girl Scouts' position on serving transgender youth?**

**External audiences:** Girl Scouts is proud to be the premiere leadership organization for girls in the country. Placement of transgender youth is handled on a case-by-case basis, with the welfare and best interests of the child and the members of the troop/group in question a top priority. That said, if the child is recognized by the family and school/community as a girl and lives culturally as a girl, then Girl Scouts is an organization that can serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe.

**Councils:** Placement of transgender youth is handled on a case-by-case basis, with the welfare and best interests of the child and the members of the troop/group in question a top priority.

When considering the placement of transgender youth, councils are asked to consider the following questions:

- Is the child living culturally as a girl?
- Is the child recognized by her family as a girl?
- Is the child recognized by her school and/or community as a girl?

Living culturally as a girl means the following: Dressing as a girl, using a culturally-accepted female name, parents/guardians using female pronouns when referring to the child, the child being considered "a girl" in all activities.

Councils are encouraged to contact Andrea Bastiani Archibald, Ph.D.—a developmental psychologist on staff at GSUSA—or other professionals and/or legal counsel for advice when addressing situations involving transgender children.

**Does Girl Scouting support families of faith?**

Yes. Girl Scouting supports girls from all backgrounds and beliefs. While we are a secular organization that refrains from teaching religious or spiritual beliefs or practices, we believe that the motivating force in Girl Scouting is a spiritual one, and we greatly value our longstanding partnerships with religious organizations across many faiths that share the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

We encourage girls to develop connections to their own spiritual and religious beliefs by earning recognitions provided by their faith communities and by earning the new My Promise, My Faith pin, which helps a girl deepen the connection between the Girl Scout Law and her faith. We support the right of faith leaders to verify that program delivered to girls in their places of worship is consistent with their faith's teachings.

**What is GSUSA's relationship with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts?**

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) comprises 145 member organizations that promote mutual understanding and cross-cultural opportunities for girls around the world. Girl Scouts of the USA is one of the 145 member organizations.

Each member organization creates its own programs and pursues advocacy efforts based on the needs and issues affecting girls in its individual country. GSUSA does not always take the same positions or endorse the same programs as WAGGGS. GSUSA's relationship with WAGGGS is akin to the United States' relationship with the United Nations (UN). The United States may not agree with every position the UN takes, but values having a seat at the table.

**Does GSUSA have a financial relationship with WAGGGS?**

Every Girl Scout and Girl Guide organization is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts—and each Member Organization, including Girl Scouts of the USA, pays dues. WAGGGS operates in much the same way as the United Nations: Each Member Organization pays dues based on the size of its membership and the per capita income of the country in which the organization resides.

**Are girl membership dues used to pay the WAGGGS quota?**

Membership dues from girls and from adults are not used to pay the WAGGGS quota. All dues collected from Girl Scout members are used to pay for services that directly impact the development and delivery of Girl Scouting to girls in the USA and girls who are involved in USA Girl Scouts Overseas, our program that brings Girl Scouting to American families who live and work abroad.

**Are girls individual members of WAGGGS?**

No, individual girls are not members of WAGGGS. Girl Scouts of the USA is a Member Organization of WAGGGS.

**Do girls have to wear a WAGGGS pin?**

Girls wear the WAGGGS pin to represent their connection to the worldwide sisterhood of Girl Scouting and Girl Guiding. For a girl to be in uniform, the only requirement is that she wears her Girl Scout pin.