

Girl Scout Grievance Procedure Booklet



Grievance Resolution



Member Grievance Procedures

Differences in opinions, member styles, or personalities often cause disagreements and grievances between two people or within groups of people. In Girl Scouts, the individuals involved may be a Troop Leader, a troop team member, or a parent who are non-paid volunteers. Individuals have the option of making Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE) aware of these situations and asking for assistance in finding a compromise or resolution. GSWISE encourages members to work through these differences with the assistance of the Grievance Resolution Tip Sheet while incorporating the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Whenever possible, GSWISE strives to resolve problems informally and through open communication.

However, if an informal attempt at resolution fails, a member may choose a formal method such as initiating the member grievance procedure. For the member grievance procedure to work, all parties must want it to work; its success is beneficial to all parties involved and ultimately the overall Girl Scout experience of the girls.

Step 1: Initiating the Grievance Process

- After a concern is brought to the attention of GSWISE, the initiating party will be encouraged to work through the situation with the assistance of the Grievance Resolution Tip Sheet, the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and guidance from a Membership Experience Specialist or other council staff.
- If the problem is not resolved within seven business days, the member may initiate a formal member grievance process by submitting a detailed, written statement online form that highlights the problem.
- Once a Member Grievance Statement has been submitted, the case will be assigned to the Volunteer Relations Specialist.

Step 2: Volunteer Relations Specialist Involvement

- The Volunteer Relations Specialist will contact all involved parties, preferably via phone call, to see if a satisfactory resolution can be reached. The Girl Scout Promise and Law, GSWISE's policies and procedures, and the details of the specific situation will be brought into consideration. Parties will be made aware that GSWISE has guidelines to follow and these may not always align with the resolution they are looking for.
- The parties will be asked to openly discuss the problems and supply all documentation and aspects of the issue for review by the Volunteer Relations Specialist.
- In certain situations, Volunteer Relations Specialist may deem it necessary to meet face-to-face with the individuals involved. Council Staff will only discuss the concerns with individuals directly involved or with those who may be able to supply necessary or relevant background information.

Step 3: Resolution

- After consultation with the parties involved, review of provided documentation, incorporation of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and evaluation of the impact on the girls, the council will work to reach a satisfactory resolution and its decision will be final.

Grievance Resolution Tip Sheet

Differences in opinions, member styles, or personalities often cause disagreements and grievances between two people or within groups of people. Individuals have the option of making Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE) aware of these situations and asking for assistance in finding a compromise or resolution. GSWISE encourages members to work through these differences with the assistance of this Grievance Resolution Tip Sheet while incorporating the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Whenever possible, GSWISE strives to resolve problems informally and through open communication.

To assist in this, following are some tips and exercises to help work through disagreements:

1. All parties must remember that the individuals involved may be a Troop Leader, a troop team member, or a parent who are **non-paid volunteers**.
2. Please complete the attached Grievance Resolution Assessment. This assessment is intended to help you identify your typical response to disagreements with the goal that when you encounter these situations you will be aware of not only your instinctive reaction, but also the pros and cons of that reaction for a specific situation and how you may deal with the others involved. Furthermore, you will also be aware of the other styles of disagreement management that you could draw on to resolve the situation, if one of the other styles is more appropriate for the current situation.
3. Take the time to write out the specific issues that you have a complaint about.
 - a. Allow yourself the time to write the issues in draft form.
 - b. Focus on facts, not hearsay.
 - c. Walk away from the issue for a day or two; then return to review what you've written.
4. Approach the situation in a calm, patient demeanor, remembering that the issue, process, and outcome will ultimately affect the troop and all involved.
5. Look for a collaborative situation where there is a win/win or a compromise where there is give and take by both sides; avoid taking a stand where you are just looking to "defeat" the other person(s).
6. When approaching a situation of concern:
 - a. Keep the Girl Scout Promise and Law in mind regarding your words and actions. Everything you say and do reflects on the Girl Scout movement.
 - b. Look for a way to preserve and hopefully strengthen the relationship.
 - c. Set it up so that any interaction will reduce tension and minimize future conflict.
 - d. Encourage dialogue and increased understanding.
 - e. Keep in mind how you would feel if your daughter was involved in either side of the situation and what your reaction would be.
 - f. **DO NOT** involve your daughter in the situation or discuss any of the related matters with her. This will seriously affect your standing and be detrimental to your daughter and her Girl Scout experience.
 - g. While a situation is being addressed and afterwards, **DO NOT** turn to social media, but be civil, polite, and show confidentiality in having the matter remain between the parties involved. All communication about or between the involved parties should be in a manner consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

7. Decide how to best contact those involved to inform them of your concerns.
 - a. **Be willing to offer your assistance, not only your opinion, to make things happen or to affect change.**
 - b. Use a tone that you would like to be addressed with. Put yourself in the other person's position.
 - c. Go into the conversation with the attitude of, "We agree that we will look for a new alternative," which sometimes means entirely letting go of your position to make room for the creative conception of a third way.
 - d. Just as is asked of the girls, use "I" statements clearly stating your concerns.
 - e. In-Person Conversations (preferred):
 - i. If the situation is involving a Troop Leader, all Troop Leaders or at least one other, should be present.
 - ii. Have a non-involved, third party present to witness the conversation or to moderate.
 - iii. In-person conversations should be held away from the girls.
 - iv. Make sure you are a good listener. Restate the other party's position (not necessarily accept but restate). Comprehension seeds a sense of empathy and defuses confrontation.
 - f. Emails and Text Messages:
 - i. Written statements should state facts and minimize emotion.
 - ii. Emails can be drafted and then walked away from for a time, then revisited to allow a "calming down" period.
 - iii. There are three types of messages: 1) The message you intended to send; 2) the message you sent; and 3) the message the other party received.
 - iv. Remember that even though you are expressing your thoughts and opinions in writing, you should still consider the other person's feelings and reactions. Put yourself in their shoes. Read what you wrote from their viewpoint to see how the context will be received, even though it is not necessarily the intent.
 - v. Don't state things in the written word that you would be hesitant to say in a face-to-face conversation.
 - vi. If there is an extended "dialogue", it may be better to switch to an in-person conversation or a phone call.
 - g. Phone Conversation:
 - i. Write down what you are going to say ahead of time, stating the facts, not hearsay.
 - ii. Phone conversations should be undertaken away from the girls.
 - iii. Make sure you are a good listener. Restate the other party's position (not necessarily accept but restate). Comprehension seeds a sense of empathy and defuses confrontation.
 - iv. If you are feeling frustrated or the conversation is escalating, don't hesitate to stop talking, take a breath, and tell the other party that you don't feel comfortable continuing this phone call but would like to step away from it.
 - v. Be polite.
8. If you are unsure of how to approach a situation or express your concerns, before doing so consult with your troop's Volunteer Support Specialist or the Membership Experience Specialist at GSWISE.
9. We thank you in advance for your interest in improving the Girl Scout experience, for wanting to express your concerns, and in anticipation of your handling this matter consistent with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
 To serve God and my country,
 To help people at all times,
 And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
 honest and fair,
 friendly and helpful,
 considerate and caring,
 courageous and strong,
 and responsible for what I say and do,
 and to respect myself and others,
 respect authority,
 use resources wisely,
 make the world a better place,
 and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Grievance Resolution Assessment

Please **CIRCLE ONE** response that best describes you. Be honest.

This survey is designed to help you learn about your grievance resolution style.

There are no right or wrong answers!

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1. I discuss issues with others to try to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	1	2	3	4
2. I try to negotiate and use a give-and-take approach to problem situations.	1	2	3	4
3. I try to meet the expectations of others.	1	2	3	4
4. I would argue my case and insist on the advantages of my point of view.	1	2	3	4
5. When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open.	1	2	3	4
6. When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible.	1	2	3	4
7. I try to see disagreements from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?	1	2	3	4
8. I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on.	1	2	3	4
9. I find disagreements exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that may follow.	1	2	3	4
10. Being in a disagreement with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.	1	2	3	4
11. I try to meet the wishes of my friends and family.	1	2	3	4
12. I can figure out what needs to be done, and I am usually right.	1	2	3	4
13. To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway.	1	2	3	4
14. I may not get what I want, but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace.	1	2	3	4
15. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.	1	2	3	4

Scoring the Grievance Resolution Assessment

The 15 statements correspond to the five grievance resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points for each style. The style with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy. However, all styles have pros and cons, so it's important that you can use the most appropriate style for each conflict situation.

Style Corresponding Statements Totals:

Accommodating (questions 3, 11, and 14): _____

Avoiding (questions 6, 10, and 15): _____

Collaborating (questions 1, 5, and 7): _____

Competing (questions 4, 9, and 12): _____

Compromising (questions 2, 8, and 13): _____

My preferred grievance resolution style is: _____

Accommodating (Teddy Bears)

Teddy Bears typically value relationships over their own goals; if forced to choose, Teddy Bears will often sacrifice their goals in order to maintain relationships. Teddy Bears generally want to be liked by others and prefer to avoid conflict because they believe addressing it will damage relationships. Teddy Bears try to smooth over conflict to prevent damage to the relationship.

Avoiding (Turtle)

Turtles tend to value avoiding confrontation more than either their goals or relationships. They often find it easier to withdraw from a conflict than to face it. This might even include completely giving up relationships or goals that are associated with the conflict.

Collaborating (Owls)

Owls highly value both their goals and their relationships. They view conflict as a problem to be solved and seek a solution that achieves both their goals and the goals of the other person. Owls see conflicts as a means of improving relationships by reducing tensions between persons. They try to begin a discussion that identifies the conflict as a problem and strive to resolve tensions and maintain the relationship by seeking solutions that satisfy both themselves and others.

Competing (Sharks)

Sharks typically value their goals over relationships, meaning that if forced to choose they would seek to achieve their goals even at the cost of the relationship involved. Sharks are typically more concerned with accomplishing their goals than with being liked by others or compromising. They might try to force opponents to accept their solution to the conflict by overpowering them.

Compromising (Foxes)

Foxes are moderately concerned with both their goals and their relationships with others. Foxes typically seek a compromise; they give up part of their goals and persuade the other person in a conflict to give up part of their goals. They seek a conflict solution in which both sides gain something, the middle ground between two extreme positions. They are willing to sacrifice part of their goals in order to find agreement for the common good.

Member Grievance Statement

1. Initiating Member's Name
2. Your Involvement with the Troop Leader, Troop Team Member, Parent, Other
3. Email
4. Phone Number
5. Do you have a preferred time to receive calls? If so, when?
6. Do you want anonymity regarding the other people involved or any action that is taken to resolve this situation? *(Please be aware that though we respect your decision to remain anonymous, it may make a complete resolution of this problem difficult.)*
7. Is this situation impacting the Girl Scout experience for the girls? Yes. No. How?
8. Names of Those Involved
9. Does everyone involved know there is an issue?
10. What form of contact has happened between the involved parties (emails, texts, phone calls, face-to-face)?
11. What attempts have been made to resolve the issue?
12. When did the current situation begin?
13. Describe the grievance in detail.
14. Resolution
 - a. Are you looking for a resolution? If so, what is it?
 - b. Are you just informing the council to have it noted?
 - c. Other
15. If removal of a co-leader is involved and the decision is made to have them removed based on GSWISE policies and procedures, they will have to be replaced for the troop to continue. Are you willing to step up and be a co-leader?

After submission of this form, please allow 2-3 business days for the Volunteer Relations Specialist to contact you.