

**girls
inc.®**

**Inspiring all girls to be
strong, smart, and bold™**

INFORMATION FOR NEW MEMBERS

A. Introduction

The mission of Girls Incorporated of Monroe County is “**to inspire all girls to be strong, smart, and bold**” and all programming is planned and facilitated to achieve this mission. Girls Inc. helps build girls’ capacity for responsible and confident adulthood, economic independence, and personal fulfillment. Program emphasis is in the follow six core areas:

1. Self Reliance & Life Skills
2. Culture & Heritage
3. Leadership & Community Action
4. Health & Sexuality
5. Careers & Life Planning
6. Sports & Adventure

B. General Information

Membership is on a sliding scale starting at \$55 per year per girl. Membership fees are non-refundable. Scholarships are readily available upon separate application. All forms must be signed prior to the member’s first day in the program. Girls are allowed one “free” day to check out programming before signing up.

Center hours for members are 2:30 – 6:00 p.m. on school days, 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. during full day paid school holidays and summer programming. Free walk-in membership benefit during summer programming is 12:30 – 5:30 p.m. *when available*. (Always check weekly schedule.)

Sign-in and sign-out procedures are for member safety. Staff will sign in younger members when they arrive from school; older members must sign in themselves. During the summer months or school breaks, all members must sign in themselves. When a member leaves her parent or guardian must come into the center and sign out the girl. Each member should come to the center knowing who will be picking her up at the end of the day. Anyone picking up a member must be listed on the membership form. Girls will not be released to unauthorized people. Until staff get to know family members, we will ask to see a photo ID. Members may not sign themselves out unless the appropriate box is checked on the membership form. Please read and understand the attached late policy. Late pick-ups will be documented and charged late fees.

If a girl misses transportation from the schools, she must call a *custodial adult* from school for pick-up.

Members are responsible for placing book bags, coats, and other personal items into a locker. Girls may not remove items already in a locker. Girls Inc. is not responsible for lost or broken personal items. “Lost and found” items can be found in the program office. Please check for lost personal items periodically as Girls Inc. will donate these items to Salvation Army and/or Middle Way House.

Girls Inc. will provide a daily snack as part of membership benefits. Girls may have seconds only if enough food to go around. Water or another drink option is always available. Food is provided in cooperation with Community Kitchen and Hoosier Hills

Food Bank. **If there are dietary or allergy concerns, PLEASE talk with staff.** We are sensitive to allergies and will try to accommodate these issues when possible.

Members are not allowed to use cell phones or the center phone unless it is an emergency. (Forgotten belongings and setting up play times are not emergencies.)

C. Members' Rights

Each member of Girls Inc. has all of the following rights:

1. The right to be treated with consideration and respect for personal dignity, autonomy, and privacy.
2. The right to participate in any appropriate and available agency service regardless of refusal of one or more other services
3. The right to be informed of and refuse any unusual or hazardous treatment procedures.
4. The right to be advised of and refuse participating in evaluations such as paper survey, phone survey, focus groups, etc.
5. The right to confidentiality of communications and of all personally identifying information within the limitations and requirements for disclosure of various funding and/or certifying sources, state or federal statutes, unless release of information is specifically authorized by the member or parent or legal guardian of a minor member.
6. The right to receive an explanation of the reasons for denial of service.
7. The right not to be discriminated against in the provision of service on the basis of religion, race, color, creed, sex, national origin, age, lifestyle, physical or mental handicap, developmental disability, or inability to pay.
8. The right to know the cost of the services.
9. The right to be fully informed of all rights.
10. The right to exercise any and all rights without reprisal in any form including continued and uncompromised access to service.
11. The right to file a grievance.
12. The right to have oral and written instructions for filing a grievance.

The goals and objectives of the organization continue to be grounded in the Girls Inc. Bill of Rights, which states that girls have a right to be themselves, to express themselves with originality and enthusiasm, to strive freely and take pride in success, to accept and appreciate their bodies, to prepare for interesting work and economic independence, and to have confidence in themselves and be safe in the world.

D. Suicide Disclosure and Suspected Child Abuse

Should a member present suicidal intentions, staff will try to calmly talk with her and notify the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Guardians will also be notified. If we suspect child abuse we must report it to the proper authorities. We are not making a judgment call; we have to follow up with every situation whether real or imagined.

E. Field Trips and Special Events

All outings, walks, and events occurring off Girls Inc. property require permission slips signed by the guardian. Verbal permission may not be taken from a guardian over the phone. We must have written permission slips at least one day prior to the event. Participation in field trips and special events is on a first come, first served basis and a

member's spot will not be held unless all fees are paid. If fees are not paid and arrangement for scholarship not made, members may not participate in the event. Particularly during the summer, events off-site may result in the center being closed. Make sure to make other arrangements.

At the time of the scheduled departure, staff members will have a list of all participants with their emergency contact numbers. Each staff person going on the field trip will have a copy of this list and one copy will remain at the center.

PLEASE NOTE: members will not be able to participate in special activities or field trips until all fees are paid (including late fees).

F. Parental Concerns

At the end of the day, staff does try to connect with guardians about the day's activities, follow up with homework help, or other issues. Should situations arise that lead to questions or concerns, guardians are encouraged to talk directly with a member of the staff. If concerns are related to a staff member, please see the Executive Director.

G. Transportation Behavior

Riding the bus is a *privilege*, not a right. If minor infractions continue repeatedly or if there is a more significant misbehavior infraction the rider will receive a written notice to give to her guardians about her problematic behavior. This notice serves as a warning letter to the possible suspension of a rider if her misbehavior continues.

After having received such notice, the bus driver reserves the right to suspend a rider for one day for misbehavior. If misbehavior continues, the bus driver may either give another suspension or if behavior is extreme, terminate bus privileges to the child.

In an extreme case after suspension has been given, the bus driver may terminate a student's riding privileges in order to maintain safety of all those using Girls Inc. transportation services.

H. Late Policy

During the MCCSC school year, the Girls Inc. center closes at 6:00 p.m. on regular school days and at 5:30 p.m. on school vacation or half days. During the summer, the center closes at 5:30 p.m. Members must be picked up by the closing time (center clock) or a late fee will be assessed. One late pick up results in a written warning with an explanation of fees charged. Fees will be assessed with the second late pick up. After 30 minutes, staff must call Child Protective Services and fees escalate greatly.

I. Rules To Have Fun By

All girls and adults at Girls Inc. are expected BE RESPECTFUL, COOPERATE, and PARTICIPATE at all times.

In addition, we ask that all girls follow these rules so that we can all stay safe and have fun.

1. No physical aggression- hitting, kicking and play fighting, will NOT be tolerated.
2. Use respectful communication with girls and adults at all times.
3. Keep your shoes on at all times.
4. Keep all food and drinks in the snack bar area.
5. Stay with your age group or program group at all times.
6. No loitering in the locker area or bathroom.
7. Do not go outside or between buildings without a staff person.
8. Do not pick anyone up. (Two feet on the ground).
9. Keep make-up, hair brushes, and electronics (including cell phones and music players) at home.
10. Stay in activity areas that are supervised by adults. If you would like to use an area that is not open, ask an adult.
11. All girls are required to participate in clean up.
12. Do not run in the center.
13. There are additional rules when riding Girls Inc. transportation. They are posted in both buses and include:
 - a. **LISTEN** to and obey the school bus driver *at all times*.
 - b. **SIT** in your seat - do not stand or change seats after loading the bus.
 - c. **Be a good person - RESPECT** each other's personal space.
 - d. Keep yourself, your belongings, and all other items inside the bus.
 - e. Keep the aisles clear of backpacks, legs, arms, etc.
 - f. Do not throw objects.
 - g. Avoid kicking, scuffing or marking on the seats and walls.
 - h. Use an inside voice and use kind words.
 - i. No cell phones.
 - j. **CLEAN UP** after yourself.
 - k. No candy or chewing gum is allowed on the bus.
 - l. Make sure that the bus is fully stopped before standing when getting off at your stop.
 - m. Remain calm and follow the driver's directions in case of an emergency.

Self-Discipline Model

Girls Inc. uses a self-discipline model that focuses on respectful communication. Adults focus on empowering girls to take responsibility for their actions, show empathy for others, make positive decisions, and use creative problem solving.

We believe that girls' family members are essential partners in creating a positive and safe camp environment, and Girls Inc. staff will communicate with family members about any issues or concerns. We encourage family members to communicate any suggestions, concerns, or questions regarding their daughter's behavior at Girls Inc.

Formal Grievance Policy and Procedure Clients, Parents, and Volunteers

Girls Inc. posts the agency rules in both buildings. Violations of agency rules will be addressed by the appropriate staff person at the time of occurrence. The following procedure is a guideline; however, any staff member at any time who feels that either their personal safety or the safety of patrons, volunteers, or other staff is threatened may exercise their authority to call the police immediately.

Members engaging in inappropriate behavior as indicated by the rules and determined by the staff will be asked to discontinue such behavior using the self-discipline model.

In order to create a safe and supportive space for all girls, Girls Inc. does not tolerate any form of physical aggression, weapons, drugs, or alcohol. In the case of physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting etc...) a girl's family member will be called and she must be picked up immediately. In the first incident of aggression a girl will be suspended from the next day of programs. If aggression occurs on multiple occasions a girl may be suspended from the program indefinitely.

Members who wish to appeal the decision of the staff member on duty may contact the Executive Director on his/her next regularly scheduled work day. Patrons not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director may appeal to the Board of Directors through its Program Committee at the Committee's next scheduled meeting.

Violations of agency rules will be documented through an Incident Report, which will be completed by the employee on duty and turned-in to the Executive Director within 24 hours.

Dear Girls Inc. Families,

Thank you for being one of the many families that choose to make Girls Inc. your daughter's home away from home. Your support and involvement allow us to fulfill our mission of inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.

It is one of our top priorities at Girls Inc. to provide the highest quality programming at a cost that makes it accessible to every girl in our community. Due to the rising costs of running programs, this year we will be proposing a change to our fee structure.

We know that families have different financial situations and for some our membership fee of \$55 per year is very reasonable while for others it may be less affordable. In keeping with our goal of making Girls Inc. accessible to every girl who wishes to join we are choosing not to raise our fees, but instituting a self-determined sliding scale for membership fees.

It costs \$300 per year to provide programs and services to each member of Girls Inc. This includes snacks, tutoring, support and supervision by great staff, and high quality programming. The current cost to families is \$55/ year. That's \$1.30 per week or 23 cents per day. We try our best to stretch this as far as possible in order to give your daughter an experience at Girls Inc. that will truly help her develop into a strong woman.

This year we are asking all families to consider what portion of the \$300 per year they are able to pay. We will still ask every family to pay the base of \$55* year, but we are also asking you to consider paying more. This could mean paying a larger amount when you renew your yearly membership, making two yearly payments, or making monthly payments. All payments over the base \$55 per year membership fee are eligible for a charitable income tax deduction.

We need your support in order to continue to provide high quality programs for your daughter and other girls in our community. This change in our fee structure will allow us to increase the resources devoted to programming as well as increase our ability to provide scholarships for those families who cannot pay the base membership fee.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding our new fee structure. Thank you very much for your consideration and for being a part of the Girls Inc. community!

Sincerely,

Lucy Berger

Director of Program Services

*Please note that scholarships are still available for those who need them and this change will not affect the process of applying for scholarships.