



American Heritage Girls
Troop PA2551
Troop Policy and Guidelines Handbook
2021-2022

Charter Organization:
Orchard Hill Church
2551 Brandt School Road
Wexford, PA 15090

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About AHG

AHG Mission Statement:

Building women of integrity through service to God, family, community, and country.

AHG Oath:

"I promise to love God, cherish my family, honor my country, and serve in my community."

AHG Creed:

As an American Heritage Girl, I promise to be:

Compassionate	Understanding others in fellowship, empathy, kindness, and caring. Respect others' opinions and emotions.
Helpful	Willingly serve others.
Honest	Always tell the truth and keep my promises.
Loyal	True to God, family, friends, community and country.
Perseverant	Continuing to strive toward a goal despite obstacles.
Pure	Keep my mind and body pure.
Resourceful	Wisely use my time, materials and talents.
Respectful	Honor my country, be obedient to those in authority, and courteous to all.
Responsible	Accountable for my own actions. Reliable in all situations.
Reverent	Faithful and honoring to God. Respectful to the beliefs of others.

Statement of Faith:

American Heritage Girls is a Christ-centered leadership and character development ministry. Within the local AHG Troop, the primary statement/profession of Christian beliefs, faith, and/or doctrine is that belonging to the chartering Church/Organization. As with any of its ministries, the Church/Organization should take steps to ensure the Troop appropriately reflects these beliefs. Furthermore, all American Heritage Girls' Charter Organizations, Adult Members and Adult Leaders, must concurrently adhere to the Christian principles stated in AHG's Statement of Faith:

We believe that there is one Triune God – Father; Jesus Christ, His one and only Son; and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshipping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to live Godly lives. We believe that each individual is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We believe God calls us to lives of purity, service, stewardship and integrity.

Clarity is further provided to the following terms:

- **Purity** – God calls us to lives of holiness, being pure of heart, mind, word, and deed. We are to reserve sexual activity to the sanctity of marriage, a lifelong commitment before God between a man and a woman.
- **Service** – God calls us to become responsible members of our community and the world through selfless acts that contribute to the welfare of others.
- **Stewardship** – God calls to use our God-given time, talents and money wisely.
- **Integrity** – God calls us to live moral lives that demonstrate an inward motivation to do what is right, regardless of the cost.

American Heritage Girls' Inclusion Policy:

All biological girls of any color, race, national origin, and socioeconomic status who agree to live according to the standards of the AHG Oath and the AHG Creed are invited to be a member of American Heritage Girls.

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/legal guardians demonstrate commitment to the girls by encouraging them and supporting them throughout their years in AHG. Girls should arrive at meetings and events on time, in the appropriate uniform and with the necessary handbooks or supplies. Parents/legal guardians can obtain information at check-in for upcoming activities and should monitor Troop communication regularly.

Providing a quality program for Girl Members requires a commitment from all families. Each family should actively participate in the Troop to ensure the success of the Troop as a whole. At times, some families may be asked to serve outside of regular Troop meeting times, some may serve during Troop meetings, and others may experience a blend of both. Prayerfully consider how you might partner with the Troop Ministry Team to build women of integrity.

Volunteer Position Recruitment and Selection: AHG is a family-supported program that encourages both Girl and Adult Members involvement. The Troop will benefit most when utilizing the gifts/strengths from all families. As an Adult Member of AHG you can:

- Serve in the Troop impacting the lives of girls for Christ and connect with other like-minded volunteers
- Receive AHG's Heritage Headlines magazine and QuickTakes bi-weekly email that includes program information and opportunities for girls
- Attend AHG Leadership Conferences, Conventions, and AHGequip Live! events
- Have access to:
 - Resources in AHGresource
 - RightNow Media
 - The Jump social media platform
 - Special Member-only discounts such as American Red Cross, Family Life, Great Wolf Lodge, Passport2Purity, Always Icecream, Delicate Seams, Different Drum Sailing Adventures, eKnowledge, For Girls Like You Magazine, Sky Ranch, HSLDA

All AHG volunteers will walk through a selection process by the Troop to discern where someone might best fit within the Troop. Once selected the adult will complete registration including a registration fee, background check and KEYS to Child Safety Training. Volunteers will complete a background check and training pertinent to their role. This chart provides info about a few of the opportunities:

Role Type	Roles (*full year position)	Kingdom Impact
Administrative Roles: Establishing integrity in the ministry by demonstrating an inward motivation to do what is right regardless of the cost.	*Troop Coordinator *Troop Vice Coordinator *Registrar *Advancement Chair Fundraising Chair	Bringing Girls and volunteers closer to God in their spiritual walk, taking a stand for biblical principles, and making their responsibility for the body of believers known.
Shepherding Roles: Serving the Members of the Troop by contributing to the welfare of others in order to show God's love and the value of each individual involved in the Troop.	*Shepherd *Squad Leader/Co-Leader Events Coordinator *Girl Leadership Coordinator Stars and Stripes Coordinator	
Stewardship Roles: Instilling good stewardship practices of wisely using time, talent and money within the Troop in order to biblically model stewardship of the resources we are given.	*Treasurer Fundraising Chair	

Troop Structure

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.” 1 Corinthians 12:12, NIV

Just as the scripture above demonstrates, the body of Christ requires each one to come together in the Kingdom of God, the same is true in the Troop structure. The Troop Board is made up of five positions that are selected by the Charter Organization and entrusted with implementing the mission of building women of integrity. Because of their influence and focus on establishing goals for the Troop, the selection of Troop Board Members is crucial to ensure that the right people are serving on the Troop Board. The Troop Board represents their Charter Organization and AHG, Inc. to Troop families and the local community. Each position has its own volunteer ministry description which outlines the responsibilities and qualifications for the position. To protect the integrity of the Troop’s decision-making process, the Troop Board Members should not be related to one another. If the Charter Organization has any questions or concerns about the Troop Board structure, please discuss them with your Hometown Mentor or Troop Coach.

The **Troop Board** works together as a team to provide direction and make decisions on behalf of the Troop. One of the most impactful ways the Troop Board leads is through prayer. The Troop Board Members together and individually pray for the Charter Organization, the Troop, the girls, their families, and the community.

The Troop Board will consist of a minimum of five adult member positions: Charter Representative, Troop Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Treasurer and Shepherd. Other positions that may be invited to participate at Board meetings may include the: Registrar, Girl Leadership Coordinator, Advancement Chair, Fundraising Manager, Service Project Coordinator, and Special Events Coordinator. The Troop Board will meet at least once per quarter and/or when necessity dictates. The Board's responsibility will be to create and implement the Troop Policy and Guidelines, to develop and manage a Troop budget, to oversee all fundraising efforts of the Troop, to plan and execute the troop-wide event calendar, to handle conflict resolution and other administrative aspects of the Troop. When conflict cannot be resolved in a win-win situation, the chartering organization will be asked to mediate the conflict and bring it to a conclusion.

The **Troop Ministry Team** functions together to fulfil the mission of building women of integrity. The team is comprised of the Troop Board, Squad Leaders, and all other Troop Adult positions such as the Registrar, Girl Leadership Coordinator, Advancement Chair, Service Project and Special Events Coordinators.

Squad Leaders will implement the AHG program at the Squad level while incorporating the interests of the girls and encouraging girl leadership. They will uphold AHG’s Health and Safety Standards as to ensure a safe environment for each Troop meeting. This includes but not limited to, two deep leadership at all times. The Troop will work to have 3 registered Leaders assigned to each Squad. The Squad Leaders and girls will be supported by other adult volunteers such as Mentors, Girl Leadership Coordinator, etc.

Adult Membership (Troop Board, Squad Leaders, and all other Registered Adult Members)

Troop-level AHG Adult membership is granted upon the approval of a Charter Organization’s appointed Charter Representative after a Membership Application is submitted, and subject to a successful background check, payment of the membership fee and completion of *AHG’s KEYS to Child Safety Training*. The Troop Board can use the Troop Risk Report and/or Adult Registration Progress Report in AHGconnect to verify completion of the steps for membership.

While AHG facilitates a background check, Adult Members serving in a Troop are ultimately ministry volunteers of the Charter Organization, and the Charter Organization has the duty to exercise an appropriate selection

process in approving these volunteers. Adult Members must also comply with PA state and the Charter Organization's required background checks and processes.

AHG Adult Members:

- Agree to live according to the AHG Statement of Faith, AHG Oath, and AHG Creed
- Follow all Health and Safety Policies, including 2 deep leadership at all times.
- Choose appropriate activities based upon girls' ages, abilities, and limitations.
- Use sound judgment in taking additional precautions necessary to avoid accidents.
- Work in partnership with girls in safety planning and implementation.
- Promote the concept of safety consciousness at all times, in all places.
- Complete training essential to their position according to the "Well Equipped Volunteer Training Grid," including *AHG's KEYS to Child Safety Training*.

Troop Board and Squad Leader positions are a minimum one-year commitment. Any Adult Member in any position may be removed from duty by the Troop Board and/or the Charter Organization, if deemed necessary.

It is the policy of Troop PA2551 that each family have at least one Adult (parent/guardian) register as Adult Member with AHG, Inc. This will allow for protection of our girls, support necessary Girl:Adult ratios, and flexibility and coverage during regular Troop meetings and events.

Squads

The Troop will be divided into age appropriate squads according to the guidelines set forth by AHG, Inc. The Troop will operate all five levels if there is interest and leadership. It is vital for the protection of the girls and Leaders, that "two-deep leadership" is always maintained while at the same time adhering to the girl/Leader's ratios set by AHG, Inc.

Appropriate Girl/Adult Leader ratios are:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ○ Pathfinder (K) | 6 girls per 1 registered adult |
| ○ Tenderheart (1 st -3 rd) | 6 girls per 1 registered adult |
| ○ Explorers (4 th -6 th) | 8 girls per 1 registered adult |
| ○ Pioneers (7 th -8 th) | 10 girls per 1 registered adult |
| ○ Patriots (9 th -12 th) | 12 girls per 1 registered adult |

Levels may be divided into smaller units according to the number of girls registered and the development stages of the girl members. Pioneer and Patriot Levels may join as one unit while the girls work on their age-appropriate program work, pending the number of girls in each squad.

Girl and Adult Member Uniforms

AHG is a uniformed organization which creates a sense of belonging for both Girl and Adult Members. Girl and Adult Members will wear the AHG Official Class A Uniform to all Troop Meetings and the majority of AHG activities. While the girls are in uniform, they are to be very conscious of the fact that they are representing AHG and the charter organization and making lasting impressions on those around them. The AHG Official Class B Uniform can be worn for more casual activities. Uniforms, handbooks, and other AHG merchandise can be purchased through the AHG Store: <https://store.americanheritagegirls.org/>

The Troop designs a spirit wear Troop t shirt 1x/year that can be purchased and worn to casual events. We also maintain an "AHG Closet" of gently worn uniform and casual wear clothing items. All members are invited to donate to, and take as needed, from this box.

The AHG official Class A girl uniform consists of the following:

- **Pathfinder:** AHG Pathfinder T-shirt, Necklace Kit, Navy skirt, skort or slacks
- **Tenderheart:** AHG Red Vest, Blue Neckerchief, White Polo Shirt, Navy bottoms
- **Explorer:** AHG Blue Vest, Red Neckerchief, White Polo Shirt, Navy or Khaki bottoms
- **Pioneer:** AHG Blue Sash, White Polo Shirt, Navy or Khaki bottoms
- **Patriot:** AHG Blue Sash, Red Polo Shirt, Navy or Khaki bottoms

It is our desire that requiring a girl to wear a uniform should in no way hinder her from joining the organization. If obtaining an AHG uniform for your daughter is difficult, please speak with the Troop Coordinator about your need.

Purchasing Girl Uniforms

The AHG Uniform packages and separates are purchased at the AHG Store <https://store.americanheritagegirls.org/>. Girls may choose to, but they are not required to, purchase the "official AHG polo shirt", however, they must wear the correct color polo shirt for their level. For placement of the badges and insignia on the vest or sash please refer to the Girl Handbook.

Purchasing Leader Uniforms

Registered adults who are in a leadership role are required to wear the AHG Leader uniform at meetings/events required. Pathfinder Leaders may purchase the Pathfinder Leader T-shirt or a red or navy polo shirt. Tenderheart through Patriot Leaders wear the AHG "official" or similar red or navy polo shirt. These may be purchased at the AHG Store <https://store.americanheritagegirls.org/>. Adult leaders wear navy or khaki bottoms. Leaders are also required to wear their AHG Member ID card on a lanyard to all AHG Meetings and Events. This will provide an increased sense of security for AHG girls, volunteers, parents, and visitors who can immediately identify AHG Adult Members who are wearing their lanyard.

Registered Adults who do not have a full year troop leadership role are not required to wear the AHG leader uniform. It is required they wear their AHG Member ID card on a lanyard when working directly with the Girls or at an AHG Meeting or Event.

AHG Program

The AHG Program is built around six Program Emphases to achieve the mission of building women of integrity. These six key components create a Christ-centered, progressive, and balanced structure, providing girls with a holistic experience. AHG's goal for a girl who completes the AHG Program is that she has learned to be a Christ-following servant leader who is honoring, relational, anchored in Christ, and competent: a woman of integrity.



Faith - Girls are encouraged to grow in their faith and relationship with God through the AHG Faith Award Program, prayer, fellowship, and service, which are woven throughout each aspect of the AHG Program.
Outcome: A *Christ-follower* who submits to Christ and seeks God's will for her life.

Leadership - The AHG Program is rich in leadership opportunities for girls of all ages. Girls discover their passions, acquire project management skills, hold leadership positions, and participate in leadership training.
Outcome: A *servant leader* who follows Jesus' model of leadership by putting others first.

Citizenship - The AHG Program provides girls with a deeper understanding of their country and heritage. Girls cultivate honor for their country by participating in patriotic events, flag ceremonies, serving in their community, and through badge work. Serving others and being active citizens with their Troop, fosters a lifelong love for their country.
Outcome: An *honoring* girl who cares for her community as an active citizen through service and patriotism.

Social & Emotional - Girls will gain a better understanding of their identity in Christ through the AHG Program. AHG's multi-level Troop structure encourages girls to create friendships with girls of all ages. This unique [Troop structure](#) allows for mentorships and learning opportunities to occur naturally among girls. Girls learn to anchor their emotions in Christ in a caring and loving environment.
Outcome: A *relational* girl who invests in positive and loving relationships with others and clings to Christ when navigating emotions.

Life Skills - In the AHG Program, girls can step out of their comfort zone and try new experiences in a safe environment. Earning badges provides girls the opportunity to learn a wide array of life skills, inspiring them to become lifelong learners and doers. AHG's six Badge Frontiers include: Heritage, Family Living, Arts, Outdoor Skills, Personal Well-Being, and Science Technology.
Outcome: A *competent* girl who enjoys mastering new skills and applies them to her life.

Outdoors - Nature reveals to us God's beauty, glory, power, wisdom, presence, creativity, and, most of all, his loving care. Through the AHG Program, girls are encouraged to participate in outdoor activities such as hiking or camping several times a year. High Adventure activities are great times for team building, leadership, physical activity, and strengthening relationships with friends. The outdoors will educate girls about their natural world and the beauty God has bestowed upon them.
Outcome: A girl who *values creation* through outdoor experiences that display the glory of God's creation.

Troop Programing

Following the AHG Program as designed by AHG, Inc. the Troop Board and Leaders design the Troop Meetings, Events, and Troop Programming to support the six Program Emphases. The Troop Board determines the Troop Calendar by the start of the program year with Meeting/Event dates and times listed. A PDF of this calendar will be emailed to all members. The Meeting/Events will also be on our Troop Track Calendar. Leaders may schedule additional activities for their Squad. This will be communicated to families directly from the Squad Leader.

Troop Meetings - Troop Meetings will be held at the Charter Organization, Orchard Hill Church, on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month (September - May) from 6:30 to 8:00pm. Occasionally this schedule will be adjusted based on holidays and events at OHC. Families will be given ample notice. Most Troop Meetings will begin with all levels of the Troop together for the opening ceremony, followed by age level Squad time. It is extremely important for all girls and leaders to regularly attend Troop Meetings.

Troop Events (Service, Social, Outdoor, etc.) – In addition to Troop Meetings, the Troop plans and offers many additional activities for girls and their families. These activities are an integral and important part of AHG and it is strongly encouraged that girls attend 2-3 events per year. Girls who wish to earn their Level Awards are required to attend 2-4 special events per year pending their level. Some of these events may have a separate charge. Pathfinders and Tenderheart level girls can only attend overnight events if their parent/guardian attends with them. In this instance, they must be a registered AHG Adult Member.

Spiritual Development - Each girl is encouraged through the AHG program to grow her faith and relationship with God. The Troop Shepherd, and Troop Board will develop programing (Meeting Devotions, Bible Memory Verses, modeling prayer, etc.) designed to foster and develop each member's relationship with Christ.

Girls at all levels are encouraged to participate in the AHG Religious Award Program. The Troop also emphasizes the value of the Religious Awards and will offer programing during Troop Meetings and Special Events on a bi-yearly basis to allow the girls to earn this Award. Girls who wish to earn their Level Awards are required to earn the Religious Award. Information booklets may be obtained through AHG's website: www.americanheritagegirls.org. All questions regarding Religious Awards may be directed to the Troop Shepherd.

Community Service - HUGS (Heritage Girls United Giving Service) is the service arm of American Heritage Girls. Community service is a key component of the AHG program. This Troop will hold at least three troop-wide service projects a year. Squads may do additional projects if there is interest from the girls. Girls earn service stars based on the number of service hours they log. Girls may earn additional service hours outside of the Troop setting. Service hours can and should be recorded on Troop Track (parents are encouraged to do this as soon as their daughter participates in a service project). Service stars will be ordered two times per year when the badge order is placed. Unused service hours may be carried over from year to year until used. The Troop Coordinator or Advancement Chair may review all service hours and has the right to question service hours that do not fit within the service guidelines of AHG.

In order for an act to be considered service in AHG, girls must *not* be reimbursed in any way. We encourage all of our service hours to also be served with a joyful heart as if serving the Lord. For those older girls participating in long hour mission trips, please consult with the Troop Coordinator as to what can be counted on a mission trip prior to submitting those hours. Only hours "serving" may be counted. Preparation, planning, and travel time may not be counted.

Leadership Program - Girl leadership skills are encouraged at all levels of AHG. Through many successful experiences, leadership becomes a lifestyle to the AHG girls. The Troop will offer many leadership

opportunities throughout the year embedded within Troop Meetings and Special Events. The Pioneer and Patriot level girls will be supported and strongly encouraged to take on a Troop Level role. Leadership opportunities will also be supported and encouraged to all girls at the Squad level. The Troop Board and Girl Leadership Coordinator will develop programming, design roles, and provide support so that each Girl is able to develop her leadership skills.

Badge Program- Each squad will work on approximately 3-4 badges during the Troop year. Leaders help the girls plan activities to complete the selected badge requirements. If girls are absent from a Troop meeting where badge requirements are being met, it is up to the Girl and/or parent to make sure she fulfills those requirements on her own time if she wants to receive the badge along with the girls in her squad. Girls may also earn badges independently outside of the Troop setting. Badge requirements earned outside of Troop meetings must be approved by the Leader. Leaders have the right to question any badge requirements fulfilled outside of the Troop meeting. It is recommended that Badges earned be tracked by hand in the Girl Handbook. **In addition, parents/girls are required to record ALL badges and service hours earned outside of Troop Meetings and Events in Troop Track.** Leaders and Troop Board will record girl attendance, badge requirements, and service hours for any Troop Sponsored activity (meeting or event).

Awards and Recognition - AHG provides numerous opportunities for girls to grow by earning awards and recognitions. Although not the focus of the Program, they serve as a tool to recognize girls as they grow into women of integrity. Refer to the Girl Handbook for more details on each award offered. Awards and insignia that AHG offers includes:

- Joining Award
- Level Awards
- Faith Awards
- Stars & Stripes Award
- Service Stars
- Badges
- Patches
- Sports Pins

AHG also recognizes the immense value of volunteers by offering tenure pins and other recognitions for their investment in girls and the AHG Ministry.

Awards are ordered semi-annually by the Troop. Before the order is placed parents will be emailed a list of items being ordered. Parents will approve the purchase order for their daughter. Parents also have a right to decline any and all award purchases. Individuals will be invoiced for their awards and must pay for awards before they are distributed.

Award Ceremonies - The Troop plans one end of the year Court of Awards Ceremony so Girl and Adult Members may receive their Awards and Recognitions. If the calendar allows, a casual mid-year Ceremony may be scheduled. Award Ceremonies are open to parents/legal guardians and families to attend. It is important to the girls that family attend the ceremony to celebrate their accomplishments.

Finances

Payments to the Troop - The Troop is only able to take check payments. Checks should always be made out to the "AHG Troop PA 2551" with the girl's name and purpose of payment noted in the memo line.

Membership Costs: The following is a breakdown of annual costs. These are subject to change annually.

ANNUAL COSTS 2021-2022	Cost if the family has:			Explanation
Initial Registration Costs:	1 girl	2 girls	3 girls	
AHG, Inc. Girl Membership Fee	30	60	75	Payment to AHG, Inc. There is a \$75 Sister cap (families with 3+ Girls registering at same time)
Troop PA 2551 Dues	50	100	150	This money stays with our Troop and covers some of the Troop expenses (Adult Leader Membership Fee, TroopTrack fee, AHG, Inc. Charter Fee, programming materials, t-shirts, some badges, etc.)
*AHG, Inc. Adult Membership Fee	30	30	30	Payment to AHG, Inc. *See below, this fee is waived if the Adult commits to a full year Troop leadership position. IF the fee is paid, and then an adult commits later to a full year position, the fee will be reimbursed.
A. TOTAL due to Troop at Registration	110	190	255	Payment options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay in full at initial registration 2-part payment (half in Aug & half in Sept) <i>Scholarship funds are available, PLEASE inquire if needed.</i>
B. ** TOTAL due with Leader Thank You Fee Reduction	80	160	225	
Mid-Year payment:				
AHG, Inc. Program Support Fee	20	40	50	Payment to AHG, Inc. mid-year. \$50 Sister cap. The Troop offers a fundraiser to offset this cost.

* AHG Adult Membership- Due to recent AHG, Inc. Policy changes for adults needing to be registered, the Troop will require each family to have at least one Adult (parent/guardian) register as an Adult Member with AHG, Inc. While this unfortunately comes with a financial cost, this gives the Troop more flexibility for adult coverage while abiding by AHG, Inc. Girl:Adult ratios. This also guarantees girls can participate in both large events (meetings, camp outs, lock in, service days) and smaller functions (squad hikes, service projects, outings), which is a huge benefit.

**The cost is \$30 per adult. As a thank you for serving, the Troop allocates funds to cover this Fee for those adults who commit to a full year leadership position with the Troop (Board Member, Leader/Co-leader, Girl Leadership Coordinator, and other positions at the decision of the Board).

Other Costs: These costs are dependent on Girl Level, and special troop events beyond regular meetings.

Girl AHG Handbook	Pathfinder: \$9; Tenderheart through Explorer: \$20; Pioneer through Patriot: \$20
Girl AHG Uniform	Cost dependent on Girl Level and total items purchased
Adult AHG Uniform	Cost dependent on total items purchased
Special Troop or Squad Events	Information will be shared through the Troop for special event opportunities for girls and what charges may apply.
Badges/Awards	This cost is the parent's responsibility. Parents have the option to NOT order awards when the Troop places the order 2x year. Based on the Troop Budget, often the Troop can cover the cost of some awards.

Scholarship Funds - Scholarship funds are available to girls whose families are in financial need. Please submit your request in writing to the Troop Coordinator for Troop Board approval. If a girl is granted funds, a portion of the expense may be expected to be paid by the family. It is also expected that a troop member who requests funds participate in the fundraisers offered by the Troop.

Troop PA 2551 Dues - The Troop Board annually determines the amount of “dues” to be assessed each girl member to operate a Troop budget. This budget includes Adult Leader Membership Fee, TroopTrack fee, AHG, Inc. Charter Fee, programming materials and supplies for Troop/Squads, camping supplies, refreshments for ceremonies, girl and leader recognitions, general office supplies, postage, charter fee and miscellaneous. The Troop’s source of income is from dues and fundraising by all its members. If you should have any questions regarding the Troop budget, please contact the Troop Treasurer.

AHG, Inc. Program Support Fee - AHG, Inc. spends far more than \$30 per girl annually to provide the AHG program at a national level. The remaining cost to provide the program comes from the assessment of the Program Support Fee, which is \$20 per registered girl paid to AHG, Inc. annually by the Troop. A fall fundraiser will be offered to allow girls to raise money to offset this fee.

Annual Family Stewardship Campaign (AFSC) - The Annual Family Stewardship Campaign is an annual family donation drive. Each registered family receives information about this stewardship campaign and how to participate. Each Troop is asked to promote and encourage Troop family participation, as this campaign is crucial to the health and growth of the American Heritage Girls, Inc.

Fundraising Policy/Obligation - Fundraising is a necessary activity on behalf of the Troop. Funds earned support the Troop budget and enable families to lessen the out of pocket costs of the program. Each Girl is expected to participate in the fundraiser for the vitality of the Troop and her experience in AHG. Each year, the Troop Board reviews the budget and determines the fundraising goals. The Troop may also fundraise for a particular project or trip. AHG Inc’s fundraising guidelines allow for a Troop to conduct up to three fundraisers per year. It is the goal of the Troop Board to keep fundraising to a minimum. A fall/winter fundraiser is provided for girls to raise money for the AHG, Inc Program Support Fee. Any additional monies raised will benefit the entire Troop. If fundraising goals are met through one fundraiser, additional may not be needed. All families will be notified of the financial standing of the Troop once the fall fundraiser and Troop Dues have been collected.

Troop Meeting Procedures/Policies

Permission Slips – Regular Troop Meeting permission slips will be signed by parents/guardians when they initially register their daughter/s for the troop year. However, a separate permission slip is required for any event outside of the regular Troop meeting. These permission slips will be emailed and attached to the event invitation in Troop Track. They are required for girls to attend all AHG sponsored events.

Release of Troop Members – For Troop Meetings at OHC, parents/guardians are to assist their girl with check in at the kiosk and retain the security portion of the tag, girls adhere the name tag to their shirt. At the end of the meeting, parents will pick up girls from their squad room and the Leader will collect the girl’s security tag prior to her release. If a parent is unable to pick up, and the girl will be going home with someone else, the

security tag must be given to the Troop Coordinator with the name of person picking up the girl. For events not at OHC, a sign in/sign out system will be used in conjunction with release information on the permission slip.

Cell Phone/Picture Policy – Girls are not to have cell phones turned on or visible during Troop activities. Adult Leaders should set an appropriate example, and only use cell phones if necessary. Girls will need to consult with their Leader/Troop Coordinator for permission to call a parent/guardian if needed. Any photos taken during Troop activities may not be posted on-line or passed along in email/text without the direct consent of all families included. Our private Shutterfly site is the only place photos can be posted.

Inclement Weather Cancellation - A Troop Meeting/Event may be cancelled if there is inclement weather. The Troop will follow the North Allegheny School District closing schedule. However, the final decision will be determined by the Troop Coordinator. If a Troop meeting/event is cancelled, a troop wide email will be sent out by the Troop Coordinator. If Squad Leaders are unable to attend a meeting and no adult volunteers can assist, that squad may also be cancelled or rescheduled for another date and time.

A Squad special event/trip may also be cancelled due to poor weather conditions and/or more than 50% of the unit being ill. In that case, the Leader/s would contact the respective members.

Code of Conduct - All AHG girl members are expected to properly conduct themselves at all AHG functions. Proper behavior includes respect for themselves and others and adherence to AHG standards as outlined in the AHG Creed. A girl who is out of line with her unit Code of Conduct will first be counseled by her Unit Leader in any change that must take place. A second violation will result in an interview with the Troop Coordinator concerning how the incident does not live up to the AHG Creed. A third violation will result in parental notification and possible termination of membership if deemed necessary. The Troop Board has the right to terminate membership if the violation is determined to be severe.

Knife Policy - Knives can be an important and exciting piece of equipment for outdoor adventures, but they also bring with them an inherent increased risk. Knives may only be brought to an AHG activity when deemed appropriate by chaperoning AHG adult Leaders and included on a pack list for the AHG activity. For activities when knives (or other equipment, such as cell phones, electronic devices, etc.) are not appropriate, they should be included on the activity pack list under a “do not bring/leave at home” category. If pocketknives will be permitted at a Troop activity, Troop leadership must train girls about safe and appropriate use of a pocketknife.

Girl Visitors - From time to time, AHG girls may like to invite a friend to visit a Troop meeting. The following procedure must be followed when inviting a guest:

1. The Troop Coordinator **MUST** be notified at least 1 week in advance. The Troop Coordinator will reach out to the Leader to see if the meeting is appropriate to have a visiting girl attend.
2. Visiting girls who are in Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade must be accompanied by their parent/guardian or the AHG Girl's parent.
3. If a parent is unable to attend, a permission slip should be submitted with vital parent information provided. The Troop Coordinator should be notified if a parent is not attending, explaining the lack of parental attendance.
4. A new girl may visit **one** time before registering as a Troop member.
5. All non-member “visitors” attending a “Bring a Friend” Activity sponsored by the Troop must provide a completed permission slip with emergency contact information.
6. All other visitation situations must be communicated with the Troop Coordinator in advance.

Sibling Policy - AHG Troop leadership recognizes the fact that parents may sometimes need to bring children who are not AHG participants to Troop meetings and events. This is permissible provided the following rules are strictly adhered to:

1. Children must remain at their parent's side, or at the side of an adult designated by the child's parent, always during the meeting or activity. Children must never be unattended.
2. Children may not be unsupervised in the hallways at any time.
3. Siblings may not participate in AHG activities, as this may create logistical problems for those organizing the meetings and it may cause distractions (unless the event is a family event).
4. Parents are to remove disruptive children.
5. Any Leader taking an active role in a meeting is to make arrangements with another adult to supervise her non-AHG children during Unit meeting time.

Transportation for Troop Activities - All potential drivers for Troop activities must complete a *Troop Transport Form*, verifying auto insurance, seatbelts and driver's license. This form must be on file with the Troop Coordinator and Leader, in charge of the activity. Parents choosing not to complete this form may not transport girls other than their own daughter on a Troop related activity. This form must be updated annually.

Appropriate girls/leader ratios and two-deep leadership should be present during transportation. All drivers must be licensed and at least 21 years of age. The AHG Troop Board/Leadership reserves the right to deny a driver based on automobile safety or driving record.

When a Troop Unit travels, each car will be provided with a Troop Trip packet, directions, maps, contact information. Vehicles traveling more than 75 miles should each have a first-aid kit available.

Troop Trips - A *Troop Trip Notification Form* must be completed for all Troop/Squad camping trips and/or any trip over 75 miles from the Charter Organization. All trips must be approved by the Charter Representative and the Troop's Support Services Coordinator at the AHG, Inc. office at least four weeks prior to the activity. A certified First Aid/CPR adult must be present at all activities of the Troop. Along with this form, Troops must also submit a roster of all girls and adults that will be attending this activity. Any activity that involves a high-risk activity (horseback riding, rappelling, canoeing, etc.) must have Charter Representative's approval prior to the activity and a *High Adventure Notification Form* must be completed and sent to the Troop's Support Services Department for approval at least four weeks prior to the activity.

High-Adventure Form - Girls attending an event that includes a high adventure activity must submit *the High Adventure Health and Medical Form*, which includes a doctor's signature. These must be provided before leaving for the activity. It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that this information is provided. *High Adventure Health & Medical Forms* are good for one year.

Troop Communication

- **Emergency Number** – if you have an emergency and need to contact your daughter during a meeting, call/text the Troop Coordinator: [Paula Heinricher 412.716.7020](tel:412.716.7020).
- **E-Mail** – This is our PRIMARY means of communication. You will receive a bi-monthly Troop update from the Coordinator, pre/post Squad Meeting updates from the Leader, and as appropriate from other Troop Adults such as the Registrar and Treasurer. If you are unable to be contacted via email, you

must let the Troop Coordinator know your primary means of communication. It is your responsibility to inform the Troop Coordinator of an email address change.

- **Troop Track** - Our internal troop information can be found on our Troop management website: www.trooptrack.com. This website will house our events registration calendar, general information about our Troop, and our primary means of tracking badge and award requirements. New families will receive an invitation to join Troop Track within a week of registering for the Troop.

ALL families will be expected log in to Troop Track regularly to respond to event invitations and track their daughter's badge requirements and service hours. This is the **ONLY** way the Troop Coordinator will receive communications regarding the individual badges and service stars a girl has earned. The badge order will be generated from this website. If you are **NOT** receiving emails from the Troop via Troop Track, please check your spam/promotional folder, and then reach out to the Troop Registrar.

- **The Jump** – AHG, Inc has partnered with The Jump communication social media platform as a safe means of communication with the AHG family. Reach out to the Troop Coordinator if you would like access to the PA2551 Jump.
- **Front Desk** – An AHG Adult volunteer will be assigned to manage the Front/Check in desk area at the start of all Troop Meetings. This person will be prepared to answer questions and receive any paperwork and payments for Troop activities. This is also where we will collect payments in the “Treasurers Box”, turn in Chick-fil-A receipts, and any other paperwork.
- **Special Event Announcement Flyers** – These will be emailed and/or handed out at Troop meetings. Most special events have deadline whereas payment and reservation form will be due. Forms and payment will be turned in at the Front Desk.
- **Shutterfly** – Our Troop has a private Shutterfly site to post pictures taken at troop meetings and special events. Please let the Troop Coordinator know if you do not want pictures of your daughter posted to this site. Contact the Troop Coordinator to be given permission to join our Shutterfly site.
- **Troop Newsletter** – The Troop **may** publish a newsletter during the regular troop year regarding upcoming events, activities and reports on events that have occurred. Newsletters will be distributed via email from the email address ahgpa2551@gmail.com (please add this to your valid email contacts) and located at our website: www.trooptrack.com.

Communication with Girl Members: Two deep leadership **MUST** be maintained when an AHG Adult communicates with AHG Girls via text messages, emails and/or phone calls, for the safety and protection of both Girl and Adult Members. Adult Members can be included or copied on an email, text, or present on a phone call to ensure two-deep leadership.

Health and Safety

American Heritage Girls values the health and safety of its members and is fully committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health are integrated into everything a Troop does to ensure as safe a program as possible. The goal is always to provide opportunities for faith, service, and fun in a manner that no injuries occur beyond those that are readily treatable by simple first aid. Volunteers in American Heritage Girls are responsible for the health and safety of others when participating in Troop meetings, trips, events, and activities. AHG Adult Members are accountable for administering the AHG Program in a safe and responsible way by adhering to AHG policies. AHG seeks to equip Charter Organizations, Troops, and members with policies and guidelines which are designed to prevent incidents, reduce risk, protect members and the Charter Organization, and create boundaries. These policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards which have been identified through knowledge, expertise and experience. Any restrictions or limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as being overly protective; rather, they should be viewed as facilitating safe and enjoyable experiences for the AHG Members of your Troop. Health and safety knowledge can be enhanced when this resource is paired with AHG Foundations training, the BEST Practices: Health and Safety Quick Guide, and AHG's Health and Safety Policies and Guidelines. <http://bit.ly/AHGHealthANDSafety>

Two-Deep Leadership Policy: For the safety and protection of both girls and adults, there will be at least two Adult Members during all AHG Troop meetings, trips, activities and events. Note: A pair of Adult Members who are husband and wife are not adequate to establish two-deep leadership.

Upon completion of the registration process including the application, criminal background check, and KEYS to Child Safety Training, and membership fee payment, volunteers will receive a Member ID badge. AHG volunteers must wear their Member ID badge and lanyard so they are easily identifiable as Adult Members. In addition, two-deep leadership and appropriate girl/adult ratios are always maintained when girls and adults are present together at a Troop/Unit activity, meeting, or event, or communicating via email, text, or phone call.

Sick Policy – Per the “Wellness Policy” set by the Charter Organization: children must be **symptom free without medication for 48 hours** before attending in person events:

Fever of 100 or higher, Vomiting or Diarrhea, Conjunctivitis (pink eye or other eye infection), Rash, Nasal drainage(green/yellow), Sore Throat, Open Sores, Cold, Excessive Coughing, Lice*

A First-Aid and CPR certified adult will be present at all activities. The Troop will have a first-aid kit at all meetings and activities. Each Girl and Adult *Health Form* will be available at all meetings and off-site activities.

Administration of Medication Policy

1. AHG members are discouraged from taking medication at AHG events unless necessary.
2. No AHG girl member can self-medicate while participating in an AHG event. Exceptions include inhalers and EpiPen, which may be kept on a girl's person for emergency use. Parents must indicate in writing that the girl is in possession of this medication and has the knowledge and ability to administer.
3. The Leader fulfilling the Troop Health and Safety Lead role can accept the responsibility of medicating or making sure an AHG member takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time. The Lead must first receive a completed medical form and *Request for Medication Administration Form*.
4. AHG policy does not mandate nor encourage the Leader to dispense medication. If a Leader is uncomfortable administering medications, efforts should be made to make it possible for the girl to still

attend the function. If all ideas are exhausted with no resolve, to keep the AHG program available to all girls, the Support Services Coordinator at AHG, Inc. will be contacted to further problem solve.

5. No AHG girls may bring over the counter medications for self-administration. Over the counter medications may be administered by the Health and Safety Lead on an as need basis. Parents must include these over the counter medications on the *Request for Medication Administration Form*. These are kept in the possession of the Health and Safety Lead for the duration of the event.

6. Administration of all medication will be done per the instructions provided on the *Request for Medication Administration Form*.

AHG, Inc. Child Abuse Prevention and Safety Policy

Mission: To provide a healthy and safe environment for members of American Heritage Girls, through a program of education and prevention of emotional, physical and sexual child abuse and in compliance with state laws and federal regulations, and our guiding principles.

All AHG Adult Members upon registration with AHG, Inc. will be required to have a background check with AHG, Inc, and must also comply with PA state and the Charter Organization's required background checks and processes.

In addition, all AHG Adult Members are required to complete the AHG, Inc. KEYS to Child Safety Training. AHG, Inc's complete Child Abuse Prevention and Safety Policy is available on the website: AHGconnect.org.

Conflict Resolution

Steps to Conflict Resolution:

- 1) **Seek Biblical guidance- humble yourself-** The bible addresses conflict consistently. Some verses that you may reflect upon include:
Galatians 6:1 "Brethren even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted."

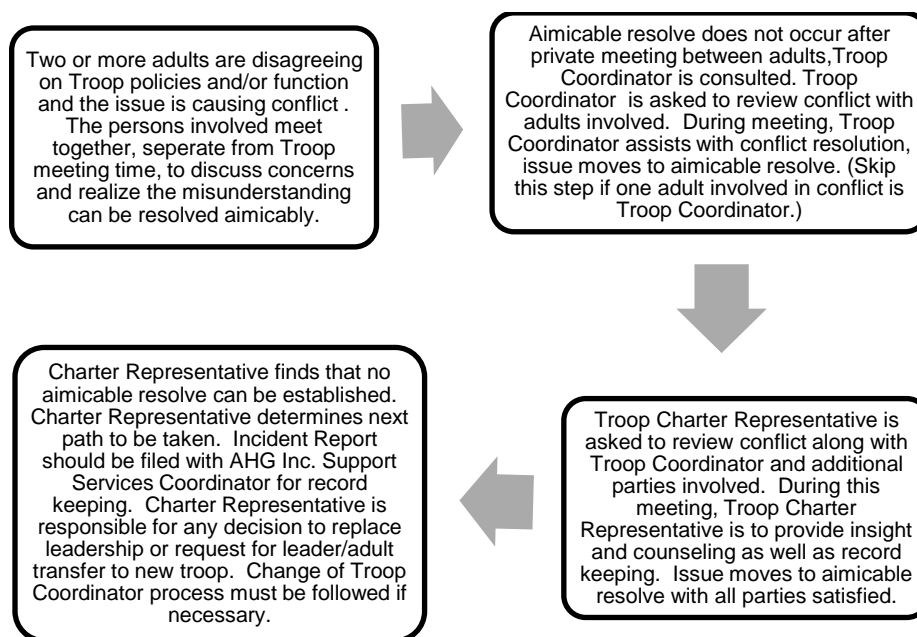
Colossians 3:12 "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience bearing with one another and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

Matthew 18:15-17 "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."
- 2) **Understand the uniqueness of each volunteer-** Identifying personality traits, spiritual gifts and preferred management styles, will help troop leadership understand the motivators each volunteer possesses. Most conflict is a result of a lack of understanding. The conflict may arise from a lack of understanding of the

personality of the volunteer, a lack of understanding of a process or a lack of understanding of the “why” behind the “what.”

- 3) Honor the feeling of each volunteer-** Their concerns are real to them, whether you feel they were right or not. Seeking to truly understand their reasons and perspective is key to successful conflict resolution. Helping each other understand perspective but reiterating the concerns of another honor the volunteer and helps you know that you understand their feelings. Start your conversation with, “Help me understand....” And remember not to be so busy trying to be understood than to understand.
- 4) Retrace the Loop-** As mentioned earlier most conflict comes from a lack of understanding. Determine how this lack of understanding came to be.
- 5) Deal with the conflict in a timely manner-** Allowing conflict to fester only makes it worse. Using the Biblical approach found in Matthew 18, meet with the person who has the conflict with you as soon as possible.
- 6) Do not let the conflict steal your joy of serving-** Nothing will burn out a volunteer more quickly than unresolved or continued conflict. Pray for the armor of God to surround you and take control of the situation. Remember you cannot make others do what you want them to do; you can only make choices to which others respond and create an environment where others can make choices too.

Below is a successful model for resolving conflict within a Troop. This process can be used for conflict with a parent, or adult volunteer. It is important that these steps take place in the order recommended.



Helping Girls Live a Life of Virtue

It is the expectation of AHG, Inc. that Girl Members not only subscribe to but strive to live according to the values represented in the AHG Oath and Creed, as they have agreed to when becoming a Girl Member. With this expectation, it is also understood that, just like adults, girls face temptation and are not without sin. Because we all fall short from time to time it is important

the AHG Troop remain a place of grace and truth. Girls, especially during their adolescent years, are trying to determine who they are and how their faith and the culture play into their identity. AHG can serve a critical role in guiding girls toward their identity in Christ. AHG is meant to be a ministry of transformation—a ministry which surrounds girls with Godly adults who will offer them sound Biblical advice, encouragement, grace, and truth. AHG should be a safe place for girls to navigate the confusion of today's moral landscape.

The relationship between a Charter Organization and its Troop is designed to be a partnership. AHG values the role of the Charter Organization and Charter Representative as ministry partners and Troops are encouraged to collaborate with them in supporting the Troop and its members in both joyous and challenging seasons. As part of the partnership between the Charter Organization and Troop, the Charter Organization will provide direction in walking through the following steps and addressing a Girl Member's behavioral concerns.

When a girl falls short of living up to the AHG Oath and Creed, it is not a time for her immediate dismissal from the Troop. It is a time when a girl needs the Christ-centered program of AHG, her family, her church and the faith-filled adults of her Troop the most. When a girl engages in behavior which contradicts the AHG Oath or Creed, it is important she understands her error and is given an opportunity to change. These behaviors might include, but are not limited to: gossip, bullying, stealing, sexual activity outside the context of marriage (opposite-sex or same-sex), illegal use of drugs or alcohol, etc. When a Troop becomes aware that a girl is engaging in such behavior, there are a number of steps which must precede dismissal from the program.

Step 1:

Depending on the level of severity of the behavior, the parents/legal guardians of the girl are notified and included in the process. If the Charter Organization has policies regarding the behaviors being addressed, please refer to the Charter Organization for input, if agreeable to the parents/legal guardians. With parent/legal guardian approval, the trusted Unit Leader and/or Troop Shepherd plus one other AHG Adult Member (maintaining two-deep-leadership) discuss their concerns with the girl in a loving manner. "Here is why we are concerned. Here is why this behavior contradicts the AHG Oath/Creed." Share Scriptural references regarding these behaviors. Girls are given an opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability for the plan is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG's KEYS to Child Safety Training through measures such as, but not limited to, two-deep leadership in all types of communication (written, verbal, in person, electronic). In addition, AHG offers the Girl Behavior Agreement available on AHGresource to set healthy behavior expectations for girls.

Step 2:

If the Girl Member does *not* show remorse, does *not* agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop:

Meets with the girl's parents/legal guardians as soon as possible, no matter how small the infraction. The Troop explains in a loving manner why the behavior is of concern, why it contradicts the AHG Oath/Creed, and what steps have been taken to assist the girl in addressing the issue. Following this meeting, girls are given another opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG's KEYS to Child Safety Training.

If the Girl Member denies the behavior while the evidence of the behavior is overwhelming, the Troop:

Stands for truth and encourages the girl to be truthful. The Troop explains that grace is available to all, however, where truth cannot be found, grace will not be applied. If the girl refuses to be truthful, then the Troop meets with her parents/legal guardians to explain their observations and concerns, to describe the potential consequences of a girl's willingness/unwillingness to be truthful, and to request the parents/legal guardians counsel the girl. The Troop offers the parents/legal guardians and the girl 2-3 days to respond and commit to behavior change.

Step 3:

If the Girl Member continues to not accept responsibility for the behavior, does not show remorse, does not agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop again meets with the girl and her parents/legal guardians. At this meeting, discussions are had around engaging a pastor, priest, or other church leader within the girl's preferred denomination. Outside ministries who specialize in the issue at hand may also be engaged at this time. The objective of this meeting is to again work on a plan of action in order to assist the girl in understanding her behavior, the consequences or impact of her behavior, and work to overcome it. If the parents/legal guardians and girl understand the concern around the behavior and are willing to implement a plan for change, then the girl will be allowed to remain in the Troop. The Troop volunteers are not expected to provide counsel, which is the role of the parents/legal guardians, but rather show support and acknowledgement of the worth of the girl.

Step 4:

If the above avenues have all been exhausted and the girl continues her behavior, refuses to recognize the behavior as contradictory to the AHG Oath/Creed, and/or poses a threat to other Girl or Adult Members in the Troop, she may be asked to terminate her membership in American Heritage Girls by the Charter Organization. The goal for every Troop should be to keep the girl in the Troop. The decision to ask a Girl Member to leave a Troop is one made with prayer and discernment and in which counsel of the Charter Representative and the Hometown Mentor or AHG Troop Coach is sought.

Suggestion Policy

Your suggestions should be hand-written or typed with the situation described, the problem and your idea for a solution. Suggestions are to be submitted to your Unit Leader, Troop Vice-Coordinator, or Troop Coordinator by mail or email.

All complaints are to be signed and accompanied by suggested solutions. Thinking through the problem and coming up with a possible solution allows criticism to be constructive. Also, if you're unable to find a solution, the process may lead you to the realization that the Troop is handling the situation in the best way possible--there may not be a better way to do it. The Troop Board will consider your suggestion and implement the changes if deemed beneficial to the entire program.

American Heritage Girls Troop PA2551

Troop Policy and Guidelines

2021-2022

Parent/Guardian Signature Page

- ☐ I have reviewed the AHG Troop PA 2551 Troop Policy & Guidelines Handbook and agree to adhere to Troop Policies and Guidelines contained.
- ☐ I agree to actively participate and support my daughter/s participation in meetings, activities, and events to ensure the success of AHG Troop PA2551 as a whole.
- ☐ I understand that email is the primary means of communication for AHG Troop PA 2551 and agree to read and respond to emails and event invitations in a timely manner.

Signature:

- A. Your electronic signature on the online Troop Registration form indicates your review and agreement to the items listed above.
- OR
- B. Print this page and sign here:

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Print Parent/Guardian Name