



AMERICAN HERITAGE GIRLS™

FAITH | SERVICE | FUN

American Heritage Girls Troop IL3130 Policy and Guidelines Handbook 2020-2021

Charter Organization

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*Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.*
Proverbs 31:30

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American Heritage Girls Mission, Oath, Creed

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. The following Statement of Faith applies to all American Heritage Girls Charter Organizations and Adult Members.

"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 worshiping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Who enables us to live Godly lives. We believe that each of us as an individual is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; and collectively 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 us 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.

Girl Membership

Girl membership is defined as young women five (5) to eighteen (18) years of age who are registered and who meet all other qualifications prescribed in the policies of the Organization.

American Heritage Girls' Inclusion Policy states:

All biological girls of any color, creed, 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.

- AHG unashamedly believes, teaches, and practices Biblical principles throughout its program.
- AHG is committed not only to developing girls' character, but also to teaching girls how to apply the truths of God's Word to every aspect of life.

Troop Structure

Troop Board

AHG Troop IL3130 has a Troop Board that creates and implements all Troop policy and guidelines. The Troop Policy and Guidelines handbook will be submitted to Unit Leaders and parents for review and approval at the first parents' meeting prior to the first troop meeting. The Troop Policy and Guidelines will be updated on an annual basis by the Troop Board.

The Troop Board will consist of a minimum of five adult member positions: Charter Representative, Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Treasurer and Shepherd. Other positions on the Board may include: Fundraising Manager, Service Project Coordinator, Advancement Manager, Special Events Coordinator and Registrar. The Troop Board should meet at least once per quarter, bi-monthly is preferred. The Board's responsibility will be to create and implement the Troop Policy and Guidelines to develop, create and manage a Troop budget, to oversee all fundraising efforts of the Troop, to handle conflict resolution and other administrative aspects of the Troop. The Troop Board will also work alongside the chartering organization to approve and recruit adult leaders. 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.

Troop Leaders

The Troop Leadership is comprised of Unit Leaders, Assistant Unit Leaders, and Adult Members. These leaders will implement the AHG program at the Unit 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.

Troop Board & Unit Leader Qualifications

All candidates for Troop Board & Leadership must be approved by the Charter Organization and the Troop Board. All candidates must be 21 years old and be chosen through a selection process that includes a personal interview, volunteer application, background check and three references that are verified. Troop Board and Unit Leaders positions are a one year commitment and may continue in the position with Troop Board and Charter Organization approval. All Adult Volunteers are expected to model the AHG Creed at all times. Troop Board Members and Unit Leaders may be removed from duty by the Troop Board and/or the Chartering organization, if deemed necessary.

Units

The Troop will be divided into age appropriate units according to the guidelines set forth by American Heritage Girls. This Troop will operate all five levels, if there is interest and leadership in all levels. Those levels are: Pathfinder (K), Tenderheart (1-3), Explorer (4-6), Pioneer (7-8) and Patriot (9-12). It is vital for the protection of the girls and leaders, that "two-deep leadership" is maintained at all times. It is also important the girl/leader ratios be maintained.

Appropriate girl/Leader ratios are:

Pathfinder	6 girls per 1 registered leader
Tenderheart	6 girls per 1 registered leader
Explorers	8 girls per 1 registered leader
Pioneers	10 girls per 1 registered leader
Patriots	12 girls per 1 registered leader

Squads

Levels may be broken into squads according to size and the development stages of the girl members. It is possible that the Tenderheart Level may be sub-divided into squads based on grade level (i.e. 1st grade, 2nd and 3rd grade.) Pioneer and Patriot Levels may join together while the girls work on their age appropriate program work, depending on the number of girls in each unit.

Program Emphases

Our Troop provides a well-balanced program that includes activities based on all six parts of the AHG program.

Life Skills, Outdoors, Faith, Leadership, Citizenship and Social Emotional with Christ at the center of all.

Life Skill Enhancement

These experiences range in topic through AHG's six frontiers of skill: Heritage, Family Living, Arts, Outdoor Skills, Personal Well-Being and Science and Technology. The badges are progressive so the girls will learn new skills at each level.

Girl Leadership

Girl leadership skills are encouraged at all levels of AHG. AHG Troop IL3130 will offer many leadership opportunities throughout the year. Through many successful experiences, leadership becomes a lifestyle to the AHG members. Some of these opportunities may include Girl Leader or Squad Lead, Girl Shepard, Hostess, Flag Ceremony Lead, Announcements Lead, Song/Skit Lead, Girl Service Lead, Girl Events Lead, Girl Scribe.

Development Teamwork, Building Confidence, and Outdoor Experiences

It is our Troop's hope that the girls will take part in exciting outdoor opportunities. Providing outdoor experiences to our Troop members is important. Our Troop will sponsor or provide several opportunities annually for the girls. Please see the Special Event Calendar for specific information. From time to time, the Troop or units will also make available overnight activities. Parent involvement is encouraged at all levels but is most essential for Kindergarten and 1st grade girls. Girl members that are in Kindergarten or 1st grade may not participate in extended overnight camping trips, but may participate in unit/Troop sleepovers and day programs. Unit Leaders may request parent involvement for overnight activities.

Community Service

A key component of the AHG program, HUGS (Heritage Girls United Giving Service) is the service arm of AHG. Troop IL3130 will participate in at least three service projects a year. Units 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.

Use the Service Google Doc to log ALL hours of service. Unused service hours may be carried over to the next year. The Advancement Manager will review all service hours and has the right to question service hours that do not fit within the service guidelines of American Heritage Girls. Any disputes on service will first be addressed by the Unit Leader and Advancement Manager. If not resolved, it may be taken to the Troop Board for a final decision.

In order for an act to be considered service in AHG, girls must not be reimbursed in any way. As we are called to love our neighbor, AHG does not count family service as service hours. For those older girls participating in long hour mission trips, please consult with your Unit Leader as to what can be counted on a mission trip prior to submitting those hours. Only hours “serving” may be counted. Preparation time and planning time may not be counted. Please refer to page 41 of the Girl Handbook for more information.

Social Development

Social activities for girls are an integral and important part of AHG. The Troop offers many activities for girls and their families. These events may have a separate charge and are not included in the Troop budget. It is important that girls try to attend 2-3 events per year in order to earn their Level Award at the end of their Level. The Troop will provide a Calendar at the beginning of the year to help with setting your calendar.

Spiritual Development

Each girl is encouraged through the AHG program to grow her faith and relationship with God. Whether through meeting prayer, unit Bible studies, or modeling Christ-like behavior, AHG Volunteers can have an eternal impact on the lives of girls. Each AHG Troop has a Troop Shepherd who seeks to get to know each girl and pray for each girl. Girls at all levels are encouraged to participate in the AHG Religious Award Program. Our Troop also emphasizes the value of the Religious Recognition Program offered to Protestant girls through several options in the Faith Awards Program and to the Catholic girls through the AHG National Catholic Committee. Information may be obtained through your Troop leader or AHG.

Meeting Procedures and Safety

Permission Slips

When girls will be participating in a special event away from our regular meeting site at St. Peter Lutheran Church, a permission form is needed. A field trip or activity that requires transportation outside of the Troop meeting also requires a permission slip. If a child forgets the permission slip, she will not be able to attend. Troop leaders are not authorized to take children without a permission slip. Permission slips are emailed to troop members.

Release of Troop Members

If a parent is unable to attend the meeting and the child will be riding with someone else, a written note is expected to be given to the Troop Coordinator at the beginning of the meeting. No verbal approval will be accepted.

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 pocket knives will be permitted at a Troop activity, Troop leadership must train girls about safe and appropriate use of a pocket knife.

Cell Phone/Picture Policy

Cellular telephones (including but not limited to camera phones) or any other related electronic communication devices are not to be turned on or visible during meeting or activity time. Please consult with your Unit Leader or Troop Coordinator for permission to call out to a parent or guardian when needed. Any photos taken during Troop activities may not be posted on-line or passed along in emails without the direct consent of all families included.

Inclement Weather Cancellation

A Troop meeting may be cancelled by the Troop Coordinator if there is inclement weather. Any cancellations or adjustments to the schedule due to extenuating circumstances or weather will be communicated by email or phone.

Girl Visitors

From time to time, girls may like to invite a friend to visit a Troop meeting. The following procedure must be followed when inviting a guest(s):

1. The Troop Coordinator and Unit Leader should be notified at least one week in advance of a girl visit.
2. Pathfinder and 1st and 2nd grade Tenderheart parents must accompany the child and remain with the child during the Troop meeting or activity.
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 and her parent 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.

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

the Unit 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. The driver's motor vehicle record may be randomly checked.

When a unit/squad of the Troop travels for an activity of the Troop, 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/Units/Squads when planning a camping trip or a trip that exceeds 75 miles away 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 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.

Girls attending an overnight activity that includes a high adventure activity (see health and safety section of Troop Coordinator & Unit Leader Handbooks) must complete 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. See your Unit Leader or Troop Coordinator for the necessary forms. High Adventure Health and Medical Forms are good for one year.

Administration of Medication Policy

1. AHG members are discouraged from taking medication at AHG events unless absolutely necessary.
2. No AHG girl member is allowed to self-medicate while participating in an AHG event. Exceptions include inhalers and Epi Pens, 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 possesses the knowledge and ability to administer.
3. The AHG Unit 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 Unit 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, in an effort to keep the AHG program available to all girls, please contact your Troop Coach 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.

Sick Policy

Your daughter should be at least 24 hours fever free and head lice free in order to attend any AHG event. Any girl who has an unknown rash will be unable to stay for a meeting. If any medication must be given during an event, the request for Administration of Medication must be provided to the Unit Leader before the event. A First-Aid and CPR certified adult will be present at all activities. The Troop has a first-aid kit at all meetings and activities. Each girl's health and medical information will always be readily available at all meetings.

Wearing Masks

Girls and leaders will need to wear masks (as able) when we are less than 6 feet apart in outdoor activities or inside as mandated in Illinois. Please have your daughter bring her mask to all AHG events.

Covid-19 (2020-21 health addendum) (Following CDC and IDPH guidelines)

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people.

St. Peter and AHG have put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, St. Peter and AHG cannot guarantee that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, attending St. Peter and AHG could increase your risk and your child(ren)'s risk of contracting COVID-19.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that my child(ren) and I may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending St. Peter and AHG and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. I understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at St. Peter and AHG may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, St. Peter and AHG employees, volunteers, and program participants and their families.

I voluntarily agree to assume all of the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to my child(ren) or myself (including, but not limited to, personal injury, disability, and death), illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that I or my child(ren) may experience or incur in connection with my child(ren)'s attendance at St. Peter and AHG or participation in St. Peter and AHG programming ("Claims"). On my behalf, and on behalf of my children, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless St. Peter and AHG, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of St. Peter, its employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in any St. Peter and AHG program.

American Heritage Girl Troop IL3130 will ask all girls and leaders to self-certify before every in-person meeting at St. Peter or elsewhere during the upcoming year. We will verify temperatures as needed at check-in as well. Girls and leaders should be symptom free for 14 days.

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, at all times 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.
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.

Alcohol, Drug and Tobacco Policy

As the use of alcohol and drugs has been proven to be a significant health hazard, they are not permitted at any AHG function or activity. Tobacco has also been proven to pose serious health risks. Since the adult leaders serve as examples for the girl members, smoking is not allowed in the presence of girls at AHG activities or events. Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco by an AHG member should be reported to the girl's parents. Use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco by an AHG adult member during an AHG event should be referred to the Charter Organization Representative or your Support Services Coordinator.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Parents are encouraged to share these procedures with their daughters. Parents must sign off on receipt of Child Abuse Prevention Policy on Girl Registration Form.

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.

Issue

The emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children by adults and others is a widespread problem. Abuse may be emotional, physical, and/or violent. Incidents may occur just once or be repeated many times. Child abuse affects everyone - the victim, family/friends, all of us! We can prevent child abuse by giving children accurate information about physical and sexual abuse, teaching children how to protect themselves, encouraging children to communicate incidents, educating adult members in prevention techniques and reporting incidents or suspected incidents to proper authorities. A child abuser can be anyone - male or female, young or old, familiar or unfamiliar, or a former victim. Child abuse can happen in familiar areas, public places, in unfamiliar or deserted areas. The abuser usually tries to control the victim by coercion, manipulation, or bribery.

Bullying can be another form of abuse and can result from adult and/or youth behaviors. Bullying can be physical, emotional or mental. Female bullying is becoming increasingly common

and typically is in the form of verbal and emotional harassment. Cyber bullying (bullying via internet, email, text messaging, etc.) is also increasingly common and equally destructive.

AHG Policy

If an adult member learns or suspects that a youth member has been emotionally, physically or sexually abused, we can help by not questioning the validity of the incident, help is needed no matter the validity of the incident. Control emotions, give support, get information about the incident, get medical assistance, and immediately contact the appropriate social service agency and police in compliance with state and local laws and regulations, parents/guardians and the designated AHG Unit Leader. You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in "good faith". It is the responsibility of the AHG Unit Leader to file an incident report with the Local/National Office.

Guidelines for Youth Members

To help prevent child abuse, our members should learn and follow these common-sense rules: Be alert of other's behavior, don't believe strangers, avoid being alone with anyone who wants to touch a child in a sexual way, and don't be overly trusting.

- Avoid dangerous situations including playing alone in deserted or public areas, not opening doors or answering phones at home. Discuss problem encounters with parents, guardians, and AHG Unit Leaders. In the event of an incident, the member should not obey the abuser unless physically threatened, try to turn away, say no if someone tries to abuse them, tell abuser they'll tell someone, seek help as soon as possible, be told not to feel guilty, "it wasn't their fault."

AHG Standards for Maintaining a Healthy and Safe Environment

AHG has developed a plan to prevent child abuse and improve the environment in which our young members live. The key elements include:

1. Establish Unit Leader selection procedures to prevent individuals with a history of abuse from joining our adult membership or volunteering through effective screening of applicants. The AHG Leader Selection Process includes the following steps:
 - Unit Leaders have been interviewed by the Troop Coordinator and Charter Representative.
 - Adult Volunteers must submit a completed adult volunteer application, three character references and a background check.
 - References should be contacted and verified by the Troop Coordinator.

"Being a registered leader is a privilege, not a right." The quality of our program and safety of our youth members require selection of leaders to be taken seriously.

2. Educate leaders, volunteers, parents/guardians, and young members to aid in detection and prevention of child abuse.
3. Encourage girls to report improper behavior and to identify incidents and offenders promptly.

The following procedures have been established to provide additional security of members from situations in which they may be vulnerable to abuse, and to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

1. Two-deep leadership: No less than two registered adult Leaders are required on all trips and activities. The Troop is responsible for ensuring sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
2. No one-on-one contact: One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. Any meeting or discussion on private matters or sensitive issues, must be conducted in view of other adults and /or members.
3. Respect privacy: Respect the privacy of youth members at all times, except to the extent of health and safety concerns.
4. Separate accommodations: At outdoor and overnight activities, youth members are not permitted to sleep with an adult other than parent or guardian unless adult and youth membership join as a group with two-deep leadership. Use of separate restrooms and shower facilities are encouraged or scheduled times arranged for use of facilities for youth members and adult members. If this is not possible, two-deep leadership must be maintained in restroom and shower facilities.
5. No secret organizations: AHG does not permit secret organizations. All programs and activities are open to observation by parents and adult members. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited.
6. Appropriate attire: Proper, modest attire for all activities is required.
7. Constructive discipline: Discipline used in AHG should be constructive, positive, and reflect our values. Corporal punishment is not permitted.
8. Adult supervision: Adult Leaders must monitor and guide leadership techniques used by youth leaders.

To enhance the health and safety of all members of AHG, the following safety standards are to be followed:

- Controlled Substances: Persons under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol or in possession of same are prohibited from participation in any AHG activity or program.
- Fireworks: Persons are prohibited from using or possessing fireworks at any AHG activity or program.
- Firearms: Persons using or possessing firearms must comply with all local, state and federal laws during all AHG activities.
- Smoking: The use of tobacco products where members are present is not permitted at AHG programs or activities.

Procedures In the Event of Suspected Abuse

In the event an act of child abuse is witnessed, reported, or suspected the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Remove youth member from immediate danger and provide medical attention if needed.
2. In the event child abuse is witnessed, promptly remove and report offenders to the local social services department and/or police immediately in accordance with state, local, and federal laws and regulations. (Refer to your county website for reporting abuse in your area.)
3. If the suspected abuser is NOT the parent/guardian, notification should be made to Parents/Guardians and designated AHG officials as soon as possible advising them of situation and action taken.
4. Leaders, having reason to believe a youth member(s) has suffered abuse, should report or cause reports to be made to the local social services department and police as soon as possible. The report should include: name and address of youth member(s), age, parent's/guardian's name, nature and extent of abuse, and any other information which would be helpful in investigating the situation. Upon notice to the

social services and police, immediate notification should be made to AHG officials advising them of the situation and action taken.

Adherence to these policies and procedures not only enhances the protection of our members, but also ensures the basic values of American Heritage Girls while providing a healthy and safe environment.

Troop Communication

Emergency Numbers

If you have an emergency and need to contact your daughter during a meeting, call the Troop Coordinator, Tina Wilson at 847-997-4502.

Email

This is our PRIMARY form of communication. Troop emails will typically be sent out several days prior to a meeting. You may receive updates from your Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, or another AHG Leader. The Troop will send regular emails of upcoming events, activities, and reports on events that have occurred. Please respect the privacy of our members. All member contact information should be used expressly for AHG purposes (no solicitations or spam email).

Website

<https://troop-il3130.trooptrack.com> is the primary website our troop uses.

Special Events, Flyers, and “Turn-In”

Be sure to check the Communications Table upon sign in and sign out for any time-sensitive AHG information. Notification of activity fees, payments, and permission slips will be available and turned in at the Communication Table.

You will also need to turn in your Covid-19 self-certify form at check-in as well. (2020-2021)

Special event flyers will be emailed or handed out at Troop meetings. Most special events have deadlines. Payment and a reservation form will be due on a particular due date. Forms and payments may not be handed to a leader, but must be placed in appropriate labeled envelopes at Troop meetings.

Parent Responsibilities

The girls should be at the meetings and events in the required uniform; they should arrive before the starting time and after a visit to the bathroom. Parents are also required to obtain information at check-in for upcoming events, monitor e-mails and make sure the girls remember to bring their AHG Handbooks or other necessary information to each meeting.

Parent Participation Pledge

Providing a quality Program for girl members requires a commitment from all families involved. Each family must agree to actively participate in the Troop to ensure the success of the group as a whole. Due to various circumstances, some families may need to complete their service outside of regular meeting times; some families can better complete their service during meetings, while others will do a blend of both. It is an important priority to fill position vacancies and delegate work appropriately to insure a fulfilling experience for all.

Volunteer Position Selection Based on Gifts

American Heritage Girls is a family-supported Program that encourages both girl and adult involvement. Our Troop will benefit most when we can utilize gifts from all our members. We, the Board Members of AHG Troop IL3130, recognize that each of you has been given different gifts by God and is called to use these gifts for His glory. Although we have been very blessed with many wonderful volunteers who have given their time and talent, we are in need of more. Our Troop cannot exist without those who give themselves for others. Volunteering for a position should be done with discernment. Prayer and ones' circumstance in life should be weighed when considering a position within the Troop. Please do not think that if you are unable to volunteer that your daughter will not be able to participate with our Troop, but we do ask that you pray for guidance in helping our Troop in any way possible. The following Spiritual Gift list may help you determine what position you may be called to volunteer for:

Title	Position Description	Kingdom Goal	Kingdom Result
Administrative Roles: establishing integrity in the ministry by demonstrating an inward motivation to do what is right regardless the cost			
Troop Coordinator	Supervises the running of the chartered AHG Troop by providing leadership, administration and support to the Unit & Asst. Unit Leaders and by being the Troop's liaison with AHG, Inc. and the charter organization. May have the gifts of Teaching, Shepherding and Administration.	To create unity within the Troop and lead families to deeper relationships with God	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.
Vice Coordinator	Assists in supervising the running of the chartered AHG Troop by providing leadership, administration and support to the Unit & Asst. Unit Leaders. Duties should be divided with Troop Coordinator as spiritual gifts and personalities dictate. May have the gifts of Teaching, Shepherding, Helping or Administration.	To create unity within the Troop and lead families to deeper relationships with God	
Unit & Asst. Unit Leaders	Works directly with girl members in implementing the AHG program based on their interest while inspiring and facilitating them to achieve all six Program Emphases. May have the gifts of Teaching and	To inspire Girls to grow in their relationship with Christ through modeling biblical character; direct responsibility to girls and families as a voice of the Troops vision and witness to the Great Commission	

	Leadership.		
Registrar	Responsible for all registration paperwork, fees and final submission to AHG, Inc. May have the gift of Helping.	To be an example to families as to how to integrate integrity into the financial and organizational workings of the Troop	
Advancement Manager	Responsible for maintaining each girl's advancement achievements, as well as working with the Unit Leaders to keep girls informed of badge &/or level status, noting requirements to be met for completion. Usually serves as Board of Review Chair. May have the gift of Administration.	To promote Girls achievements, skills, and gifts in light of their growth in Christ	
Training Coordinator	Responsible for training other adult volunteers to become trainers within the Troop to ensure that the mission and ministry of AHG are applied in a consistent and positive manner. May have the gift of Teaching.	To take a holistic approach to insure each Girl and Volunteer in the Troop is growing in knowledge and biblical truth	
Uniform Manager	Responsible for ordering uniforms, badges, service stars and other insignia. Works with Advancement Manager to determine specific badges that will be earned throughout the year. May have the gift of Administration.	To bring unity to the Girls showing God's love is equal for all and also make the Girls aware of their individual uniqueness	
Secretary	Responsible for taking minutes at Troop Board meetings, creating and maintaining a Troop roster and phone tree; responsible for creating monthly/quarterly communication of Troop's activities with families. May have the gift of Administration or Helping.	To keep the Troop on task with the goals and vision of the Troop in order to see Kingdom results	

Historian	Responsible for taking pictures of Troop activities and events throughout the year; responsible for creating a yearly scrapbook or photo album, as well as, collecting articles of Troop activities that were published, Troop newsletters, or other news-worthy events. May have the gift of Helping.	To inspire the Troop by reminding them how God has worked through the service of the Troop to make a difference for Christ	
Hospitality 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			
Charter Rep	Responsible for being the primary liaison between the Troop and Charter organization. This position communicates the value of the AHG Troop to the overall ministry of the church/school and will be able to assist the Troop when his/her help is needed. May have the gift of helping and administration.	To act as the relationship builder focusing on unity and spiritual growth by providing an open connection between the Troop and Charter Organization	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.
Troop Shepherd	Responsible for the "care and feeding" of the Troop's members, encouraging each one in their spiritual walk. Gathers understanding of girl absences and is Troop Prayer Warrior; develops a prayer team. May have the gifts of Shepherding and Evangelism.	To draw upon each girl and Volunteer's spiritual gifts and show them how to better apply their gifts and talents within biblical principles	
Recruitment Coordinator	Responsible for developing and implementing a year-round recruitment plan, organizing information session, and providing other recruitment opportunities throughout the year. May have the gift of hospitality, administration and helping.	To facilitate Volunteers' growth in Christ as they use their gifts to see the Troop accomplish the God-given vision of the Troop	

Events Coordinator	Responsible for coordinating the Troop's activities, service projects, ceremonies and/or summer programs. May have the gift of hospitality and administration.	To host events that support faith, service, and fun through unity and advancement of the ministry	
Financial Roles: To instill good stewardship practices of wisely using time, talent and money within the Troop in order to biblically model for families the way to wisely uses resources we are given.			
Troop Treasurer	Responsible for the financial standing of the AHG Troop. Also, responsible for Troop's financial records, budget, checkbook and expenses. May have the gift of giving and administration.	To serve the Troop wisely by tracking resources available and using them to further the ministry outreach for Christ	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.
Fundraising Manager	Helps to establish fundraising goals, research & select appropriate products and companies as well as implement sale. May have the gift of giving and administration.	To make the best use of God's resources and helping families to be able to grow stronger spiritually through participating in the Troop	
ASC (Annual Stewardship Campaign) Coordinator	Responsible for overseeing the Annual Stewardship Campaign. May have the gift of administration and giving.	To encourage Troop goal- setting and family involvement by adhering to the bigger picture of God's Kingdom	

AHG Troop IL3130 thanks you for helping enhance the lives of these young girls through your participation.

Uniforms

The AHG Official Girl & Adult Uniforms consist of the following items:



Pathfinder

AHG Pathfinder T-shirt
 AHG Necklace Kit
 Navy skirt, skort, pants*, capris or modest shorts

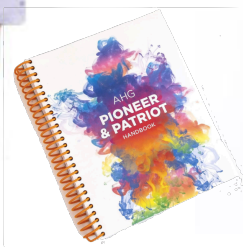


Tenderheart

AHG Red Vest
 Blue Neckerchief
 AHG Polo Shirt, white
 Navy skirt, skort, pants*, capris or modest shorts

Explorer

AHG Blue Vest
 Red Neckerchief
 AHG Polo Shirt, white
 Navy or Khaki skirt, skort, pants*, capris or modest shorts



Pioneer

AHG Blue Sash
 AHG Polo Shirt, White
 Khaki or Navy pants*, capris, skirt or modest

Patriot

AHG Blue Sash
 AHG Polo Shirt, Red
 Khaki or Navy pants*, capris, skirt or modest shorts



Registered Adult Member

AHG Polo Shirt, Blue or Red
 Khaki, black or navy pants, skirt, capris or modest shorts
 AHG Registered Adult Member polo Lanyard

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 Official Uniform for your daughter is difficult, please speak with the Uniform Manager or Troop Coordinator about your need. For any concerns regarding uniforms please see the AHG Uniform FAQ.

The AHG uniform (Class A) is to be worn to all meetings and ceremonies. It can be worn to service projects, fundraising activities and Troop activities that do not require more casual dress. Class B uniform (red t-shirt) may be worn to Zoom meetings and more casual events and some service opportunities. 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. Spirit wear can be purchased through the AHG online store at <https://www.americanheritagegirls.org/store>

Spirit wear is worn, when appropriate, to AHG events. However, we encourage our girls to show off their Troop and spirit wear at any time outside of uniformed events.

Closed-toe shoes are required for all AHG meetings and events (absolutely NO flip flops). Pathfinders may wear a white long-sleeved mock turtleneck under their uniform t-shirt. T-shirts may not be worn under the vest or sash. The neckerchief must be tied with a square knot at the first button of the polo. ALL CLOTHING MUST BE MODEST (e.g., shorts, skorts, or skirts should be no shorter than three inches above the knee). Polos, skirts, skorts and slacks need not be purchased through AHG, but must adhere to the organization's uniform standards.

For placement of the badges and insignia please refer to pages 26 and 27 in the old American Heritage girl handbook or pages 16 and 17 in the new Tenderheart and Explorer handbook or pages 22 and 23 in the new Pioneer and Patriot Handbook.

Pathfinder

AHG Pathfinder T-shirt, necklace kit, navy skirt, skort or slacks*

Tenderheart

AHG red vest, blue neckerchief, white polo or long-sleeved mock turtleneck, navy skirt, skort, or slacks*

Explorer

AHG blue vest, red neckerchief, white polo or long-sleeved mock turtleneck, khaki or navy skirt, skort, or slacks*

Pioneer

AHG blue sash, white polo shirt or white long-sleeved mock turtleneck, khaki or navy skirt or slacks*

Patriot

AHG blue sash, red polo shirt or red long-sleeved mock turtleneck, khaki or navy skirt or slacks* Patriots may choose to have a 2nd sash for the Patriot level.

* Dress slacks with no pockets on legs

Leader's Uniforms/Adult Recognition

Pathfinder Leaders wear the Pathfinder "official" Leader T-shirt and Navy Blue or Khaki bottoms. Tenderheart through Patriot Leaders wear the AHG "official" Red or Navy Polo Shirt. New Unit Leaders will receive the AHG Membership Pin at the Fall Joining Award ceremony. The AHG membership pin is to be worn on the right lapel. Unit Leaders also may earn the Gem of a Leader Pin (at the 2, 4, 6, or 8 years of service) and the Religious Award Mentor Pin, which may be placed on the AHG official polo as well.

Badges, Awards, and Recognition

Badges

The Troop budgets for three badges per girl to be implemented during Troop meetings. Unit Leaders help the girls plan their activities to revolve around their badge requirements. If girls are absent from a Troop meeting where badge requirements are being met, it is up to the girl member and/or parent to make sure she fulfills those requirements on her own time if she wants to receive the badge along her with girls in her unit.

Badge Work

Girls may earn badges outside of the Troop setting. Summer months are a great opportunity for girls to earn badges in the outdoor skill frontier as well as the other frontiers. The individual must pay for all badges earned outside of the Troop meeting (\$3.25 each). The Troop Board may waive this fee due to successful fundraising efforts. Badge requirements earned outside of Troop meetings must be approved by an AHG Leader and recorded by the Advancement Manager. AHG Leaders have the right to question any badge requirements fulfilled outside of the Troop meeting. Girls will be required to demonstrate acquired knowledge/mastery of the completed badge requirements. If required by the badge, girls should bring a display or make a short presentation to the large group or their unit at a scheduled time. Please set up this time with your Unit Leader. If there is a dispute regarding requirements, it will be brought to the attention of the Troop Board for rectification. Individuals may not purchase badges or insignia though the AHG Store.

Handbook sign offs

AHG Leaders will sign off on requirements in each girl's AHG Girl Handbook for any badges earned. Request for badges earned must be submitted one month prior to the next Court of Awards. Sign-offs for the badges must be completed prior to ordering a badge. Badges earned or ordered after this date will be ordered for the next Court of Awards. Badges earned over the summer will be signed off by AHG leaders and ordered for the fall Court of Awards. Leaders may not sign off their own daughter's badge work.

Badge Completion Form

At the time of badge sign-off, have a "Badge Completion Form" ready for the leader to sign or completed the Badge Completion form online. This signed form must be turned into our Advancement Manager, via the "Badge Completion Form Envelope" located at the Communication Table. It is best to turn in a badge completion form as badges are completed.

Joining Award

All new members must earn the Joining Award. This is the first award an American Heritage Girl earns, despite her age (except for a Pathfinder, whose first award is the Fanny Crosby). The Joining Award can be earned within a Troop/Unit or independently. If a girl joins, and the majority of her Troop has already earned their Joining Award, our Joining Award Leader, along with the parent, can assist the girl in learning the requirements within the first quarter of her membership. New members will need to complete the Joining Award section in the Girl Handbook and have the Joining Award Leader sign off on the requirements before the Joining Award may be presented. All girls must wear their "official" uniform to receive the Joining Award. Girls will be recognized and receive their award at a Court of Awards. The purchase price of this award is covered by troop dues.

Sports Pins

We hope that this program will encourage lifelong health through exercise. This program is designed to introduce AHG members to both group and individual sports and to encourage teamwork, respect for authority, goal setting and good sportsmanship. Girls may work together on

these pins or may participate individually through community and church teams or clubs. Parents can find Sports Pin Requirements on pages 341-356 of the old AHG Girl Handbook; 274-302 in the new Tenderheart and Explorer handbook and 282-310 in the new Pioneer and Patriot Handbook. Sports Pins must be filled out on a Badge Completion Form.

Level Awards

Level Awards are available at all levels of AHG. It is highly recommended that each girl earn her level award, however level awards are not required in order to continue in the AHG program. The steps towards the Level Award include badge work, leadership opportunities, special event participation and community service hours. This award is earned at the end of each Level (i.e. Pathfinder, Tenderheart 3rd grade, Explorer 6th grade, Pioneer 8th grade and Patriot 10th grade). Because earning Level Awards usually takes work over a couple of year, girls joining AHG in the 3rd or 6th grade may choose to earn their level award, however parent involvement outside of regular Troop Meetings may be needed to complete necessary work. Girls (all except Fanny Crosby) receiving their Level Award will need to participate in a Board of Review. Once the girl has participated in her Board of Review and she has been approved to receive her Level Award, she will receive this recognition at the End of Year Court of Awards. The Level Award Tracking Sheets can be found in the old Girl Handbook on pages 64-67 or on pages 303-318 in the new Tenderheart and Explorer handbook and pages 311-320 in the new Pioneer and Patriot Handbook.

Board of Review

Each girl member completing her Level Award (except for Fanny Crosby) must participate in a Board of Review, at the end of their level year, prior to a Court of Award Ceremony. The purpose of a Board of Review is to make sure the American Heritage Girl has completed all of her requirements for her level award. The Board of Review provides the girls with the opportunity to develop and practice skills needed in an interview situation and is an opportunity for the girl to review her accomplishments. Unit Leaders will assist girls with preparing for their BOR. The Board of Review will be offered during a regular Troop meeting and girls will be notified prior to the meeting of their required attendance. Girls must be dressed in full uniform (including neckerchief) with badges and insignia, complete for inspection. Girls should wear the official AHG uniform appropriate to their level. No short shorts are allowed.

Award Ceremonies

The Troop plans Award Ceremonies so girls may receive their badges, joining awards, level awards, service recognition and religious recognitions. You will receive a calendar in the fall for all of these important dates. Most ceremonies typically occur in December (Joining Award), and the end of May. These award ceremonies are open to parents, family and relatives to attend. It is important to the girls that they have at least one parent in attendance for these award ceremonies. If a girl is unable to attend the ceremony, her recognition will be given to her during an opening ceremony at the next available Troop meeting. When scheduling your family calendar, please make these ceremonies a priority.

Presidential Service Award

The Presidential Service Award was put in place to honor Americans that use their time, energy, talents, and compassion for others to make a difference in the world through volunteering. To earn an award, individuals, families and groups must keep a record of volunteer activities and hours served. This Record of Service may be kept as a diary, or calendar or in your Service Hour Tally Sheet. Individuals must submit their records along with the Presidential Volunteer Service Award Order Form to "certifying organizations" that will review and verify their records and order and

distribute the award. To be recognized, service activities should meet national or community needs in the areas of youth achievement, parks and open spaces, healthy communities, and public safety and emergency response. <http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov/>

Finances

The following is a breakdown of initial and annual costs. Please note, these costs are subject to change annually.

Girl National Registration	\$26.00 (annual) AHG Membership Registration; \$60 “sister cap” \$26 (\$60 per family) will be covered by successful fundraising this year.
Troop Dues	\$65.00 (annual) – Helps cover Troop budget (see details below) Early registration discount of \$10 is available. Nonrefundable
Program Support Fee	\$20 per girl, paid to AHG National mid-year; \$60 “sister cap” This is included and collected in initial registration fees. Nonrefundable
Fundraising Obligation	See Fundraising policy and guidelines below. All girls are expected to participate in Troop fundraising activities.
Adult Member Registration	\$26.00 (annual) – Annual membership registration with AHG Inc. Cost will be covered by successful troop fundraising with board approval.
Girl Handbook	\$10.99 Pathfinder Handbook; \$19.99 Tenderheart and Explorer Handbook; \$19.99 Pioneer and Patriot Handbook
Special Events (optional)	Additional charges vary. Registration and permission forms are distributed through Troop email.

Troop Dues

The Troop Board annually determines the amount of “dues” to be assessed each girl member to operate a Troop budget. This budget includes badges, unit supplies, camping supplies, refreshments for ceremonies, crafts and school supplies, girl and leader recognitions, general office supplies, and charter fee. A Troop budget is given annually to parents at the beginning of the program year for approval. 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 Coordinator or Treasurer.

Troop Dues Summary

If you already have your uniform and handbook, the total cost will be \$65, plus any additional optional special events.

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.

Program Support Fee

American Heritage Girls spends far more than \$26 per girl annually to provide the AHG program. 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. Troop IL3130 raises this money through fundraising.

Fundraising Policy

Fundraising is a necessary activity on behalf of the Troop. Funds earned support the Troop budget, (patches, badges, badge work, activity subsidies) provide for the AHG program support obligation and enables girls and their families to lessen the out of pocket costs of the program. Therefore, each American Heritage Girl is expected to participate in this effort for the vitality of the Troop and her experience in AHG. The Troop may fundraise as a whole for a particular project or trip, and/or units may do so as well. AHG'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. All families will be notified of the financial standing of the Troop.

Spring Plant and Flower Sale! We expect each girl to sell \$250.00 worth of product or Buy Out \$90 (our profit). In addition to selling plants on your own, there are also two opportunities for you to participate in flower sale flyer distribution and earn credit: St. Peter Church Services and St. Peter Street Campaign.

If you do not sell the minimum of \$250.00, you will be asked to pay the balance (based on the \$90 buyout). The troop will hold all badges/patches until buy out is paid.

We realize while sisters often share the selling target market, they do not share badges, patches, subsidies, and fees. Sisters should take advantage of the flyer distribution opportunities for credit.

Benevolent Funds

Benevolent funds are available for troop activities! Financial gifts never exceed 50% of activity cost. Please submit your request in writing (email) to the Troop Coordinator for Troop Board approval. A Troop member must participate in the fundraiser to seek money for a special event activity.

Conflict Resolution

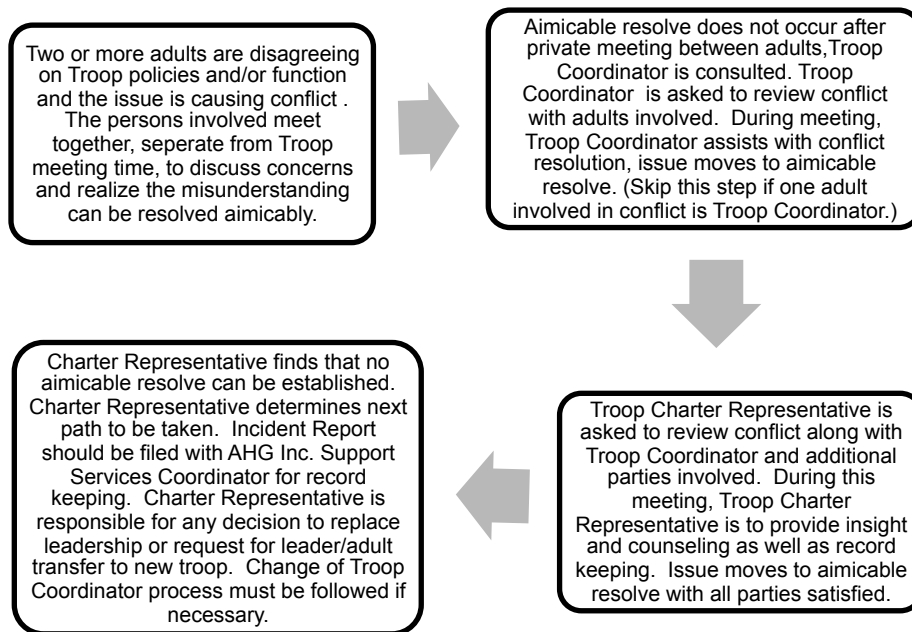
Steps to Conflict Resolution

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.*
2. **Understand the uniqueness of each volunteer-** Identify personality traits, spiritual girls and preferred management styles, will help the Coordinator 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, honors the volunteer and helps you know that you have an understanding of 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 quicker 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 AHG 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, to which they agreed when they became a

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 that 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 that 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 that will offer them sound Biblical advice, encouragement, grace and truth. AHG should be a safe place for girls to navigate the confusion that is today's moral landscape.

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 parents, her church and the faith-filled adults of her Troop the most. When a girl engages in behavior which contradicts the Oath or Creed, it is important that 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 Troop Leadership becomes aware that a girl is engaging in such behavior, there are a number of steps that must precede dismissal from the program.

1. Depending on the level of severity of the behavior, the parents of the girl should be 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 parent. With parent approval, the trusted Unit Leader and/or Troop Shepherd plus one other adult (maintaining two-deep-leadership) should discuss their concerns with the girl in a loving manner. "Here is why we are concerned. Here is why this behavior contradicts the Oath/Creed." Share the Scriptural references regarding these behaviors. Girls should be given an opportunity to show remorse, repent and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability should be established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG's KEYS to Child Safety Training.
2. If the girl member does *not* show remorse, does *not* agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, Troop Leadership should meet with the girl's parents/guardians as soon as possible, no matter how small the infraction. Troop Leadership should explain 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 should be given another opportunity to show remorse, repent and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability should be established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety as described in AHG's KEYS to Child Safety Training.
3. If the girl member denies the behavior while the evidence is overwhelming, Troop Leadership must stand for truth and challenge the girl member to be truthful. Troop Leadership should explain that grace is available to all, but where truth cannot be found, grace will not be applied. If the girl member refuses to be truthful, then Troop Leadership should meet with her parents/guardians to explain the evidence, to describe the consequences that are available dependent upon the girl member's willingness/unwillingness to be truthful, and to request that the parents/guardians counsel their girl member. Troop Leadership should offer the parents/guardian and the girl member 24 to 48 hours to respond to the evidence and the possible consequences.
4. 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, Troop

Leadership should again meet with the girl and her parents/guardians. At this meeting, discussions should be had around engaging a pastor, priest or other church leader within the girl's preferred denomination. Outside ministries that specialize in the issue at hand may also be engaged at this time. The object of this meeting is to again work on a plan of action in order to assist the girl in understanding her behavior, its consequences and work to overcome it. If the parents and girl understand the concern around the behavior and are willing to implement a plan for change, then the girl should be allowed to remain in the Troop. The Troop Volunteers are not expected to provide counsel, which is the job of the parents, but rather show support and acknowledgement of the worth of the girl.

5. If the above avenues have all been exhausted and the girl continues her behavior, refuses to recognize the behavior as contradictory to the Oath/Creed, and/or poses a threat to other girls in the Troop, she may be asked to terminate her membership in American Heritage Girls. The goal for every Troop should be to keep the girl in the Troop. The decision to ask a girl to leave a Troop should be one covered in prayer and discernment and in which counsel of the Charter Rep and the Member Services Coach is sought.

*Scripture addresses the issues of sin: homosexuality, adultery, fornication, lust, pornography, lying, stealing, etc. Sin is contrary to God's design and purposes (Romans 1:1, 1 Corinthians 6:1, 1 Timothy 1, and Leviticus 18). While AHG is well aware that the culture may promote various sins as natural and people are "born that way," AHG defers to the truth of Scripture that states that these behaviors are "sin" and an "abomination." AHG Leaders should communicate that God's grace extends to every form of sin when there is confession, repentance, and dependence on Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). As girls are maturing, there will be natural questions about same-gender attraction and the development of healthy relationships. Parents should also engage these matters with grace, truth, courage and understanding.

It is vital for the protection of the girls and Leaders, that "two-deep leadership" is maintained at all times. It is also important the girl/Leaders ratios be maintained.

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 squad or Unit Leader 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.