

Girl Scout Responses to Social and Sensitive Issues

During Girl Scout Cookie Season (typically January through early March in most areas), we tend to see an uptick in false news connected to Girl Scouts. You may also encounter challenges at booth sales. Please use the information below to help dispel myths about Girl Scouts and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. If questions go beyond your comfortable response, please direct customers to reach out to media@gsnetx.org

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest fundraiser for our Girl Scouts - with 100% of the proceeds remaining in our council to benefit girls through council hosted programs and properties, service unit funds and troop proceeds to fund troop-based activities.

SAFETY

The safety and protection of girls and adult volunteers and our customers is a top priority. Several safety guidelines are established to keep girls safe when selling cookies online, door-to-door, or at community cookie booths. [These guidelines](#) are published and distributed to each participating family.

We do not tolerate individuals who harass girls at cookie booths. In the instance that individuals or groups attending a Girl Scout Cookie sale make girls, volunteers, or staff uncomfortable, we will call law enforcement.

COVID Safety

Girls and families are given options when participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program so they can determine the pathway that is right for them. Girls and volunteers who exhibit signs of illness may not participate in booth and door-to-door sales and deliveries.

Digital Cookie: With the help of her parent/caregiver, a Girl Scout sets up Digital Cookie to sell online. Orders opened December 11, in-person contactless deliveries will begin mid-January. This is a digital pathway where money is not exchanged. Girls may drop cookies on front porches or engage in other contactless forms of cookie delivery. Customers may also opt to purchase and donate cookies to first responders and essential workers through our Community Cookie program through their Digital Cookie online purchases.

In-Person Sales: Starting January 15, and based on comfort level, a girl can begin selling in person. Girls may sell door-to-door, to family and friends, teammates, and beyond, asking her network of contacts to support her goals. Girls must wear face coverings, follow proper hand sanitizing procedures, and maintain social distancing when visiting homes in her community.

Family Booth Sales: Girls and their families can work with their Troop Cookie Manager to set up family booth sales starting January 15 at local small businesses as a new way to reach more customers. Girls and adults must wear a mask covering the nose and mouth and maintain social distance. Additionally, hand sanitizer should be available for girls, adults and customers. Parents/caregivers and Girl Scouts hosting a My Family Sales Booth must be from the same household. No more than two adults and three Girl Scouts can be present. No non-member siblings are permitted.

Troop and Council Booth Sales: Starting January 29, girls can participate in Troop Booth Sales and Council Booth Sales with local partners like grocery stores and more. Council Booth Sale locations are secured by Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and troops can sign up for slots in eBudde, our Cookie Program software. Girls and adults must wear a mask covering the nose and mouth and maintain social distance. Some vendors may have additional requirements to which girls will be expected to adhere in accordance with our partner agreements. Additionally, hand sanitizer should be available for girls, adults and customers. When hosting a Troop Booth, a maximum of two adults and two Girl Scouts from two different households is allowed. There is an exception for sisters in the same troop to allow two sisters to host a booth with one unrelated Girl Scout sister from the same troop, for a total of three Girl Scouts. No non-member siblings are permitted. Some vendor partners may have additional limitations on the number of girls and adults that are allowed to be present at booth sales.

SOCIAL ISSUES:

Does Girl Scouts partner with Planned Parenthood?

Girl Scouts does not have any relationship with Planned Parenthood. Rather than give undue attention to a long-debunked myth about Girl Scouts of the USA (see [FactCheck.org](#), [Politifact](#), [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), and [Snopes](#)), an organization that doesn't take a position on or develop materials about sex education – we believe these to be issues best discussed by parents at home. Girl Scouts remains focused on bringing girls nationwide the single best leadership development programming in the world. Girl Scouts is proud of its longstanding relationship with the Catholic Church, and we look forward to continuing to work with dioceses throughout the country to help today's girls tap into their incredible leadership potential on their way to becoming tomorrow's leaders.

Does Girl Scouts allow transgender girls to register?

Girl Scouts of the USA and its local councils and troops value diversity and inclusiveness and do not discriminate or recruit on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, national origin, or physical or developmental disability. Placement of transgender youth is handled on a case-by-case basis, with the welfare and best interests of the child and the members of the troop/group in question a top priority. That said, if the child is recognized by the family and school/community as a girl and lives culturally as a girl, then Girl Scouts is an organization that can serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe.

Did you know there's a marijuana strain called Girl Scout Cookies?

Girl Scouts of the USA is aware of our trademark being misappropriated. We take these trademark misappropriations seriously and, when applicable, will send a cease and desist request. Trademark infringement concerns may be directed to trademarks@girlscouts.org.

Why does Girl Scouts partner with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGS)?

Girl Scouts partners with organizations from around the world, and while we value our many partnerships, that doesn't mean we agree with every position a partner organization may take. Differing points of view are a given, and we respect these differences as we work with our chosen partners for the benefit of girls and their incredible leadership potential.

Does Girl Scouts provide sex education?

Girl Scouts of the USA does not take a position on or develop materials pertaining to sex education. Our role is to equip girls with the self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. GSNEX directs volunteer leaders to get written parental permission for any locally planned program that could be considered sensitive.

Is Girl Scouts a liberal or conservative organization?

Girl Scouts counts as members close to 2.6 million girls and adults who hold many different beliefs and points of view. Our programming and approach—nonpolitical, nonpartisan—is designed to serve all girls. While Girl Scouts has always been a secular organization, we hold true to the values established by our founder, Juliette Gordon Low. Girl Scouts offers a variety of faith-based awards and recognitions for girls from varying religious backgrounds. We attempt to remain neutral in highlighting prominent women leaders of various beliefs, backgrounds, demographics and more to inspire girls to take a stand for the benefit of their communities and the world. These women hold a range of beliefs, and Girl Scouts chooses to emphasize the individuals for the leadership they've shown with regard to important issues that affect girls. We may not agree with all of the opinions of these women, but we feel strongly that standing up and taking the lead as they've done enables girls to create a better world.

Nonpolitical and Nonpartisan

The mission of Girl Scouts of the USA is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. This is not a political mission. Girl Scouts will not tolerate special interest groups linking its name to any political issue in order to advance an agenda, nor will it tolerate individuals and organizations that misuse its name and/or brand.

Girl Scouts is a nonpolitical, nonpartisan organization. We have girls in every zip code representing every political, religious, economic, and ethnic background. We have been able to serve 59 million girls over the past 108 years by staying true to our core beliefs and values and by not taking a stand on political issues. Building girls' leadership skills is a nonpartisan, nonpolitical agenda.

Palm Oil FAQs:

As you may have seen, the Associated Press published a story in December regarding the palm oil industry and included a reference to Girl Scout Cookies. You may remember that years ago, some pretty impressive Girl Scouts helped bring awareness to GSUSA about the impact of palm oil use on our environment, leading GSUSA to become a member of RSPO and to work with others across the world, including our cookie bakery, Little Brownie Bakery, to find more sustainable solutions. Today, another Girl Scout is highlighting additional concerns about the exploitation of child workers in the production of palm oil. Talk about making the world a better place – it is our very own Girl Scouts who are leading the way.

The global palm oil issue is a very complicated one and we continue to encourage and push Little Brownie Bakery, our Girl Scout cookie partner, to be as forward-thinking as possible about sustainable solutions. A link to their commitment to fair labor and sustainable solutions has been provided on our website.

The answers aren't easy. Many American products use palm oil, including shampoos, toothpastes, vitamins, makeup, fuel and foods. This media attention will certainly increase the urgency to develop substitute products and in the meantime, ensure healthy working conditions and a commitment to our environment.

Below are some basic talking points and FAQs surrounding the palm oil issue:

- First and foremost, we want to stress our condemnation of child labor and any exploitation of workers.
- We continue to work closely with RSPO and other organizations to ensure suppliers adhere to our Global Supplier Code of Business Conduct and human rights policies, and we correct or terminate suppliers who do not.
- We recognize that palm oil remains an important topic for us and for our councils, and a complex one for the baked goods industry. As such, we want to affirm with our valued councils our current position on palm oil and where we're headed in the future.
- As a socially responsible company, the goal of Little Brownie Bakers is to secure a 100% deforestation-free and exploitation-free palm oil supply chain, and we are working hard to make the complex shifts necessary to achieve this goal.
- Our future ambition for the Little Brownie Bakers portfolio is to extend our commitment to source only sustainable palm oil that is 100% RSPO Segregated certified to all Girl Scout Cookies that we produce.

Statement from Little Brownie Bakers

"We condemn child labor and any exploitation of workers and take all allegations of abuse seriously. We work closely with our suppliers and partners to ensure that our Global Supplier Code of Business Conduct and human rights policies are followed, and correct or terminate suppliers not in compliance. As a socially responsible company, our goal is to secure a 100% deforestation-free and exploitation-free palm oil supply chain, and we are working hard to make the complex shifts necessary to achieve this goal."

The World Wildlife Federation (WWF) maintains a scorecard of global manufacturers using palm oil: https://palmoilscorecard.panda.org/file/WWF_Palm_Oil_Scorecard_2020.pdf You can see that our parent company and corporate group Ferrero, has the best ranking of ALL global manufacturers in terms of progress made towards this issue, and is specifically called out in the WWF 2020 scorecard report, pages 5 and 31.

At this time, Ferrara has requested evidence of the abuses from the journalists so that we can further conduct our own investigation. As of Monday, January 4 no further information has been provided to us.

Additional Palm Oil FAQs

Q: Why does Girl Scouts use palm oil in their cookies?

Palm oil is an ingredient found in the majority of baked snacks sold in the United States. GSUSA's licensed bakers tell us it continues to be necessary to use palm oil in our cookies to ensure their shelf life, to bring you the highest quality products, and to serve as an alternative to trans fats. While we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time, there are no viable or readily available alternatives on the market.

Q: Why can't you use something different?

The world's food supply is intricately tied to the use of palm oil, so we believe promoting proper manufacturing principles is the most responsible approach to how Girl Scouts and Girl Scout Cookie development is advanced. While we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time, there are no viable or readily available alternatives on the market.

Q: What corrective actions is GSUSA taking to prevent child labor?

To be very clear, child labor has no place in the production of Girl Scout Cookies. If suppliers are not following best practices, our bakers and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), of which GSUSA is an affiliate member, take action quickly to rectify those exceptions.

Q: Does GSUSA belong to the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)?

Yes, GSUSA is an affiliate member of RSPO. Our licensed baker for Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas is Little Brownie Bakers, a division of Ferrero Group, also a member of RSPO.

Q: Does the cocoa used in Girl Scout Cookies come from cacao beans picked by children?

Our licensed bakers continue to work with their primary chocolate suppliers and with the Chocolate Manufacturer's Association (CMA)—which both licensed bakers of Girl Scout Cookies are members of—on issues of slavery and abusive child labor as they relate to the production and purchase of chocolate. The chocolate suppliers and the CMA strongly condemn the use of slavery and abusive labor practices. Their goal is to support the governments and advocacy groups that will make a difference in the lives of the cacao farmers, as well as to give assurances to consumers that the cocoa has been farmed under appropriate working conditions.

Q: Why should I buy Girl Scout Cookies?

When you buy Girl Scout Cookies, you support Girl Scouts and you power amazing experiences and life-changing opportunities for girls year-round—from awesome trips to community projects to outdoor adventures. Through your support, you help Girl Scouts build essential skills as they begin to think like entrepreneurs and learn to take the lead, both now and in the future. Girls gain these skills from working with others, setting goals, and connecting with customers. It's about the experience a girl has running her very own cookie business, gaining five essential skills (goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics) as she learns to think like an entrepreneur. Because proceeds from your purchase stay local, you also help create positive change in your community.

PRODUCT QUESTIONS:

Why are my Caramel DeLites now called Samoas? Why are my Trefoils now called Shortbread?

Each Girl Scout council chooses a licensed baker, either [ABC Bakers](#) or [Little Brownie Bakers](#). Each baker uses different names for some cookies. So a cookie may be called Trefoils® when baked by one baker and Shortbread when baked by the other. The two cookies look and taste similar, but the name of the cookie and the recipe are dependent on the baker. The exceptions are Thin Mints® as well as Girl Scout S'mores™, which are the names used by both bakers.

Is high-fructose corn syrup used in Girl Scout Cookies?

Our licensed vendor, Little Brownie Bakers, does not use high-fructose corn syrup in its cookie manufacturing process.

Why is palm oil in Girl Scout Cookies?

Palm oil is an ingredient found in the majority of baked snacks sold in the United States. GSUSA's licensed bakers tell us it continues to be necessary to use palm oil in our cookies to ensure shelf life, to bring you the highest quality, and to serve as an alternative to trans fats. One of the primary goals of our Girl Scout Cookie bakers is to create the best-tasting cookies possible using the healthiest ingredients available. While we continue to explore other alternatives, at this time, there are no viable or readily available alternatives on the market.

Don't Girl Scout Cookies contribute to childhood obesity?

Girl Scout Cookies are sold for a short time every year, and are considered a sweet treat. As with all treats, they should be enjoyed in moderation. Starting with our youngest members, the Girl Scout organization promotes a healthy lifestyle for girls, which includes a well-balanced diet and plenty of exercise. Our health and fitness programs encourage girls to adopt healthy fitness and eating habits early in life and to continue them into adulthood. Girls are also taught to consider ingredient contribution to their overall diet and portion size when choosing snacks.

Why are the cookies so expensive? I can find a cheaper version at my local supermarket.

We aren't selling a product – the Girl Scout Cookie Program is an entrepreneur leadership development program for girls. Girls learn valuable skills (goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics) as they prepare and participate in the program. The markup on the product goes to support the program as well as the operations of the local Girl Scout council - 100% of the proceeds remaining right here in our community.

General nutrition/certification facts for Little Brownie Bakers:

All our cookies have...
NO High-Fructose Corn Syrup
NO Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHOs)
Zero Grams Trans Fat per Serving
RSPO Certified (Mass Balance) Palm Oil
NEW! Halal Certification

In addition to being Kosher certified, all Girl Scout Cookies® baked by Little Brownie have achieved Halal certification from the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America, demonstrating our commitment to developing cookie products that serve the needs of a wider segment of cookie buyers.

Additional questions about the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Girl Scout Cookies, visit [girlscouts.org/cookies](https://www.girlscouts.org/cookies).