

School Year 2020/2021

Parent Handbook



Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have all had to make adjustments in our lives to remain as vigilant as possible in the potential spread of this virus. Girls Inc. as an organization is no exception to adapting to change in the face of this pandemic. With the direction of the State of CT, and our Local Health Department, Board of Education and Office of Early Childhood we as an organization and employees working with youth on how we can within our control take measures to help mitigate potential COVID-19 Spread through various cleaning practices, social distance practices, and basic hygiene practices. The overall goal is to keep all of the staff and the girls we serve within our power as safe as possible. This handbook will go over strategies implemented by the organization to better serve our Girls Inc. Community. As always please reach out directly to the office with any questions, concerns or just to discuss these procedures.

Building Regulations:

- Currently Girls Inc. is limiting who is in the building both during the day and when programming is taking place. We are encouraging all correspondence for families to happen via phone or email, however if you need/want to speak with a member of the office staff we will more than happy to set up an appointment with you, we can no longer take walk-ins at this point.
- We will not be able to have parents, siblings etc. in the building waiting for their loved one during their program time. This is to really try to mitigate the risk exposure with limiting individuals in and out of the building who are directly being served for programs. (Please note that during times when the weather is nice out, bring a lawn chair and feel free to use any of our empty outdoor space on grassy areas to sit and wait if you would like to remain on site, masks must be worn on site even outdoors).

Masks:

- All program participants will be required to wear masks while they are in the building for their designated programs the entire time they are with us. In our more physical programs mask breaks will be offered all in compliance with health and safety measures to ensure social distancing.
- All staff will be wearing masks the entire time they are in the building. Administrative staff will also be following the same rule except if they are in their private offices and no one else is in the space they may have their masks removed.
- Those dropping off and picking up their loved ones will also be required to wear a mask on our property.
- Any vendors, or individuals coming for an appointment in the building are also required to wear masks when on the premise.

What to Bring to Enrichment Programs:

- Yourself and your mask, we will have everything you will need for your program(s)

Please NO stuffed animals, toys, or other items brought from home. No Cell Phones are needed on premise; the girls are more than welcome to use our phones if they need to connect with a parent and parents can always call the office if you need to connect with your loved one.

What to Bring to Dance Programs:

- A small bag that will have your dance shoes and can hold your street shoes and jacket so we eliminate items being unorganized and intermingling potentially with other members in the same class.
- We ask that all dancers come prepared for class by coming to Girls Inc. already dressed and ready for class.
 - For all Ballet and Tap combo classes, Musical Theatre, and Contemporary we ask all girls to have pink ballet slippers, black tap shoes, and dress is in black or pink Dance/Leo with pink tights, with your hair pulled back and away from your face. Of course they can wear ballet skirts if they wish but it is not required.
 - For Hip Hop Classes we ask all girls have tan or black jazz shoes and wear comfy clothing i.e. leggings with t-shirt never jeans so you can move comfortably in the class and to also have your hair pulled back and away from your face.

What to Bring to Gymnastic Programs:

- A small bag to hold all personal belongings like shoes, socks and jacket so we can eliminate items being unorganized and intermingling potentially with other members in the same class.
- We ask that when possible the best outfit to wear is a leo, athletic shorts can be worn over the leo and possibly leggings when it is colder. Loose clothing should not be worn as it can get caught on equipment and when doing certain skills can expose a child unintentionally with the clothing shifting. No gymnast will be allowed to participate if they have jeans on.

Drop Off:

We will be utilizing our two main doors in the building which are our immediate front door and our back (red) door as points of entry and exiting creating a one-way flow.

- **The front door will be used for drop off only, we ask that a parent or loved one walk them to the front door. We will not allow entry more than 5 minutes prior to the start of class time.** Upon entry staff will be taking your loved one's temperature. If it registers at 100.0 or higher she will not be able to be left for programming that day. She can return with a doctor's note stating she is able to attend again after a minimum of 24 hours being fever free without the use of any medications or fever reducers and no other symptoms of being ill. We will also be asking basic health screening questions to assess risk of feeling ill. A good rule of thumb especially this year is if your loved one or anyone else in your household is not feeling well they should stay home. Remember when we knowingly send our loved ones out when sick we are putting others at risk. Let's all try to do our part and stay home if we are sick. Also if the child or anyone in the household is waiting for results of a COVID test she should not return to class until the results are back and are negative. If your child is placed in quarantine for any reason through school/local health department your child should not return to programs until quarantine is over, even if you have a negative test to show.

(Please Note we reserve the right to have your loved one stay home if we suspect the child may be ill)

Once your loved one has been cleared we will be utilizing our living room for staff to collect their program participants. As you will notice we have staggered our start and end times to minimize clustering of girls at any given time. Please, no dropping off your loved one early to

class and please be on time for pick up so we can ensure our protocols in place will work for your loved ones. See below for pick-up.

Pick-Up:

We will be utilizing our two main doors in the building which are our immediate front door and our back (red) door as points of entry and exiting creating a one-way flow.

- **The back (red) door will be used for pick-up only, we ask that a parent or loved one walk to the back door area.** During the nicer weather you may find that we already have a staff person stationed out back to assist with pick up. Once a class is being dismissed and we know your loved one will be picked up we will escort them outside to the back grassy area for you to get them. We will bring the child back inside to the living room area if the ride is late for pick up. At that point if when you come there is no staff or others waiting for a pick up you can call the office at 203-235-7146 and we will bring her out.

Ratios:

We have determined our ratios to be extra cautious with public recommendations. Most classes will have no more than six participants. Our Gymnastics team will have no more than ten and recreation will be lower. We determined these ratios to provide the safest environment as possible and to limit the number of individuals in the building throughout the week.

Personal Hygiene:

We will be instituting increased measures to promote proper personal hygiene for all members and staff through handwashing and hand sanitation.

- Upon entry into the building the first thing all staff will do is wash their hands with soap and water.
- Staff will have members either wash their hands or sanitize their hands prior to class starting and at the end of class as well.
- Of course handwashing will occur after the use of the restrooms by all staff and members.

Buddy System:

As we do each year we will continue to use the buddy system ensuring that members are not wandering the property and building alone.

- As an added safety measure when able to help ensure proper hygiene and touching of surfaces, staff will accompany children to their destinations to ensure they are washing their hands properly and disinfecting areas that they are touching like the water cooler etc. this will help to minimize cross contamination possibilities.

Social Distancing Practices in Place:

Girls Inc. has worked hard to be thoughtful and practical with our social distancing measures that we are implementing. We ask that you spend time talking to your loved ones about personal space and the need to follow the social distancing measures. Here are some highlights of how we plan to achieve this measure.

- Each program space will be clearly marked on where members can sit so they will maintain the proper distance from others and still have a meaningful program experience.
- We will have proper stickers on the main hall areas to promote social distance when moving about the main building in a socially distanced manner. These marking will also be used in the gym for proper spacing for each group as well in our dance area.
- For our enrichment classes during the early fall we will be taking advantage of holding as many classes weather and daylight permitting outdoors when possible.
- There will be no hugging, hand holding or other close contact activities that cannot be done from a safe distance. Instead we will work on ways to continue to show encouragement and support just in a different manner.

Supply Usage:

To help keep cross contamination and use of shared items to as much of a minimum as possible we have created the following measures:

- Each member (accept for Gymnastics & Dance) will be assigned a supply bin that will have general items like crayons, markers, glue sticks, scissors, paint brushes, pencils and more that will be just for them to use when working on projects. By not sharing each of these common supplies it will save on time and disinfecting between each use. The

boxes will still be disinfected daily and stored at Girls Inc. If they are in multiple classes they will use the same bin whenever they are here for classes.

- Each week depending on program supplies needed they will be provided individually to each member. If any items will be shared staff will disinfect it prior to use between members.

Cleaning:

We have instituted increased cleaning measures daily to do our part to keep the building as sanitized as we can throughout the day.

- Each staff when working will be equipped with a cleaning supply kit that will consist of EPA Approved disinfecting cleaners that are safe for use around others, disinfectant wipes, gloves, hand sanitizers, and paper towels so they will have the ability to clean and wipe down throughout their class time.
- These kits will follow each class wherever they go so that they can wash down surfaces, chairs and high touch surfaces frequently.
- Staff throughout the day, as mentioned above, will disinfect common used items between and after use to keep all products as clean as possible too.
- Staff will also, when escorting members to their destinations, wipe down commonly used areas like sinks, water cooler, soap dispensers, etc.
- At the end of each program we have built in a fifteen-minute window so that all of the surfaces in the program space can be disinfected for use by the next class.
- Daily our cleaning lady will conduct a thorough cleaning after hours utilizing EPA approved disinfectants to clean all high touch points, surfaces, floors, bathrooms and common areas throughout the entire building on a daily basis including the gym and stage. We will be utilizing both a fog/misting and sprayer machines to assist in our daily deep cleaning each evening.
- Office staff will also throughout the day disinfect high touch areas like door knobs and light switches to help keep up with cleaning throughout the day as well.

Sick Room/Nurses Station:

We will have a first aider (our version of a “nurse”) available to meet the needs of members who may get hurt or fall ill during their program time.

- We have designated our dining room area as our official nurse’s station to meet the needs of our members.
- If a member falls ill and presents common covid-19 related symptoms the designated sick area will be closed to any other patients during the time that member is being

screened and helped and proper cleaning of the room will be conducted before being used for other purposes. Depending on the circumstances, that entire room may be shut down for the rest of the day.

- We reserve the right based on symptoms being presented by a member to insist they be picked up if they have fallen ill. Please plan accordingly as it would be expected that if we are sending home a member they would be picked up in a timely manner.
- All minor bumps, scrapes, and bruises will then take place outside the main office area where certified staff will be able to assist with these types of needs.
- If your loved one will need to have medication and/or an epi-pen on site staff will be in touch to make sure you have all the paperwork in hand prior to the start of programs. If we receive incomplete medical forms your loved one cannot start until we have all the proper documentation in hand.
- As with all our cleaning and safety measures in place the room will be disinfected after each patient use, with a deeper cleaning every night.

Potential Covid-19 Positive Case(s)

As we know even with strict precautions like we are instituting at Girls Inc. we still could face the possibility of staff and/or member(s) testing positive for COVID-19. Now more than ever it truly is prudent that if your loved one is not feeling well you keep them home to better assess their needs. The same is true if anyone in your household is not feeling well out of an abundance of caution please think about keeping your loved one home too until you determine the cause of not feeling well.

In the case COVID-19 occurs with any of our staff or members we will follow the directive from our Local Health Department, State of CT and the Office of Early Childhood on how to handle the situation. From conversations I have had with these entities depending on the exposure etc. will determine how they would want us to handle the continuation of programs and will be handled on a case by case basis.

We know this is a very fluid situation and we ask that you understand that we will continue to change, enhance and do what we need to based on every changing situation to what is best for our staff and members. Our number one priority is everyone's health and safety and we will make decisions that have that as our number one priority always.

- If the organization encounters a positive case of COVID-19 that puts anyone in the building at risk, those families will be notified immediately with further instructions per the Health Department or other official entities.

- If we will need to shut down partially or the entire building based on circumstances and directives from the Health Department, State of CT and Office of Early Childhood we will continue to be transparent through our communication with families on how this would work.

Misc.:

- At this time, we are not letting anyone into the building unless they have an appointment. We are trying to accommodate the needs of our families and greater Community utilizing email as often as possible to reduce the amount of individuals in the building.
- The main office is not allowing any members or staff into these spaces. We have rearranged the office to accommodate these needs. Staff mailboxes and time clock are now in the hallway, we will make copies for staff, and attendance sheets will be placed on a desk outside the main office.
- Please note that we will not be issuing refunds or credits on classes if we move to remote programming as we will be able to provide the same level of programming just remotely. Credits will only be applied if we are not able to provide instruction for a specific class on our end. This will be on a case by case basis and will communicate with families directly if this is the case. We are hopeful that this won't be the case but we want to be prepared in case.

We understand as parents you are entrusting your loved ones with us and we are so thankful for each and every one of our families. If you ever have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to reach out to us directly, we are always here for you. Please sign below that you have read and received this parent handbook, as well as the informed consent required by the State of CT. We need these documents prior to your loved one beginning programs for the school year.

I _____ parent to _____,
have received, read and understand the policies and procedures being implemented during the
2020-2021 school year for Girls Incorporated of Meriden through the Parent Handbook.

Also

I hereby attest that I have been informed of the following pertaining to the coronavirus:

- People who are 65 years and older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions or are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to stay at home. A list of medical conditions associated with a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 can be found in [CDC's guidance](#).¹ Individuals and families should consult their healthcare provider to determine whether they have medical conditions that place them at risk.
- Staff and children living in households with individuals who are 65 years and older OR have higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are recommended to stay home.

Signature of Staff or Parent/Guardian

Printed Name

Child's Name (if a parent/guardian)

Date