

GIRLS INCORPORATED® OF OMAHA

MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK



**Inspiring all girls
to be strong,
smart, and boldsm**

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MISSION STATEMENT

Inspiring all girls to be strong, smart, and bold.SM

WELCOME TO GIRLS INC.!

This handbook provides important information to parents/guardians and members. We are excited to have the opportunity to serve you and we look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

The programs and services of Girls Inc. are designed to encourage girls to try new things, build their skills and knowledge, and prepare them for a bright future. At Girls Inc., we believe that growing up is serious business and we grow in a fun atmosphere.

Please read the contents of this handbook carefully. Feel free to consult with the Front Desk or the Center Director if you have any questions.

Girls Inc. is a licensed as a day care by the State of Nebraska. We follow the state's rules and regulations for the safety and wellbeing of all our members.

We are delighted to have you join Girls Incorporated of Omaha!

United Way
of the Midlands



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

EVERY DAY

We provide transportation for girls who attend schools on our van/bus routes. Current van/bus routes will be posted on the Parent Bulletin Board at the Front Desk. We provide dinner during the school year; during the summer we provide breakfast, lunch, and a light snack. We help with homework by providing paper, pencils, dictionaries, computers, encyclopedias, markers, calculators and other tools the girls may need to get their homework done. We also provide staff, volunteers, and paid homework helpers to help with homework. We staff both of our centers with caring, nurturing adults who want the girls to succeed. We provide counseling services for girls who may need help with mental health issues, family problems, social adjustment issues, conflict resolution, etc.

GIRLS INC. PROGRAMMING

During the school year, Girls Inc. offers what we consider our “core programming” between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. each day. This is the “power hour” at Girls Inc. This is the hour that helps make your daughter smarter, safer, healthier, and more confident. It is during this hour that we provide math and science enrichment, reading instruction, dance classes, art classes, pregnancy prevention and lifesaving HIV/STD awareness classes for our teens.

We provide gender-specific programs in the following core areas:

- **Career and Life Planning** - career exploration, economic literacy, mentors, computer training, and exposure to a wide variety of career fields
- **Culture and Heritage** – examination of cultural, ethnic and historic heritage of our families and community through dance, music, theater and art
- **Health and Sexuality** - knowledge and awareness, personal assertiveness, and negotiation skills to educate and combat negative peer pressure

Do you know: The rate of African American teen pregnancies in Douglas County is twice that of Caucasian teens and Latina teen pregnancies are only slightly less than that. One in four teen girls, and one of every two African American teen girls, has a sexually transmitted infection. Therefore, it is important for Girls Inc. to partner with you to keep our girls safe and healthy. Access to reproductive health educational programs and services are available to girls with permission from a parent/guardian. More details on these programs and services are available on the Membership Application form.

- **Leadership and Community Action** – volunteerism, giving back to the community, and the election process
- **Self-Reliance and Life Skills** - science and math, gardening, landscaping, nutrition, conflict resolution, self-defense, sewing, cooking, and industrial arts
- **Sports and Adventure** - being both cooperative and competitive, learning how a healthy lifestyle positively impacts our lives today and in the future

During the school year we do track early pick-up. If your daughter has a doctor appointment or an occasional reason to be picked up earlier than 5:30 p.m., we can be

flexible. Just send us a written note or give us a call in advance. If you must regularly pick your daughter up before 4:30 p.m. on school days, you must speak with the Center Director about the possibility of creating an individual, written and signed plan for your daughter's daily schedule at Girls Inc. If you consistently pick her up early without having made prior arrangements, you will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss your level of commitment to our program.

Some specific programs such as GIRLStart, Operation S.M.A.R.T.®, and other activities with program partners have limited spaces available and attendance requirements. Girls who are signed up for these programs but do not meet the attendance requirements may lose their place in the program and lose the opportunity to join other programs.

MEAL PRIVILEGES

- **Breakfast** – During the summer we serve breakfast from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. If your daughter arrives after 8:30 a.m., please make sure she has had a good breakfast.
- **Lunch** – During the summer we take the girls across the street for lunch at Holy Name at 11:30 a.m. Girls arriving after 11:30 a.m. should make other lunch arrangements.
- **Snack** – During the summer a mid-afternoon snack is provided.
- **Snack-A-Licious** – Snack-a-licious is a kiosk where girls can buy snack items and juice drinks ranging in price from 10¢ to \$1. The kiosk is occasionally open after school during the year and after lunch during the summer - except on Wednesdays. Girls ages 5-8 can turn in Snack-a-licious money to the Front Desk when they arrive. Girls should not share money or snacks.
- **Dinner** - During the school year we serve dinner at 5:30 p.m. Girls who eat dinner will not be paged to the front desk for pick up between 5:30 and 6 p.m.

Girls are not required to eat everything on their tray. They will, however, be encouraged to try a bite of everything and to give new foods a chance. While girls must take a milk at each meal, they are not required to drink it. Meal privileges may be revoked for members who consistently and grossly waste food or exhibit inappropriate cafeteria behavior.

PATHFINDERS MENTORING PROGRAM

In an inequitable society, mentoring has been critical to the success and achievement of many women. Pathfinders is a one-on-one, long-term match program where a mentor will work with a young lady until she is a senior in high school, and in some cases, through college. Girls are accepted into the program between the ages of 10 and 14. At a minimum, our mentors are asked to mentor their girl for three years. Parents interested in enrolling their girl(s) in this program must attend an orientation to receive an application. To learn more about Pathfinders, call Antonia Valentine at 402-457-4676 or email her at avalentine@girlsincomaha.org.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

GIRLS INC. CENTERS

- HOURS OF OPERATION

Summer and school-year program hours vary. All **DON'T MISS** announcements such as program hours, early closings, center closings, or other schedule changes will be posted on the board behind the Front Desk. Please make it a practice to check daily for any announcements.

Summer Session (June – August)	7 a.m. – 6 p.m.
School Year Session (August – May)	2:30 p.m. – 7 p.m. on school days

The Front Desk is generally open at 10 a.m. during the school year and at 7 a.m. during the summer for parent/guardian inquiries and information.

- DROP-OFF & SIGN-IN POLICY

For the girls' safety, daycare licensing requires that the girls ages 5-12 are passed directly from the supervision of one adult to another. Girls ages 5-12, therefore, must be escorted into the building by an adult. There will be a \$10 fee for girls dropped off and not escorted into the building. Once in the building, **all** girls are required to sign-in at the membership computer using a pre-assigned numerical code.

- SIGN-OUT AND PICK-UP POLICY

It is our policy that girls be picked up only by the people indicated on the membership application. At least two (2) adults must be listed on your approved pick-up list. You, or an adult on your pick-up list, must come inside Girls Inc. and sign your child out. At any time, adults picking up girls from our centers may be asked to show photo or agency ID. Girls will not be released to anyone under the age of 18. While we make every reasonable effort to comply with this policy, you should know that at times it is impossible for us to monitor all pick ups. You should also know that girls are not locked in our centers.

If you would like someone that is not on the membership application to pick your child up, YOU must come to the Girls Inc. front desk and add the name of that person. Names will not be added to the pick up list over the telephone nor via fax.

If a girl is not picked up by closing time, we will first call you and then begin calling those on your approved pick up list. If we are unable to reach anyone and/or secure a ride home for the girl, it is our policy to call the police. We do not like to do this as it can obviously be traumatic for the girl. Please make all efforts to pick your daughter up by the scheduled closing time.

For safety reasons we strongly encourage an adult on your list to come and sign your daughter out. If you do choose to give written permission for her to walk home, we will release her from our supervision at 5:30 p.m. We will only release her earlier when we have instructions from you in writing ahead of time.

- PARKING

At the North Omaha Development Center:

The north side of Corby Street is marked by the city with a No Parking sign. Do not stop or park here when picking up your daughter(s). Parking is permitted on the south side of Corby Street and on both sides of 45th Street. You may park in the parking lot if there are parking spaces available. You may parallel park in the lot along the building, but please do not double-park or block other cars. For the safety of the girls, please do not park in the painted cross-walk from the sport field to the center. Do not park in the entrance or exit. The parking lot is one-way: enter from Maple Street and exit to Corby Street.

At the South Omaha Emma Lozier Center:

Parking is permitted in front of the Girls Inc. garage. Street parking is available as posted.

- TRANSPORTATION

For safety reasons, girls are not allowed off transportation before reaching their destination and non-staff/volunteers are not allowed to board transportation. In an emergency situation, de-boarding will be under the instruction of the staff.

Please help us save on our gas budget! If Girls Inc. transportation stops at a designated school and no Girls Inc. members board, staff are instructed to discontinue stopping at that school until further notice. It is a parent or guardian's responsibility to call Girls Inc. if your daughter does not need to be picked up from school.

- TEACHING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Girls Inc. staff deal with minor behavioral issues internally without interrupting the parent at work by calling about every issue that arises. If behavioral issues persist, they will be logged and parents will be contacted.

Girls with behavioral issues will be directed to our Positive Action Center (PAC). Girls who are assigned to PAC have committed an infraction that warrants removal from their classroom. While in PAC, your girl will be able to complete her homework and will participate in programming designed to help improve social skills and manners. In PAC girls learn the benefits of self-control and facing up to personal responsibility.

- PERMISSION SLIP POLICY

Additional parent/guardian permission may be required for participation in special programs, activities, or field trips. Permission slips turned in after their due date will not be accepted.

- PRE-MEMBERSHIP VISITS

Girls may attend one time as a visitor during regular after school programming or regular summer programming. Parents/Guardians of visiting girls must provide, in writing, emergency contact information and pick-up information on the day of her

visit. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit too. Visitors must sign in at the Front Desk. Visitors cannot attend fieldtrips.

EMERGENCIES

- **CLOSINGS**

In cases of extreme weather conditions or other emergencies, Girls Inc. may deem it necessary to close early or not provide transportation to our Centers. Girls Inc. follows the Omaha Public School guidelines for extreme weather; if OPS is closed, Girls Inc. will be closed. If Girls Inc. deems it necessary to close after the school day has begun, Girls Inc. will call the schools and inform them to follow the parent/guardian's weather/emergency cancellation procedure.

Parents/Guardians must complete a weather/emergency cancellation procedure form which lists instructions for your girl in the event Girls Inc. is closed due to weather or other emergencies. Be sure your girl(s) know what to do in this situation. Girls Inc. will share the completed form with your girl's school.

If bad weather occurs during programming hours, emergency procedures will be followed based on the weather condition. During a Tornado Warning, girls will remain in designated areas of the building. We will not release girls during a Tornado Warning. Parents are welcome to take shelter in the building during storm warnings.

- **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Parents/Guardians must keep address, phone, and other contact information updated at all times. A new membership application must be filled out annually. It is the parent/ guardian's responsibility to provide Girls Inc. with at least one reliable person to contact in case of emergency. More than one person may be listed. You will need to come to the Front Desk in person to update this information or make any additions or changes.

- **FIRE & TORNADO DRILLS**

Each Center will have periodic drills so everyone is prepared for emergency situations.

FEES

- **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Girls ages 5-18 are eligible to join Girls Inc. Membership fees are not refundable. Fees are \$100 for summer and summer-registered members can attend through the school year for free. \$100 covers the approximate costs for the first week your daughter participates in Girls Inc. programming, transportation, and meals. Registration for the school year only is \$50. The remaining days of the year are paid for through the generosity of community donors, corporations, and foundations.

- **LATE FEES**

Girls must be picked up by scheduled closing times. Parents/Guardians picking up a

girl after closing will be assessed a fee. The rate is \$10 for the first 1-10 minutes late and \$10 for every portion of 10 minutes there after. If late fees are not paid within two weeks, we will no longer provide transportation to our Center. At that point, a meeting between parent/guardian and the Center Director is required to reinstate transportation privileges.

- FIELD TRIP FEES

Many field trips are provided at no charge to the girls, while others require a paid fee for admission. If a girl is denied access to a paid field trip due to behavioral issues, no refunds are issued. If the field trip is cancelled, fees will be refunded. Fees may also be charged for girls who have signed up for a field trip, or an educational camp, and do not show up.

MEMBERSHIP POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- CLOTHING & PERSONAL PROPERTY

For both safety and programming reasons, girls must wear tennis shoes to Girls Inc. Flip flops and Heelys are not allowed. Some of our activities, such as art classes, gardening, and cooking classes, are messy. Clothes should be comfortable and allow for physical movement.

Girls **must** leave valuables (including but not limited to: iPods, mp3 players, electronic games, etc.) at home. Because many of the girls have identical coats, jackets, backpacks, etc... it is important that personal items are clearly marked. Girls Inc. is not responsible for lost or missing items. Girls under 13 are not allowed to bring purses. Tampons and sanitary napkins are available from the Front Desk.

- HEALTH & MEDICATION

Girls with a significant temperature, open sores, ringworm, impetigo, or any other contagious disease will be sent home. Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately. A doctor's note will be required for a member to return to Girls Inc. Keep girls at home when they are ill.

Girls Inc. will not dispense any medication. Any member requiring medication must check it in at the Front Desk. All medications must be sealed in a ziplocked baggie clearly marked with the girl's name and include:

- The medication in its original container
- Any additional item necessary to administer the medication (i.e. teaspoon, etc.)
- Written instructions for use signed by a parent/guardian including date(s) and time(s) for the girl to self-administer the medication
- Written permission from the prescribing doctor must accompany the medication. An *Asthma Action Plan* is required for girls who have asthma.

In order to keep the Centers cleared of lice, from time to time, Girls Inc. staff may do head checks. Girls with lice will be sent home for treatment.

- RESTROOM BREAKS
Our daycare license does not allow for girls ages 5-12 to go to the restroom unescorted. As we do not have staff to accommodate individual trips to the restroom, we take group restroom breaks every hour to hour-and-a-half. While we will attempt to accommodate individual emergency situations, for enrollment purposes, we accept girls for whom our restroom break schedule is not a hardship.
- TELEPHONE
The telephone is for emergency use only. In case of emergency, girls should inform a staff person. Girls are not allowed to use cell phones.
- INSURANCE
All girls have Secondary Accident Insurance while participating in Girls Inc. activities. The cost for this is included in the membership fee.

PARENT/GUARDIAN POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Girls Inc. staff is very open to hearing any of your concerns and is here to answer any questions you may have about Girls Inc.'s policies and procedures. Our staff will be professional and respectful when addressing your concerns and we ask parents and guardians to respect staff in return.

- NOTICES, ANNOUNCEMENTS & INFORMATION
At the North Omaha Development Center:
Important announcements such as closings, payment reminders, etc. are posted behind the Front Desk. Be sure to check these postings daily for information you need to know about Girls Inc.'s policies and practices.

Permission slips and opportunities to sign your girl(s) up for special activities are located in the kiosk located by the entrance or by the sign out sheets.

At the South Omaha Emma Lozier Center:
All information, announcements, and permission slips are posted on the bulletin board behind the Front Desk.
- ORIENTATION
In order to become a member of Girls Inc. a parents/guardian must attend a yearly orientation session. Enrollment applications of 5 year olds must be accompanied by a birth certificate. Girls Inc. will make a copy of the birth certificate for our records.
- STAFF MEMBER CONCERNS
If you have a concern about one of our staff members, ask to speak with the Center Director, Director of Operations or Executive Director.

VOLUNTEERS

Parents/Guardians, grandparents, and other interested adults are encouraged to get involved in Girls Inc. programs. Volunteers are needed to assist with homework activities, serving meals, field trips, job shadowing, programming, and more. We also need adult women to volunteer as mentors for girls. For more information, contact the Front Desk or the Director of Operations.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT & AGREEMENT

Parents/Guardians are required to fully complete the PARENT / GUARDIAN CONSENT & AGREEMENT section of the Membership Application Form. Consent items include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Consent to access your child's school records
- ◆ Consent to obtain your child's Immunization Records
- ◆ Consent for emergency medical treatment
- ◆ Release of Girls Inc. from any and all claims or causes of action
- ◆ Consent for your child to ride on Girls Inc. busses or vans
- ◆ Consent for your child to participate in a savings account
- ◆ Consent to use your child's name, photograph or video/film image
- ◆ Consent for your child to participate in age appropriate classes and workshops
- ◆ Consent for your child to participate in field trips
- ◆ Agreement to review member rules with your child
- ◆ Consent for your child to have access to reproductive health educational programs and access to reproductive health services

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Please read this section with your daughter. Girls Inc. strives to offer a safe and positive environment. It is essential that members follow the Girls Inc. rules and the direction of staff at all times. Disciplinary action, up to and including cancellation of membership, will be taken for inappropriate behavior.

CENTER RULES

- Be respectful of yourself, other girls, staff, and visitors.
- Be respectful of the Girls Inc. property and building. (Girls and/or parents/guardians will be required to pay for willful damage to any Girls Inc. property.)
- Be safe and let staff know of any unsafe activities.
- Run only as part of programs or outside.
- No outside foods or drinks may be brought in (this includes gum).
- Ask for staff permission before sharing items or taking items that do not belong to you, such as: food, money, etc.
- No cell phones.
- If you have an issue with another member, tell a staff person.

COMPUTER LABS

- No food or drink in the labs.
- Be considerate of the other person when sharing a computer.
- Get staff immediately if something inappropriate comes on the screen.
- Ask for staff help if you have problems with the computer or printing.
- Use only flash drives given to you by staff (not flash drives from home or school).
- Only access web sites authorized by Girls Inc. When in doubt, ASK!

SAFETY RULES FOR THE FITNESS CENTER

- No food or drink – other than water – allowed in the fitness center.
- Treadmills should not be set for higher than 3.5 miles per hour without staff permission.
- No disrupting or interfering with the workout of another member.
- Do not touch exercise equipment while it is being used by another member.
- Focus on your workout while in the fitness center.
- Proper workout attire is required to use the Fitness Center (shorts, sweatpants, t-shirts, and supportive athletic shoes with socks). Non-athletic shoes are not allowed. No proper clothing – no workout.
- Do not jerk, bounce, slam, or drop weights. If you do not know the appropriate amount of weight to use, ask the supervising staff member.

TRANSPORTATION

Girls Inc. transportation is a privilege. Girls that do not follow bus and van guidelines may lose transportation privileges.

- Use a soft voice in the bus or van. Loud voices distract the driver.
- Sit in your seat with your arms down so the driver can see out the windows.
- Follow directions.
- Be respectful of yourself, other girls, transportation staff, and the driver.
- Wear a seatbelt in the van and remain seated and belted-in until the van comes to a complete stop.
- Only get off transportation at your designated stop or when told by staff.

SCIENCE LAB & INDUSTRIAL ARTS ROOM

- Follow instructions carefully. If you do not understand a direction or part of a procedure, ASK YOUR GIRLS INC. STAFF BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH THE ACTIVITY.
- Do not touch any equipment, chemicals, or other materials in the laboratory area until you are instructed to do so.
- The laboratory contains animals including but not limited to: fish, turtles, snakes, spiders, geckos, and rats. Do not stick your fingers into the cages. The animals should only be held with permission from Girls Inc. staff.
- Perform only those experiments and work with only those tools authorized by your Girls Inc. staff.
- Do not eat or drink in the laboratory. Do not use laboratory glassware as containers for food or beverages.
- Notify Girls Inc. staff immediately of any unsafe conditions you observe.
- Sinks are to be used only for water. Check with Girls Inc. staff for disposal of chemicals and solutions.
- Keep hands away from face, eyes, mouth, and body while using chemicals or lab equipment. Wash your hands with soap and water after performing all experiments.
- Experiments must be personally monitored at all times. Do not wander around the room, distract other students or interfere with the laboratory experiments of others.

Clothing

- Any time chemicals, heat, glassware or power tools are used, girls will wear safety goggles. NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE! This includes girls with prescription eyeglasses.

- Dress properly during a laboratory activity. Long hair must be tied back and dangling jewelry and baggy clothing must be secured. Shoes must completely cover the foot. A lab coat should be worn during laboratory experiments.

Accidents and Injuries

- Report any accident (spill, breakage, etc.) or injury (cut, burn, etc.) to Girls Inc. staff immediately, no matter how trivial it seems.
- If you or your lab partner is hurt, immediately yell out to get Girls Inc. staff's attention.
- If a chemical should splash in your eye(s) or on your skin, immediately flush with running water at the Eye Wash Station for at least 20 minutes. Immediately yell out to get Girls Inc. staff's attention.

Handling Chemicals (Mostly for chemistry students)

- All chemicals in the laboratory are to be considered dangerous. Avoid handling chemicals with fingers. Always use a tweezers. When making an observation, keep at least 1 foot away from the specimen. Do not taste or smell any chemicals.
- Check the label on all chemical bottles twice before removing any of the contents. Take only as much chemical as you need.
- Never return unused chemicals to their original container.
- Never remove chemicals or other materials from the laboratory area.

Handling Glassware and Equipment

- Never handle broken glass with your bare hands. Use a brush and dustpan to clean up broken glass.
- Examine glassware before each use. Never use chipped, cracked or dirty glassware.
- Do not immerse hot glassware in cold water. The glassware may shatter.

Heating Substances

- Use of a hot plate is only allowed in the presence of Girls Inc. staff. Take care that hair, clothing, and hands are a safe distance from the hot plate at all times.
- Heated glassware remains very hot for a long time. They should be set aside in a designated place to cool and picked up with caution. Use tongs or heat protective gloves if necessary.
- Never look into a container that is being heated.
- Do not place hot apparatus directly on the laboratory desk. Always use an insulated pad.

GIRLS INC. IN CYBERSPACE



Visit our website (www.girlsincomaha.org) to read our current Wish List, learn about our events, read our most recent news releases, or download documents such as the Girls Inc. membership application or a copy of this Membership Handbook.

The Girls Inc. Gossip Blog features photos, quotes, and video clips from girls, staff, program partners, and volunteers. The girls like to visit the blog and comment on programs and their own friends' activities. We have taken parent suggestions for blog content as well – featuring a special award or honor for individual girls.



Become a fan of Girls Inc. of Omaha on Facebook. Facebook provides an opportunity for our fans to participate in a virtual community of support for Girls Inc. Learn more about day-to-day programs, see pictures of the girls, leave comments, and hit the “Like” button if you like what you see.



Follow Girls Inc. of Omaha on Twitter (@GirlsIncOmaha). Twitter offers on-the-spot information about daily programs such as basketball game scores or party events. It also provides links to articles and information about girls, gender equity, political advocacy, and more.

If you don't have a computer or Internet access at home, ask the Girls Inc. staff for help accessing one of our computers to catch up with Girls Inc. news.

GIRLS INCORPORATED OF OMAHA

LOCATIONS:

DEVELOPMENT CENTER

2811 NORTH 45TH STREET
OMAHA, NE 68104
(402) 457-4676

EMMA LOZIER CENTER

5407 SOUTH 30TH STREET
OMAHA, NE 68107
(402) 731-2108

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Roberta Wilhelm
Executive Director
rwilhelm@girlsincomaha.org
402-457-4676

Monica Miller
Development Center Director
mmiller@girlsincomaha.org
402-457-4676

Nancy Ibarra
Emma Lozier Center Director
nibarra@girlsincomaha.org
402-731-2108

Fatema Graves
Director of Operations
fgraves@girlsincomaha.org
402-457-4676

Emily Mwaja
Director of Programs
emwaja@girlsincomaha.org
402-457-4676

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