

General Information 2024

We are USA Girls Scouts Overseas (USAGSO) based in Nagoya, Japan.

Our Girl Scout Members

The Girl Scout year runs 1st October to 31st September. Girls join troops according to their age on the 1st September before the Girl Scout year starts:

- 5 & 6 year olds are **Daisies** (Troop 20301). Daisies can join as soon as they turn 5 years old.
- 7 & 8 year olds are **Brownies** (Troop 20302)
- 9 & 10 year olds are **Juniors** (Troop 20303)
- 11, 12 & 13 year olds are **Cadettes** (Troop 20304)
- 14 & 15 year olds are **Seniors** Troop (20305)
- **Ambassadors** are also welcome to join although we don't have a troop at this time.
- All nationalities are welcome. Girls **must have good English ability** to participate in the program and for safety reasons. All meetings & parent communication are in English. For Japanese Scouting please see www.gs-aichi.jp.
- Membership is limited to girls. For information on Boy Scouts of America in Nagoya visit bsa758-nagoya.weebly.com or contact bsa.758nagoya@gmail.com.
- Girls do not have to participate in every troop meeting to be a member.

Meetings

- Most troops meet on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month, in the afternoon. Some events are on different days so please keep an eye on the schedule. During July & August we run informal meetings only.
- The first meet in the month is usually indoors at various locations around Nagoya. The second meet is often an outdoor event/visit/activity.
- Most activities are based around the USA Girl Scouts program, learning skills like First Aid, doing craft like pottery, outdoor adventures like camping, hiking and fossil hunting and visits to fire stations, museums etc.

Membership

- Membership costs US\$45 per girl and \$25 per adult payable directly to USAGO. This goes towards program planning, legal, insurance and admin costs.
- Girls are welcome to join any time of year, however fees are not discounted for part-year membership.
- We ask that at least one parent from each family register as an adult member, to be insured when joining us on meets. See below for how to sign up.
- We believe Girl Scouting should be accessible to all girls. Financial assistance is available to qualifying families who find it hard to pay for membership fees. If you face a financial hardship, please contact USAGSO directly.

Other Costs

- Local fees are JPY5000 per Girl Scout every year to pay for venue, badges, materials and other small expenses, regardless of attendance. This pro-rated to JPY500/month for those who join mid-year. We don't include July & August in our normal program. These fees may be revised to cope with rising costs so on joining you may be told a different rate.
- Our leaders try hard to keep activity costs to a minimum but sometimes may ask for a small extra to cover specific materials.
- The minimum required uniform costs around US\$40-60 (JPY6000-8000) and can be ordered from the USAGSO on-line shop (girlscoutoverseasshop.com). More details available before joining.

Parental Involvement

- Our troops are run by parents and we strongly encourage parents to volunteer as leaders, assistants or helpers. Many parents help by organising one-off activities based on their speciality or hobby. We need help at many events in the year - please be pro-active about volunteering.
- All parents are asked to complete a couple of short on-line training videos (see below) and attend training courses that are made available by USAGSO.

Application Procedure

- Girl Scouting is a girl-led experience. Chat to your daughter about whether Girl Scouts might be for her and check out the links below for more information.
- Read through our **Language Policy** at the end of this document and consider any language issues.
- Contact the Registrar (nagoyaregistrar@usagso.org) with name/date-of-birth and any other info.
- We will let you know the time/place of up-coming indoor events when you can meet the leaders, ask questions and try it out. (Please don't take photos of the Girl Scouts during these meetings). Our outdoor activities are limited to signed-up members only, but you can meet us at any public events.
- After the trial meeting if your daughter is happy to join and the leaders confirm there are no language issues we will send you details about how to sign up on-line. Please do not sign up before receiving our confirmation.

After Registration

- Once you become a registered member we'll add you to our private Facebook group. Most leaders create a Facebook event for each meeting. You will need a Facebook account to receive this information.
- We ask that you check Facebook regularly and indicate GOING/MAYBE/CAN'T GO for events as soon as possible to let leaders know.
- We ask that all parents watch the introductory video "USAGSO 101" and other videos hosted on-line.
- For each girl we will ask for a completed Health and Emergency Contact Details form, as well as copies of their health insurance cards for medical treatment if the parents are not present.
- More details of these will be available after joining.

Policy for Meetings

Safety of our Girl Scouts is everyone's No.1 priority. This note clarifies what is expected of parents at the start and end of our meetings.

- Most *outdoor* meetings/events are family oriented and parents/siblings are expected to accompany their girls and join in with activities. Unless specifically notified, please do **not** expect to just drop off and pick your scout for outdoor events.
- For *indoor* meetings, parents are asked to stay out of the room once their daughter has settled in. Parents can drop off their scout, or wait nearby (there is usually a place not far.) Brothers and sisters who are not members please wait with parents during this time.
- At the beginning and end of indoor meetings parents must come into the room and meet the leaders in person. Parents can arrange for another adult to pick up their girl but must tell the leaders before the meeting.
- If girls will be leaving early, parents must inform leaders in person when they drop them off and pick them up.
- Parents of girls who are very shy or not confident in their English language abilities may be asked by the leaders to stay in the meeting and help them until they feel comfortable enough. Please understand our goal of fostering a safe, girl-led environment.
- To encourage independence in our girl scouts, in principle we ask that siblings do not join in meetings. The whole family is welcome on many outdoor activities, but these will be specified by the Leader rather than the rule. Adult volunteers nursing infants and other exceptions are decided by the leader of each troop.
- Some girls may go to a local park afterwards. Parents are responsible for girls from the moment the Friendship Circle is finished. Leaders are not responsible for the girls in the park or on the way to the park.
- Our leaders welcome comments, ideas and constructive feedback from parents/guardians, but any complaints or negative comments should be directed to the Overseas Committee at nagoyagirlscouts@usagso.org. Should any negative or unconstructive feedback be sent to a leader or committee member through any method (including Facebook messenger) then that message will be forwarded directly to the secretary then deleted.

Policy regarding Alcohol

USA Girl Scout policy is for no alcohol at official Girl Scout events. Outside official event times we are all still ambassadors for Scouting so please use careful discretion.

Any questions please contact the Secretary nagoyasecretary@usagso.org

Useful Links

Our website: <http://girlscouts-nagoya.org> USA Girl Scouts Overseas <https://www.usagso.org>
USA Girl Scouts: <https://www.girlscouts.org> USAGSO on-line Shop <https://girlscoutoverseasshop.com>
Especially for girls: <http://forgirls.girlscouts.org> USAGSO 101 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3Yn8ansm8g>
Nagoya Boy Scouts: <https://bsa758-nagoya.weebly.com>

Language Policy

We thank you for your interest in Girl Scouts and our overseas troop here in Nagoya. At this time we would like to talk about English and communication in our troops.

English is the common language used in all of our troops. We conduct all meetings in English which includes troop business, songs, activities, presentations and ceremonies. In order to get the most out of our program, and even more importantly, in order to ensure safety in our meetings whether indoors or outdoors such as camping, hiking, and other special outings, we expect all members to have at least enough English ability to fully and safely participate in our troops.

It is important that every Girl Scout can manage in English well enough to meet these three points:

1. Understand what the leaders say.
2. Express herself in English.
3. Be able to speak up and participate in team-based activities.

Being able to meet these three points will help ensure a fun, positive, life-building experience.

The goal of our program is to have fun together, and in the process build confidence, gain knowledge, and apply that towards "making the world a better place," one of the Girl Scout laws.

Another goal of our program is to empower Girl Scouts and build them into Girl Leaders so our program can be girl-led. All of this depends on a common language that is inclusive for all kids irrespective of any other language they happen to know. Our Girl Scouts come from all over the world, so we wish to foster a cultural and linguistic space where they can all flourish.

We are naturally happy to have you and your daughter visit our meetings, participate, and make new friends. It's a great chance for her to see what we're about, and for us to see what she's about. We encourage a trial period so we can all see how it goes for her and your family. After a trial period we will have an informal meeting to discuss any questions you have before joining.

We do ask for your understanding in case we feel your child is not able to meet the three points above. There are Japanese Girl Scout units in the area that could be a better fit for your daughter, and in the end finding the best place for her to learn and grow is most important.

Most of our adult leaders and volunteers are current or former education professionals who are passionate about giving our Girl Scouts the very best environment to have fun and grow. We sincerely believe in partnering with parents in the process, and always look forward to the unique and special contributions each Girl Scout and parent can bring to the troop.

Thank you for reading and understanding our language policy. We look forward to meeting and talking to you and your daughter soon!