



# GIRLS ON THE RUN OF GREATER KALAMAZOO PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Before registering a girl for Girls on the Run (GOTR), please review these policies in full. Our policies are in place to protect the health and safety of all participants while in the care of Girls on the Run.

## Program Season Preparation Policies

### **PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

Girls on the Run participants must be current 3rd, 4th, or 5th graders. Participants who attend the host school are given first priority for placement on a school's GOTR team. If your child does not attend a GOTR host school, please get in touch with the school Site Liaison and/or the GOTR staff to determine eligibility to participate (as the host school requires approval).

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Regular and total attendance is vital to establishing group dynamics and the experiential learning process of the Girls on the Run curriculum. **It is critically essential that girls participate in BOTH sessions each week for the full 90 minutes.** Participants are not allowed to attend only one session per week or start practice late/leave practice early. Absences due to illness and other unavoidable circumstances will be excused; absences due to a scheduling conflict with another activity are not considered excused. Please consider any scheduling conflicts your child may have in the spring, e.g., a spring sport, music lessons, etc., before registering for Girls on the Run.

More than four (4) unexcused absences may result in a participant being asked to leave the program. The GOTR staff, in communication with the coaching team and family, will make any final decisions regarding a participant's exit from the program, as these decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Parent/guardian concerns regarding the attendance policy should be addressed with the Girls on the Run staff before the season starts. During the program season parent(s)/guardian(s) are asked to notify their child's coach directly if they know that she will not be attending practice on a given day.

### **REFUND POLICY**

Parents/guardians are responsible for contacting Girls on the Run if their child is dropping out of the program. The Girls on the Run office must receive a written request for a refund **at least two weeks before the program start date.** After this time, program fees are non-refundable. All refunds are subject to a \$10 administrative fee.

### **TEAMMATE REQUEST POLICY**

Due to the high number of participants and teams we serve each year, GOTR GK is not able to accommodate teammate and/or coach requests, with the exception of a participant and a family

*Updated August 2025*

member coach. Rest assured, our volunteer coaches are trained to help all team members feel included, and the GOTR curriculum is designed to help foster new friendships among teammates.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS**

Girls on the Run makes every effort to communicate effectively with families before, during, and after the program season to ensure the best experience for both our participants and our families. Girls on the Run provides important program information via GOTR Family Gazette emails, text messages, and printed communications sent home with participants. Families without access to email should look specifically for hard copy GOTR Welcome Letters and a 5K Family Newsletter. Each parent/guardian is responsible for reviewing GOTR communications to stay informed and to contact the GOTR office with any questions or concerns at 269-532-1220 or [program@girlsontherunkazoo.org](mailto:program@girlsontherunkazoo.org).

### **Program Season Expectations**

#### **POSITIVE PARTICIPATION POLICY**

We expect every participant to bring a positive attitude to the program, be willing to participate in the group activities, and put forth their best effort at each practice. Girls are expected to be respectful to their coaches and teammates. **Ongoing negativity and disruptive behavior that significantly compromises the productiveness of the group will not be tolerated.** Girls on the Run of Greater Kalamazoo reserves the right to remove a participant from the program if we are unable to resolve the issue. On the same note, parent(s)/guardian(s) also agree to respect the coaches and girls; any behavior to the contrary may result in the removal of their child from the program.

#### **BEHAVIOR POLICY**

Any participant engaged in behavior threatening the health or welfare of teammates, coaches, or other Girls on the Run volunteers will be released from participating in the program. Threatening behavior may include but is not limited to physical injury, emotional maltreatment, abuse of prescription or illegal drugs, use of alcohol, carrying firearms or other dangerous items, using any item in a harmful way, or any other activity determined by a coach or administrator to be threatening to another's health or well-being. Additionally, Girls on the Run Staff and volunteers reserve the right to remove any child from participation for any reason that does not fit the mission and goals of the organization.

#### **DRESS CODE & FOOTWEAR EXPECTATIONS**

Non-restrictive or athletic clothing should be worn for ease of movement. Weather-appropriate clothing for outdoor practices should be worn on GOTR days. Clothing that advertises alcohol or cigarettes is not permitted.

Appropriate athletic shoes should be worn for every Girls on the Run practice and the 5K event; shoes such as boots, sandals, or clogs are not allowed. Please send your participant to GOTR with appropriate athletic shoes, if possible. If your family is unable to provide athletic shoes for your child, you will be given the opportunity to request program shoes through GOTR's partnerships with First Day Shoe Fund and Adidas

## **NON-REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS POLICY**

Girls on the Run of Greater Kalamazoo takes the safety of all participants seriously. Any adult with direct contact with participants must undergo our volunteer procedures, including background screening and training. This is to protect the efficacy of our program and to ensure that each participant has a meaningful experience with the program.

We know that Girls on the Run is so much fun, but we ask that only GOTR-approved volunteers and registered girls attend and participate in practices. Parents/guardians, siblings, authorized pick-up individuals, etc., should wait outside the practice space for the release of their participants.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

Girls on the Run of Greater Kalamazoo does not allow the use of any electronic devices for texting, music, social media, or calls during practice. Participants should keep all electronic devices put away at all times. Girls on the Run of Greater Kalamazoo, their staff, and volunteers are not responsible for any loss or damage to any electronic device during practices. In case of emergency during a practice, please contact one of your child's coaches using the numbers provided at the beginning of the season and/or the main number at your child's practice site.

## **PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS**

While we hope every team can participate in all practices, all GOTR coaches are volunteers, and sometimes things happen. If a practice needs to be cancelled due to coach's absence, inclement weather, or other unavoidable circumstance, you will be notified with as much notice as possible. *Please note that prorated refunds will not be issued as a result of a cancelled practice.*

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN**

Girls on the Run will be held outside whenever possible. In the event of inclement weather, teams will proceed in one of two ways: utilize approved indoor space on-site or cancel the day's practice. Site Liaisons and Coaches will communicate with families if/when inclement weather results in the need for a cancelled practice (e.g., a power outage or dangerous road conditions).

## **Transportation and Program Dismissal Policies**

### **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

Girls on the Run does not provide transportation to or from practices. Program Volunteers are not allowed to transport any child outside of their immediate family when acting as volunteers for Girls on the Run unless the Program Volunteer is listed as an Authorized Individual for that child.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for arranging/providing transportation for their child(ren) to and from sessions.

- After-school programs: If a child participates in an after-school program in addition to Girls on the Run, the participant will be released to whatever activity is designated on the participant's program registration. Girls on the Run Staff and coaches must be aware of this before the season starts.
- Walkers: A program participant is considered a "walker" if the child is identified as such in her registration form and the walking distance is 1.5 miles or less. If a child is not designated as a "walker" and the parent/guardian did not provide a handwritten note or email to confirm this change at least 24 hours in advance, the participant cannot walk home. "Walker" status only

applies to weekly lessons; all participants must be picked up from the 5K event by an authorized individual.

- Coaches CANNOT release a child to private companies (e.g., Uber, Lyft, taxi cabs, etc.) unless the driver's name is listed as an Authorized Individual for that child.

### **PROGRAM RELEASE PROCEDURE**

Program participants may only be released to Parents/guardians, Emergency Contacts, and Authorized Individuals listed on the participant's registration form who are age 16+. If Authorized Individuals drive a child, parents/guardians must ensure the individual meets all legal driving requirements. For your child's safety, a picture ID must be shown at the start of every program season when picking up the child until these individuals are known to your child's coach. Please make everyone on your approved pick-up list aware of this policy so that they have an ID available. Photo ID can be a driver's license, state ID, passport, school/work ID, military ID, Green Card, visitor's visa, etc.

- If you or the person picking up your child does not have a photo ID, your child is still welcome to participate in Girls on the Run; in these cases, contact Girls on the Run for other methods of verifying identification.
- Unauthorized Individual: If someone who is not listed as an Authorized Individual attempts to pick up a child, the child may not be released. In this case, coaches will contact the child's parent/guardian to arrange for pick-up.

*If your site has an existing Program Release Policy, Girls on the Run must follow the procedures set by the site/school and those set forth here. Your coach will notify you if there are site-specific procedures to follow.*

### **ADDING AN AUTHORIZED PICK-UP INDIVIDUAL**

You may add or delete a person to the Authorized Individual list by sending a handwritten note or electronic message (email or text) to the coach or Girls on the Run staff 24 hours in advance of the time of pick-up. Make sure that recently added Authorized Individuals know to present their ID. Only listed Parents/Guardians can make changes to the Authorized Individuals list, except in the case of an emergency and when the Parent/Guardian cannot be reached. Emergency Contacts will be asked to make decisions about your child's safety in these cases..

### **LATE PICK UP POLICY**

Parents/Guardians and Authorized Individuals are expected to pick up their child from Girls on the Run lessons promptly at the end of each practice. Ongoing tardiness (10 or more minutes) will not be tolerated. Coaches cannot leave participants at the school unattended, even if school personnel/security are present. If a parent/guardian is tardy in picking up their child, the parent/guardian will be verbally reminded of the policy. If a parent/guardian is tardy for a second time, the coach will make a verbal reminder and written acknowledgment of the policy. Upon the third instance, Girls on the Run staff will be notified, and dismissal from the program is possible.

- **Extenuating Circumstances:** Extenuating circumstances, as determined by the Girls on the Run Staff, include family emergencies, weather, or public transportation issues. Repeated extenuating circumstances may require a phone call from the Girls on the Run Staff to the parent/guardian.

- **No Show:** If at least 10 minutes have passed after the lesson ends and no one arrives to pick up a participant, the Coach will first call the parent/guardian, then the child's emergency contact, and any other Authorized Individuals whose phone numbers are provided, until someone confirms they will pick up. Emergency Contacts may be asked to make decisions in cases where Parents/Guardians cannot be reached. If the coach is unable to confirm a plan for pick-up, GOTR staff and/or school staff will be contacted. Local authorities will be called to assist as a last resort.