

# Policy on Custody of and Access to Girls



<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Since parents and caregivers trust their daughters' welfare to our temporary custody, we must take responsibility for the girl's personal safety while she is in our care. We must comply with caregiver's wishes to the best of our ability.</p> <p>Leaders should be aware of, and sensitive to the fact, that girls may be living in the care of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• both or either parent</li><li>• a shared parenting arrangement</li><li>• other caregivers such as relatives, or temporary or foster homes and that arrangements may change without leaders being informed. Non-custodial parents (ie parents who do not have day to day care of the girl), or other significant adults, may still have access to a girl, for example at weekends.</li></ul>
<b>Purposes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To protect the rights of the young person and her parents/caregivers.</li><li>• To give advice to leaders on suitable procedures.</li><li>• To give protection to GirlGuiding New Zealand and its leaders.</li></ul>
<b>Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A leader should know the girl's method of returning home and who is permitted to collect her.</li><li>• If a parent/caregiver wants to stop access to a girl, the leader should ask the parent/caregiver for a written statement.</li><li>• If a parent/caregiver confides that there is a court order re access to a girl, the leader should request a lawyer's letter to that effect.</li><li>• Every attempt should be made to comply with the parent/caregiver's requests re access to the girl.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a non-custodial adult wants to speak with or remove a girl, contrary to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the custodial parent/caregiver's express request or written statement, or</li> <li>• a lawyer's letter or other similar evidence, such as a copy of a court order,</li> </ul> access should be refused without a letter or phone call giving consent from the custodial parent/caregiver. </li> <li>• If you need help with an insistent adult, call the parent/caregiver or as a last resort, if confrontation is unavoidable or violence is experienced, call the police. If telephone contact is impossible, it may be possible for a leader to drive the girl home.</li> <li>• Leaders should not allow girls to be transported home by other adults without the knowledge and consent of the girls' parent/caregivers.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	As leaders of young people, it is our responsibility to act in a reasonable way and to the best of our ability, to protect their rights and safety.
<b>Date of policy</b>	1998
<b>Last reviewed</b>	February 2011