

## Policy on Custody of and Access to Girls

### Rationale:

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of girls in our care.

- Volunteers and staff should be aware of the flexible living arrangements for many participants, including any Court Orders in place under the Care of Children Act 2004 or the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989. All care arrangements are referred to as 'custody and access'.

Girls may be living in the custody of:

- Both or either parent.
- A shared parenting arrangement.
- Other caregivers such as relatives, or temporary care facilities.
- Non-custodial parents or other significant adults, who do not have the day-to-day care, may still have access to a girl.

### Purpose:

- To protect the rights of girls and their parents/caregivers.

To ensure members of GirlGuiding NZ understand the requirements to comply with Custody and Access arrangements and any Court Orders in force.

### Requirements:

- A Volunteer should know each girl's method of returning home and who is permitted to collect them.
- The Transport Policy section of Safety Requirements for Programme Activities also includes specific requirements for transportation of girls attending Guiding which must be complied with.
- If a parent or caregiver wants to stop access to a girl, the Volunteer should:
  - Check if there is a Court order in place regarding the girl. If there is a Court Order in place, a copy of the Court Order is loaded onto the girl's personal record in OGM. All Court Orders must be complied with. If there is a joint custody or access arrangement in place both parents may have access to the girls records in OGM.
  - If no Court Order is in place, the Volunteer should request that the parent/caregiver provides in writing, the request. A copy of this request is loaded onto the girl's personal record in OGM and must be complied with.
  - Where a non-custodial adult, requests to speak, remove/collect a girl, consent must be obtained from the custodial parent first, if there is no prior arrangement in place.
- Where there is concern over the safety of a girl, this Policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Wellbeing Policy.
- If there are immediate safety concerns, threats, or violence from an insistent adult, concerning custody, access, or collection of a girl, call the Police.
- Where a Volunteer is unsure, please contact your Area Manager for advice.

**Date Reviewed:** June 2021