



AMERICAN  
HERITAGE GIRLS™  
FAITH | SERVICE | FUN

# Girl Registration Information

*You are welcome to join us!*

## AHG Oath

I promise to love God,  
Cherish my family,  
Honor my country, and  
Serve in my community.

## Mission Statement

*"Building women of integrity through service to God, family, community, and country."*

## Vision Statement

*American Heritage Girls is the premier national character development organization for young women that encourages family involvement and embraces Christian value.*

## AHG Creed

*As an American Heritage Girl, I promise to be:*

**Compassionate** – Understanding others in fellowship, empathy, kindness, and caring. Respect others' opinions and emotions.

**Helpful** – Willingly serve others.

**Honest** – Always tell the truth and keep my promise.

**Loyal** – True to God, family, friends, community and country.

**Perseverant** – Continuing to strive toward a goal despite obstacles.

**Pure** – Keep my mind and body pure.

**Resourceful** – Wisely use my time, materials and talents.

**Respectful** – Honor my country; be obedient to those in authority and courteous to all.

**Responsible** – Accountable for my own actions. Reliable in all situations.

**Reverent** – Faithful and honoring to God. Respectful to the beliefs of others.

## Levels of American Heritage Girls

**Pathfinder** Ages 5-6

**Tenderheart** Ages 6-9

**Explorers** Ages 9-12

**Pioneers** Ages 12-14

**Patriots** Ages 14-18

# Welcome to the American Heritage Girls!

## The AHG program is implemented through Volunteers

Adult volunteers help facilitate a program of wholesome activities which: enhances life skills, offers character development through community service, supports girl leadership opportunities, provides citizenship training and encourages the spiritual development of their troop members.

Volunteers provide leadership at all levels of AHG including unit, troop, geographic areas, and National Board. Many are parents of American Heritage Girls; some are concerned adults who agree with the mission of AHG. Each charter organization establishes a Troop Board, which operates the chartered troop, selecting leadership and providing support to the volunteers. Troops depend on parents for assistance and encourage each to fulfill a Parent Service Pledge.

Each Troop Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, Unit & Assistant Unit Leader must be a good role model to children as they are in a unique position of influence within your daughter's life. However, it is important to get to know your daughter's Unit Leader and be involved in the Troop's activities so you can help direct that influence and assist in **"building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country."** In addition, your help with encouraging perfect attendance, attending parents' meetings, assisting with car pools and helping with you daughter's advancement is necessary.

## Policies of the American Heritage Girls

Charter Organizations have the authority to use the AHG program in accordance with their own policies as well as those of the American Heritage Girls. The AHG program allows for flexibility in the integration of the AHG Troop into the mission/ministry goals for youth established by the Charter Organization. Major departures from AHG methods are not permitted. As a parent, it is important for you to know:

- ♥ AHG is a Christ-centered non-profit organization that recognizes the importance of religious faith yet leaves religious instruction to the member's family and religious leaders. Members who do not belong to a Troop's religious Charter Organization are not required to participate in religious activities.
- ♥ All adult Leadership is approved by the Charter Organization, and have been subjected to reference and background checks. They must also subscribe to the AHG's Oath, Creed, Mission & Vision Statements and Statement of Faith.
- ♥ In the interest of the safety of our members, AHG requires two-deep leadership at all times. Therefore one-on-one activities are strictly forbidden. Personal conferences must be in plain view of others.
- ♥ All AHG activities are open to parental involvement and visitation. Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and one registered adult volunteer are required on all outings and trips.
- ♥ Parents and Troop Leadership should work together to solve discipline problems. AHG advocates constructive discipline efforts that do not include corporal punishment.

### AHG Statement of Faith

*American Heritage Girls is a Christ centered character development organization. The following Statement of Faith applies to all American Heritage Girls Charter Organizations, Adult Members and Adult Leaders.*

We believe that there is One Triune God – Father, Jesus Christ His one and only Son, and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old/New Testament) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshipping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit who enables us to live a Godly life. We believe that each individual is called to love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love their neighbors as themselves. We believe that each individual is called to live a life of purity, service, stewardship and integrity.

Clarity is further provided to the following terms:

**Purity** – An AHG member is called to live a life of holiness, being pure of heart, mind, word and deed, reserving sexual activity for the sanctity of marriage; marriage being a lifelong commitment before God between a man and a woman.

**Service** – An AHG member is called to become a responsible member of their community and the world through selfless acts, which contribute to the welfare of others.

**Stewardship** – An AHG member is called to use their God given time, talents and money wisely.

**Integrity** – An AHG member is called to live a moral life, demonstrating the inward motivation to do what is right, regardless of the cost.

### Nondiscrimination Policy

Girl membership in the organization shall be made available to all without regard to race, color, creed or national origin, under such rules and regulations, not in conflict with the provisions of the AHG Oath: "I promise to love God, cherish my family, honor my country and serve in my community," and the Purpose and the Basic Policies of AHG.

## AHG CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

This policy should be shared with parents, and parents are encouraged to share these procedures with their daughters. Parents must sign off on receipt of Child Abuse Prevention Policy on Girl Registration Form.

### Mission

To provide a healthy and safe environment for members of American Heritage Girls, through a program of education and prevention of emotional, physical and sexual child abuse and in compliance with state laws and federal regulations, and our guiding principals.

### Issue

The emotional, physical and sexual abuse of children by adults and others is a widespread problem.

Abuse may be emotional, physical, and/or violent. Incidents may occur just once or be repeated many times.

Child abuse affects everyone - the victim, family/friends, all of us! We can prevent child abuse by giving children accurate information about physical and sexual abuse, teaching children how to protect themselves, encouraging children to communicate incidents, education adult members in prevention techniques and reporting incidents or suspected incidents to proper authorities.

A child abuser can be anyone - male or female, young or old, familiar or unfamiliar, or a former victim.

Child abuse can happen in familiar areas, public places, in unfamiliar or deserted areas. The abuser usually tries to control the victim by coercion, manipulation, or bribery.

Bullying can be another form of abuse and can result from adult and/or youth behaviors. Bullying can be physical, emotional or mental. Female bullying is becoming increasingly common and typically is in the form of verbal and emotional harassment. Cyber bullying (bullying via internet, email, text messaging, etc.) is also increasingly common and equally destructive.

### AHG Policy

If an adult member learns or suspects that a youth member has been emotionally, physically or sexually abused, we can help by not questioning the validity of the incident, help is needed no matter the validity of the incident. Control emotions, give support, get information about the incident, get medical assistance, and immediately contact the appropriate social service agency and police in compliance with state and local laws and regulations, parents/guardians and the designated AHG Unit Leader. You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in "good faith". It is the responsibility of the AHG Unit Leader to file an incident report with the Local/National Office.

### Guidelines for Youth Members

To help prevent child abuse, our members should learn and follow these common-sense rules:

Be alert of other's behavior, don't believe strangers, avoid being alone with anyone who wants to touch a child in a sexual way, and don't be overly trusting.

- Avoid dangerous situations including playing alone in deserted or public areas, not opening doors or answering phones at home. Discuss problem encounters with parents, guardians, and AHG Unit Leaders. In the event of an incident, the member should not obey the abuser unless physically threatened, try to turn away, say no if someone tries to abuse them, tell abuser they'll tell someone, seek help as soon as possible, be told not to feel guilty, "it wasn't their fault."

### AHG Standards for Maintaining a Healthy and Safe Environment

AHG has developed a plan to prevent child abuse and improve the environment in which our young members live. The key elements include:

1. Establish Unit Leader selection procedures to prevent individuals with a history of abuse from joining our adult membership or volunteering through effective screening of applicants. The AHG Leader Selection Process includes the following steps:
  - *Unit Leaders have been interviewed by the Troop Coordinator and Charter Representative.*
  - *Adult Volunteers must submit a completed adult volunteer application, three character references and a background check.*
  - *References should be contacted and verified by the Troop Coordinator.*

"Being a registered leader is a privilege, not a right." The quality of our program and safety of our youth members require selection of leaders to be taken seriously.

2. Educate leaders, volunteers, parents/guardians, and young members to aid in detection and prevention of child abuse.
3. Encourage girls to report improper behavior and to identify incidents and offenders promptly. The following procedures have been established to provide additional security of members from situations in which they may be vulnerable to abuse, and to comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

1. Two-deep leadership: No less than two registered adult Leaders are required on all trips and activities. The Troop is responsible for ensuring sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
2. No one-on-one contact: One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. Any meeting or discussion on private matters or sensitive issues must be conducted in view of other adults and /or members.
3. Respect privacy: Respect the privacy of youth members at all times, except to the extent of health and safety concerns.
4. Separate accommodations: At outdoor and overnight activities, youth members are not permitted to sleep with an adult other than parent or guardian unless adult and youth membership join as a group with two-deep leadership. Use of separate restrooms and shower facilities are encouraged or scheduled times arranged for use of facilities for youth members and adult members. If this is not possible, two-deep leadership must be maintained in restroom and shower facilities.
5. No secret organizations: AHG does not permit secret organizations. All programs and activities are open to observation by parents and adult members. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited.
6. Appropriate attire: Proper, modest attire for all activities is required.
7. Constructive discipline: Discipline used in AHG should be constructive, positive, and reflect our values. Corporal punishment is not permitted.
8. Adult supervision: Adult Leaders must monitor and guide leadership techniques used by youth leaders.

To enhance the health and safety of all members of AHG, the following safety standards are to be followed:

- ❖ Controlled Substances: Persons under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol or in possession of same are prohibited from participation in any AHG activity or program.
- ❖ Fireworks: Persons are prohibited from using or possessing fireworks at any AHG activity or program.
- ❖ Firearms: Persons using or possessing firearms must comply with all local, state and federal laws during all AHG activities.
- ❖ Smoking: The use of tobacco products where members are present is not permitted at AHG programs or activities.

### **Procedures In the Event of Suspected Abuse**

In the event an act of child abuse is witnessed, reported, or suspected the following procedures are to be followed:

- ◆ Remove youth member from immediate danger and provide medical attention if needed.
- ◆ In the event child abuse is witnessed, promptly remove and report offenders to the local social services department and/or police immediately in accordance with state, local, and federal laws and regulations. (Refer to your county website for reporting abuse in your area.)
- ◆ If the suspected abuser is NOT the parent/guardian, notification should be made to Parents/Guardians and designated AHG officials as soon as possible advising them of situation and action taken.
- ◆ Leaders, having reason to believe a youth member(s) has suffered abuse, should report or cause reports to be made to the local social services department and police as soon as possible. The report should include: name and address of youth member(s), age, parent's/guardian's name, nature and extent of abuse, and any other information which would be helpful in investigating the situation. Upon notice to the social services and police, immediate notification should be made to AHG officials advising them of the situation and action taken.

Adherence to these policies and procedures not only enhances the protection of our members, but also ensures the basic values of American Heritage Girls while providing a healthy and safe environment.