



## Girlguiding **INT**ernational **OP**portunities General information for 2024, with guidance for unit leaders

### What is INTOPS?

- Girlguiding Gloucestershire has a long tradition of offering international experiences to our young members.
- Plans for trips will always try to include meeting with other members of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) – perhaps at a world centre or an international camp.
- Generally, the trips happen during the school summer holiday and can vary in length and cost.
- INTOPS is an international experience that can take place in the UK or abroad. It may consist of a camp, hostelling, train trip, city based, canoeing or other adventurous activities or sightseeing. Each trip is different.
- We do not expect parents/carers to pay for the trip – the cost of the trip must be earned by the girls.
- It is an experience of three parts incorporating many Girlguiding themes, and applicants must be prepared to do all three parts before applying.
- It is unlikely that at the time of selection the destination/event will be known. Many events are only advertised 12 months in advance. In addition, it is unwise for the girls/parents/carers to have a preconceived idea of the cost of a trip based on the country they may visit.
- Making new friends, building confidence and other skills should be more important than the destination. It has been disappointing recently to have girls decline places as they aren't going to Japan or Canada. If this is what they want, please don't send them for selection.

### What's involved?

- Part 1 – becoming a team, planning and fundraising, keeping accounts.
- Part 2 – the trip itself – working as a team, promoting & representing Girlguiding UK, being self-reliant and organised; trying new things and meeting new people
- Part 3 – journal/report writing, complete accounts, promoting INTOPS to others, presentations to those who have donated money.

## Age

Participants need to be:

- In year 8 on application,
- A minimum of age 14 on the trip; *and*
- No older than 18 on the 31 August in the year of the trip. They will be Rangers or young leaders at the time of the trip.

## Skills

- Girls must be committed to Girlguiding and have a plan to move to the next section if they are presently in Guides. They must be a current member of Girlguiding and if they leave before the trip, **they will lose their place.**
- Applicants must be motivated to take part, be able to plan and lead their own fundraising, apply for grants, be team players and show resilience.
- They need to be willing to prepare for and attend meetings anywhere in the county, as the trip comprises girls from all around Gloucestershire.
- They need to commit to completing and returning forms promptly, and making payments on time.
- Due to the energy and stamina needed for these trips, please consider whether girls will need additional support so this can be considered; we may need to recruit an additional leader to give support. Please also be clear on the application form of any physical, health or wellbeing limitations.

## Selection

- This may be residential or one full day, and could take place anywhere in the county. The final part of the day is with **parents/carers** to hear about the INTOPS commitment and for Q&A. **A parent/carer must attend.**
- Most of the selection process is looking at teamwork and leadership skills. There will be physical team challenges, games and project research, in addition to other group work throughout the selection.
- The girls will be expected to bring a variety of things to demonstrate they can follow a kit list, be organised and pack their bags, and be self-reliant to bring/wear what they need.
- There will be an interview with 2 adult volunteers (and maybe a previous INTOPS team member) where they will have a conversation 'all about me' based on the list below. It would be helpful if you could practise this with them. They will be asked about their guiding experiences and why they want to be part of INTOPS.
  - Something that represents your Guiding experience
  - One thing to tell us about your local area
  - Picture of your favourite food
  - One thing you like to do in your spare time
  - Something that helps you relax
  - Something about your home life

- Also, be prepared to talk about your INTOPs ambitions and motivations
- Each girl will be asked:
  - To lead a campfire song/game/activity.
  - Bake themselves and bring 6 cookies to share.
  - Bring 2 decorated clothes pegs they have made themselves for a trading/swapping activity.
  - Bring and lead a 5-minute time filler, activity, game, etc. suitable for when waiting in a bus queue or at the airport.
  - Bring 5 questions to add to a group quiz – using any format or topic.
- This is a selection process – there will always be more applicants than places on a trip. Some may not be quite ready for a county trip in the year they apply. **Attendance at a selection event does not guarantee a place.** Girls are chosen carefully with consideration to personalities and team dynamics, also the type of trip being planned.
- Some girls may be invited to go forward for region selection. This follows the same process as Gloucestershire's selection, but with more applicants and a range of trips. If successful, parents/carers must be able to take girls anywhere in the South West of England – so think carefully before accepting a space for this selection process.
- Parents will need to be able to pay for the initial non-refundable deposit. Girls must repay parents through fundraising. If this is a challenge, unit leaders should speak to the international adviser at the earliest opportunity so this is not a barrier to attending a selection weekend.

### Help from unit leaders

If your young person is selected, then we need your help throughout parts 1&3.

- Please check in with them regularly to ensure they are on track with their fundraising.
- Advise trip leaders or myself if you have any concerns; the earlier we can help the less stressful for everyone.
- Offer fundraising opportunities in your unit and District. Quiz and pudding nights are a great way to raise funds and have fun. Get started as soon as possible.
- Check local groups that offer grants and let your Guide/Ranger/YL know – Lions, Rotary, Parish Councils etc. The trip leaders may not be from your Division and may have no local knowledge to share.
- Trip leaders will advise when to apply for a county grant, but this is usually the last thing to be paid just before the trip.
- Trip leaders will usually advise how to write a funding request letter, and these will be needed before any grants will be considered. Ask about letter writing and advise if needed.
- Check they have the correct uniform for their section. Help by giving them an International neckerchief and union Jack sleeve badge.

- Help with sourcing/loaning kit (when the list is given) to keep costs down.
- The trip involves **a lot of communication** between INTOPS leaders and parents which is vital to a smooth and safe trip. If there are potential communication issues please flag these ASAP and work out a plan with the trip leader to prevent this from being a barrier to a young person taking part.

If you have questions, please ask the trip leader or contact me on the details below.

Frances Beavis

International adviser

[intops@girlguidingglos.org.uk](mailto:intops@girlguidingglos.org.uk)