



## CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



### Bureau of Police

Sam Adams, Mayor

Michael Reese, Chief of Police

1111 S.W. 2nd Avenue • Portland, OR 97204 • Phone: 503-823-0000 • Fax: 503-823-0342

Integrity • Compassion • Accountability • Respect • Excellence • Service

## GirlStrength Policies and Procedures

Welcome to GirlStrength! A free holistic self-defense program offered through the Portland Police Bureau. We are very excited that your daughter is enrolled in the program.

GirlStrength instructors do their best to ensure that all classes are physically and emotionally safe for all girls. To maintain transparency and openness with parents and caregivers, we would like to share some important information about the program as well as our specific program policies.

### Attendance

In order for the students to maximize their learning, it is important for them to attend every class. We understand this is not always possible. Please call the center if your child will not be attending one of the classes.

### Clothing

For physical safety, we ask that students wear shoes that they would wear to participate in a PE class. Flip flops or loose fitting shoes are physically dangerous. Clothing should be loose and comfortable. We recommend street clothing such as t-shirts and sweat pants so that students' bodies are covered appropriately, while also allowing them to move easily and comfortably during the physical skills practice sessions.

### Mandatory Reporting

The Portland Police Bureau's policy requires GirlStrength instructors and volunteers to report suspected abuse in the same manner as if they were mandatory reporters. This means that we are required by the Portland Police Bureau to report suspected abuse in the same manner as if we were mandatory reporters.

### Participation

Even though safety and self-defense is a serious topic, we try to make the program fun and safe for all girls. GirlStrength instructors strive to create a safe space for girls to share and discuss issues or concerns surrounding self-defense. In the past we have found girls to be more open about their concerns when parents are not in the room. Parents are always welcome to observe, but please let us know in advance so that we can prepare for your visit.

### Physical Skills and Confidentiality

Please know that we ask girls to share all the topics covered in the GirlStrength program. The only part of the program that we ask them not to share with family, friends and people who have not taken a WomenStrength or GirlStrength class are the physical skills. There are several reasons for this request:

1. Research and statistics reveal that most assaults against women and children are perpetrated by people they know, not strangers, and very often the perpetrators are men.

**Community Policing: Making the Difference Together**  
**An Equal Opportunity Employer**

Police Information Line: 503-823-4636, TTY (for hearing and speech impaired): 503-823-4736 Website: <http://www.portlandpolicebureau.com>

2. Typically, girls do not have as much fighting and wrestling experience as boys. This puts girls at a physical disadvantage in a self-defense or fighting situation. We want GirlStrength to level-out the playing field for girls in the event that they are forced to use their physical skills.
3. By not sharing the physical skills they have learned in GirlStrength classes, we hope to give girls the advantage of surprise against a potential attacker. The surprise element may be lost if skills have already been shared in advance with people they know.

### **Physical Requirements**

Students will be learning how to escape from specific grabs and holds during the program. In order to teach these skills affectively we will need to practice these skills as realistically as possible. This means that we will be physically placing our hands on the girls' bodies from time-to-time during the program. Please know that all instructors are females and have gone through extensive background checks by the Portland Police Bureau.

If you are not comfortable with any of these policies, or any have further questions, please don't hesitate to contact the **GirlStrength Coordinator at (503) 823-0239**, or by email at [GirlStrength.pb@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:GirlStrength.pb@portlandoregon.gov)

**Once again, thank you for your involvement with the program.  
We look forward to helping your child stay safe.**

**Community Policing: Making the Difference Together  
An Equal Opportunity Employer**

Police Information Line: 503-823-4636, TTY (for hearing and speech impaired): 503-823-4736 Website: <http://www.portlandpolicebureau.com>