



PERSONAL PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

Leader Support Guide

Important

Every day, children and young people spend time with adults in a variety of workplaces such as schools, child care centres, sporting clubs and churches. Most of these adults and organisations do a great job.

However, these organisations can attract people who pose risks to children. They can provide access and opportunities for developing relationships that exploit children's trust and dependence. The way an organisation is managed can create opportunities for offending to occur. Conversely, by conducting its business differently, an organisation can reduce risk significantly.

Scouts Australia NSW developed the Personal Protection Policy & Procedures to foster a safe and secure environment for our Youth Members and to guide our adult Members in adopting behaviours that are consistent with the Association's expectations and *Code of Conduct*.

Other Important Policies and Procedures

The Scouts Australia NSW *Organisation & Information Handbook (O&I)* contains the policies and procedures of the Association. *Leader Support Guides* and *Fact Sheets* are short publications addressing specific topics pertaining to the delivery of the Scouting program. They have been developed over a period of time as a result of questions or issues Leaders have had. The *O&I*, *Fact Sheets* and *Leader Support Guides* can be found on the website in the "Resources & Policies" section.

In particular, Members should familiarise themselves with the *Code of Conduct for Adults in Scouting*.

Policy Statement on the Protection of Members

Scouts Australia NSW is an organisation dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of its Members. We are passionate about creating an environment in which our Youth Members and Leaders are welcomed, valued, respected and kept safe.

Scouts has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind, including physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Scouts Australia NSW has developed systems to prevent known offenders from entering the Movement.

The Association has also developed procedures to assist in the reporting of child abuse or child protection concerns, in particular where allegations are made against Leaders with direct responsibilities for implementing the youth program.

The Association's full procedure for reporting child protection concerns is outlined in *Fact Sheet 1 Reporting Child Protection Concerns*.

Protective Practices for Scouting Leaders – Keeping Yourself and Youth Members Safe

The following practices should be used as a behavioural guide for all Leaders (and other adult Members) to promote a more secure Scouting environment for all.

Adopting these practices will create a safer environment for our Youth Members and enable unsafe behaviours to be identified.

It will also maximise Leaders' protection from a misconstrued act.

- **Always have 'Two Deep Leadership'**

The term 'Two Deep Leadership' means that there should always be at least two leaders or a leader and another adult present when supervising Youth Members. At least one of the supervising adults must be 21 or older.

- **Leaders or other adults of both genders**

Mixed teams of men and women in either mixed or single-sex sections may provide a safer, healthier climate.

For activities in which both male and female Youth Members participate, it is important that Leaders/adults of both genders accompany the group.

- **Sole Leader sections**

Sections with one Leader should undertake to have a parent roster system, so that at least one other adult is present at all times.

- **No One-on-One Contact with Youth Members**

Leaders should have at least one other Leader/adult present in any situation that could be construed as compromising or questionable, for example, when speaking with or comforting a Youth Member.

In circumstances where a Leader needs to talk to a Youth Member, it should be "in sight, out of hearing" - it should occur in the view of other Leaders/adults and Youth Members.

Leaders must not invite or bring Youth Members to their home, for example to watch DVDs or play video games, without parent approval and without another adult present.

- **Physical Contact**

Inappropriate and intrusive touching and hugging are prohibited. Scouts Australia NSW's guidelines for physical contact are outlined in *Leader Support Guide 13 Guidelines for Physical Contact in Scouting*.

- **Respect Youth Members' Privacy**

Leaders must respect Youth Members' privacy and their own privacy when it comes to changing clothes, showering, and toilet use.

- **Separate Accommodation for Male and Female Youth Members**

Where a Scouting activity requires Youth Members to stay overnight, male and female Youth Members should have separate accommodation. Where this is not possible, there should be clear physical separation between male and female Youth Members (e.g. with a screen). The Activity Leader must ensure that every Youth Member and their parent is informed about and understands the lack of separate facilities before the activity starts.

- **Separate Bathroom Facilities for Male and Female Youth Members**

Male and female Youth Members should have separate bathroom facilities. If this is not possible, Leaders should schedule separate times for male and female Youth Members to use the bathroom. This schedule should be written on a notice that all Youth Members can see. The buddy system should be used for toilets, where one person waits outside the entrance. “Occupied” and “Unoccupied” signs and inside door latches are also recommended.

- **Separate Accommodation for Leaders and Youth Members**

Where a Scouting activity requires Youth Members to stay overnight, Youth Members should sleep in separate accommodation from adults. An exception to this is where a Youth Member with special needs requires a carer to be present. In such circumstances, the accommodation of the Youth Member and carer should be separate from the accommodation that is for Youth Members only.

Another exception to this is where accommodation is in Scout Halls and Leaders must be present for discipline and security reasons.

Where separate accommodation is not possible, there should be clear physical separation between adult and Youth Members.

- **Safe Activities**

Rough or physically hurtful games or abusive initiation (“hazing”) ceremonies are prohibited.

Leaders should choose games carefully, using common sense and avoiding games that require excessive physical contact between Leaders and Youth Members.

Leaders should encourage but not pressure Youth Members, always being sensitive to each Youth Member's individual capacity for physical activities and protecting them from unwarranted pressure to participate.

- **Open Door policy**

All Scout meetings must be open to parents, other Leaders and the Region Team.

- **Wear appropriate clothing**

The way Leaders dress and present themselves must be appropriate. Proper attire is required for all activities. For example, the activity may require enclosed shoes, warm clothing, wet weather gear and/or appropriate swimming costumes.

- **Be a good role model**

Leaders have a position of power and influence and should not abuse it, but rather should always set a good example in dress, behaviour and language.

All Youth Members (and others) should be treated with respect and dignity.

- **Carefully watch your language and your humour**

Leaders should use words to build up, empower and encourage Youth Members.

Making inappropriate jokes and ridiculing a young person are behaviours that breach the *Scout Promise*, the *Scout Law* and the *Code of Conduct*.

- **Use discipline appropriately**

The primary disciplinary tool in Scouting is the Youth Council.

Scouts Australia NSW's guidelines for managing the behaviour of Youth Members are outlined in *Leader Support Guide 7 Challenging Behaviour*, *Leader Support Guide 11 Managing Behaviour in the Mob or Pack* and *Leader Support Guide 14 Dealing with Unacceptable Behaviour of a Youth Member*.

- **Address inappropriate behaviour**

Inappropriate behaviour should not be ignored.

Youth behaviour can be brought to the attention of the appropriate Youth Council e.g. in Scouts the appropriate body is the Troop Council, Venturers the Unit Council etc.

Leaders should develop a Group etiquette that allows for Leaders to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out to each other any inappropriate attitudes or behaviours.

The "Behavioural Management" section of the *Organisation & Information Handbook* outlines the Association's procedures for:

- i. Managing grievances and disputes and
- ii. Handling major behavioural issues including misdemeanours, infringement of the *Code of Conduct* and matters where the Association's duty of care is infringed or actions bring or are likely to bring the Association into disrepute (including child protection concerns).

- **Address abusive behaviour**

Suspicious or instances of abuse of Youth Members, or other behaviour that amounts to a criminal matter or child protection concern, should be reported directly to the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Executive or the Child Protection Officer at State Office on 9735 9000. Once we receive a notification, the Association will make an immediate report to the relevant authorities.

Scouts Australia NSW full procedure for reporting child protection concerns is outlined in *Fact Sheet 1 Reporting Child Protection Concerns*.

Failure to observe these guidelines

Behaviour that is hurtful, intrusive or unsafe sets a bad example and has no place in Scouting. A failure to observe the above guidelines may result in a Leader being suspended while an investigation takes place, and if substantiated, the Leader could be subject of disciplinary action, including cancellation of their Membership.