

Dear Scouting Parents & Volunteers:

We recognize you have entrusted to Scouting the development and safety of your child. We are honored by your faith in this organization and want you to know these are top priorities.

In this period of heightened awareness about youth safety, we want to share with you some of Scouting's many important programs, policies, and procedures that help protect our members.

We are committed to consistently strengthening and enhancing our Youth Protection measures, and in recent decades, have expanded our programs significantly as more information and new techniques and technologies have become available to us. Recently, experts in youth safety and the media have acknowledged the strength of our Youth Protection programs in place today:

- "The Boy Scouts of America is one group advocates say has gone farthest to institute such measures to safeguard kids." (MSNBC, November 2011)
- "The Scouts' current prevention policies are considered state of the art and several independent child-protection experts told The Associated Press that the Scouts-though buffeted in the past by many abuse-related lawsuits-are now considered a leader in combating sexual abuse. 'The Boy Scouts have the most advanced policies and training,' said Victor Vieth, a former prosecutor who heads the National Child Protection Training Center in Minnesota." (Associated Press, January 2012.)

While we continuously evaluate and strengthen our Youth Protection programs, we recognize that abuse can happen anywhere, even in Scouting. You may have heard recent news surrounding the release of certain Ineligible Volunteer Files. BSA Ineligible Volunteer Files, still in use today, help keep people deemed to be unfit leaders out of Scouting. Still, we believe constant vigilance is the best protection. In Scouting, we tell everyone involved with our programs that "Youth protection begins with you."TM That means that each of us has a role to play in keeping kids safe.

We want to ensure that you are aware of our Youth Protection programs, policies, and procedures, so you know what to expect of our organization. Our safeguards include the following:

- **All volunteers must complete a rigorous application and screening process** before joining Scouting. As part of this requirement, applicants must provide references and submit to a national criminal background check. We also verify that our organization has not received any prior allegations of misconduct on the volunteer's part by checking names in our Ineligible Volunteer Files. Our goal is to ensure that all adult volunteers represent the values and character outlined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law and are good leaders for your child.
- **All volunteers are required to complete Youth Protection training** and must renew the training every two years. This training is accessible to the general public online at www.Scouting.org, under the Youth Protection tab. Please review the training, as it

provides important information about detecting and preventing abuse, no matter where it may occur.

- **Scouting's two-deep leadership policy requires at least two adults to be present** for all Scouting activities. No youth should ever be alone with a Scout leader for any reason.
- **Every Boy Scout and Cub Scout handbook includes a pamphlet to help parents teach their children** how to recognize, resist, and report abuse. If you haven't done so already, please immediately review and discuss this information with your child. A copy of the pamphlet and other youth-oriented literature is available under the Youth Protection tab on our website.
- **All Scouting activities are open to parents**, and we encourage families to enjoy Scouting together.
- **Anyone committing any inappropriate behavior will be immediately and permanently banned from Scouting.** If you ever have any concerns about your child's safety or the safety of any child, please contact me at the Council office immediately. Mark Turner 704.333.5471 or mark.turner@scouting.org
- **Internationally recognized child abuse prevention expert and former law enforcement professional Mike Johnson today leads Scouting's Youth Protection program.** Johnson, formerly a police detective investigating child abuse, working in close coordination with other experts in law enforcement, psychology, and other disciplines, is building upon these and other existing policies to further enhance Scouting's safety, educational, and training programs.

These measures are by no means the full extent of our efforts, but given the media attention youth-serving organizations including Scouting have recently received, we wanted to share some of the most important aspects of our program. Additional information and resources can be accessed by visiting www.Scouting.org and clicking on the Youth Protection tab.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thanks for all you do to support Scouting and help us keep kids safe.

Sincerely,



Mark Turner
Scout Executive



Benton Bragg
Council President

More information on the BSA's extensive youth protection procedures, policies and training can also be found at this link: <http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx>