

BSA Youth Protection

Youth protection is of paramount importance to the Boy Scouts of America. Recognizing that this commitment requires sustained vigilance, the BSA has continued to develop and enhance its efforts to protect youth, regularly consulting with experts from law enforcement, child safety, psychology, and other disciplines to ensure its efforts consistently evolve along with the ever-changing awareness of the dangers and challenges facing youth. The BSA takes a multi-layered approach to youth protection: (1) local selection of adult volunteers with the support of the national organization, (2) education and training, and (3) clear policies such as no "one on one" activities, and immediate reporting of any concerns.

1. Local Selection of Adult Volunteers With the Support of the National Organization

- **Chartered organizations provide local insight and ongoing supervision.**
The most important responsibility of a chartered organization is the selection of quality leadership for the Scout unit. The involvement of local chartered organizations (churches, schools, or civic groups) helps ensure that selected volunteers are known and trusted in the community.
- **Adults selected by chartered organizations apply for leadership roles.**
From its earliest days, the BSA has had a mandatory application and registration process to screen adult volunteers. The application requires adults who have been selected as potential leaders of youth by a chartered organization to provide references, past addresses, and other community affiliations, and to disclose any criminal conviction or allegations of child abuse. This information helps the chartered organization verify the applicant's suitability for Scout leadership.
- **The BSA requires criminal background checks on all adult volunteers.**
The BSA grants membership to an adult volunteer only after a national criminal background check is performed. The background checks are administered by LexisNexis, a nationally respected third party that also provides this service to local, state, and federal governments; educational institutions; and other nonprofits.
- **The BSA's Ineligible Volunteer Files provide an added layer of protection.**
Scouting takes any allegations of inappropriate behavior seriously, whether or not the individual ever served as a Scout leader, and whether or not that person behaved inappropriately with a Scout or any other child. Scouting policy requires the prompt reporting of inappropriate conduct. When such issues are reported, the individual is added to the Ineligible Volunteer Files maintained by the National Council, whether or not the allegations are proven. The Ineligible Volunteer Files have successfully kept dangerous and potentially dangerous individuals out by enabling Scouting to identify those individuals who have been barred from the organization, even based on suspicion alone.

2. Education and Training

- **Every parent completing a youth membership form acknowledges awareness of the BSA's youth protection and affirms their intention to review the booklet, "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide," which is included in every Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbook.**
Every application for youth membership advises parents about the basic principles of youth protection, including the "two deep" leadership requirement for every Scouting activity.

- **At least two adults supervise all Scouting activities.**
 One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In compliance with the BSA's "two deep" leadership policy, two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. In situations requiring a personal conference, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youth. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all Scouting activities.
- **Privacy of youth and adult members is safeguarded by BSA policy.**
 Adult leaders must respect the privacy of members and protect their own privacy especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp. The BSA strongly encourages councils to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females as well as separate facilities for youth. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female and/or youth and adult showering should be scheduled and posted. No youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian.
- **Scouts are instructed to use cameras, cell phones, and other digital devices responsibly.**
 While most members use cameras, cell phones, and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade other individuals' privacy. Scouting policy prohibits the use of any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants. Additionally, Scouts are not to send sexually explicit photographs or videos electronically.
- **All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.**
 The BSA does not allow any secret organizations as part of its program nor does it condone physical hazing or initiations as part of any Scouting activity. Parents are encouraged to attend all Scouting activities.
- **All of the BSA's Youth Protection policies are clearly defined and available for all to review.**
 BSA policies are included in training materials and posted online at www.Scouting.org , which clearly sets forth member and unit responsibilities.