

# Youth Protection and Adult Leadership

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(From the Scouts of America's [Guide to Safe Scouting](#))

## Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The Scouts of America has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies primarily protect youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders. Parents and youth using these safeguards outside the Scouting program further increase the safety of their youth. Scout leaders in positions of youth leadership and supervision outside the Scouting program will find these policies help protect youth in those situations as well.

**Two-deep leadership on all outings required.** A minimum of two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a participating scout's parent, or another adult is required for all trips and outings. One of these adults must be 21 years of age or older.

### Patrol Activities

There are instances, such as patrol activities, when the presence of adult leaders is not required and adult leadership may be limited to patrol leadership training and guidance. With proper training, guidance, and approval by troop leaders, the patrol can conduct day hikes and service projects.

### Adult Supervision/Coed Activities

Male and female adult leaders must be present for all overnight coed Scouting trips and outings, even those including parent and child. Both male and female adult leaders must be 21 years of age or older, and one must be a registered member of the Scouts of America.

**One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is prohibited.** In situations requiring a personal conference, such as a Scoutmaster Conference, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.

Two-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact between adults and youth members includes digital communication. Leaders may not have one-on-one private online communications or engage one-on-one in other digital activities (games, social media, etc.) with youth members. Leaders should copy a parent and another leader in digital and online communication, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication.

**Age-appropriate and separate accommodations for adults and scouts are required.**

### Tenting

No adult may share a tent with a person of the opposite sex unless he or she is that adult's spouse.

No youth may share a tent with an adult or a person of the opposite sex other than a family member or guardian. Assigning youth members more than two years apart in age to sleep in the same tent should be avoided unless the youth are relatives.

### Shower Facilities

Whenever possible, separate shower and latrine facilities should be provided for male/female adults and male/female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate shower times should be scheduled and posted.

**The buddy system should be used at all times.** The buddy system is a safety measure for all Scouting activities. Buddies should know and be comfortable with each other. Self-selection with no more than two years age or significant differences in maturity should be strongly encouraged. When necessary, a buddy team may consist of three scouts. No youth should be forced into or made to feel uncomfortable by a buddy assignment.

**Privacy of youth is respected.** Adult leaders and youth must respect each other's privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp. Adults may enter youth changing or showering

areas only to the extent that health and safety requires. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

**Inappropriate use of smart phones, cameras, imaging, or digital devices is prohibited.** Although most scouts and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it is easy to unintentionally or inadvertently invade the privacy of other individuals with such devices. The use of any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in or near shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected is inappropriate.

**No secret organizations.** The Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

**Youth leadership is monitored by adult leaders.** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure Scouts of America policies are followed.

**Discipline must be constructive.** Discipline used in Scouting must be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are prohibited. Examples of positive discipline include verbal praise and high fives.

**Appropriate attire is required for all activities.** Proper clothing for activities is required.

**No hazing.** Hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

**No bullying.** Verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited in Scouting.

#### **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse**

All persons involved in Scouting must report to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. This duty cannot be delegated to any other person.

Immediately notify the Scout Executive of this report, or of any violation of Scouts of America Youth Protection policies, so he or she may take appropriate action for the safety of our scouts, make appropriate notifications, and follow up with investigating agencies.

State-by-state mandatory reporting information: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov) 

**All adult leaders and youth members have responsibility.** Everyone is responsible for acting in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, sexual activity, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, unauthorized weapons, hazing, discrimination, harassment, initiation rites, bullying, cyberbullying, theft, verbal insults, drugs, alcohol, and pornography have no place in the Scouting program and may result in revocation of membership. For more information, please see the Scouts of America Guide to Safe Scouting and Youth Protection resources.

**Units are responsible to enforce Youth Protection policies.** Adult leaders in Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and other leaders and interceding when necessary. If youth members misbehave, their parents should be informed and asked for assistance.

**Incidents requiring an immediate report to the Scout executive.** The following must be reported to the council Scout executive for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the Scouts of America's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 911.

If a scout is bullied because of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and local help is not working to solve the problem, contact the Scouts of America's Member Care Contact Center at 972-580-2489, or send an email to [youth.protection@scouting.org](mailto:youth.protection@scouting.org).

**Link to the Volunteer Incident Report Form:**

[http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-676\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-676_WEB.pdf) 

**Your Responsibility**

- Stop the policy violation or abuse.
- Protect the youth.
- Separate alleged victim from alleged perpetrator.
- Summon needed assistance (911, EMS, additional leaders, etc.).
- Notify parents.
- Notify the appropriate Scouting professional.

**Chartered Organization Responsibility**

The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and their committee chair must approve the registration of the unit's adult leaders.

**Link to the Local Council Locator:**

<http://www.scouting.org/LocalCouncilLocator.aspx>

**Link to the Bullying Prevention Guide:**

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/BullyingPreventionGuide.pdf> 