

# District Explorer Scout Administrator Training Pack Factsheet 4 of 8 Communicating with young people



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## Why communication is so important!

The role of the DESA was discussed in an earlier factsheet in this series and it is clear that the DESA is the focus of communication for Explorer Scouting in a District. Young people are busy people, with many pressures on their time, and in order to enjoy Explorer Scouting to the full they need to be kept fully informed of what is on offer for them.

If they don't know it is happening, they won't turn up - and they will miss out!

## What should you be communicating?

Some things you may need to communicate to young people:

- Information about the Balanced Programme and specific events
- Information about subscriptions and membership
- Arrangements for the District Explorer Scout Meeting and Forum.

## Programme / events

It is clearly important to make sure that the young people know about the programme and events, because however good the Programme is, if the young people don't know about it, then they won't

come. Unlike Scouts, where a note can be given out very easily in the meeting, the whole point of Explorer Scouting is that it is flexible. If they are doing exams, or tied up with a part time job or coursework, they may very well have not attended for a few weeks, but they will still need to have an up to date programme, and need to know what is going on. *Don't assume that someone else has told them* - remember, the DESA is the main channel of communication.

## Subscriptions and membership

The administration of subscriptions will depend very much on your District's system. In some districts the District Treasurer has assumed responsibility for collecting subs from the Explorer Scouts (in which case they will either want contact details from you or your help). In other Districts subs are collected by the DESA. Elsewhere Unit leaders are charged with the task, and then the DESA coordinates all the information and money for the census. Whatever system is in place, you will have a key role in it. Make sure you know what your District has decided to do about finances, subscriptions and membership, and your role within that system.

## District Explorer Scout Forum and Meeting

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Here you will have a major role to play in keeping the DESC sane! The District Explorer Scout Forum must be organised, venues booked, and agendas and minutes circulated. Explorer Scouts representing every Unit in the District are invited

to attend. You will need to know who attends this forum and when it meets, as well as communicating with the DESC to organise it effectively.

The District Explorer Scout Meeting is a gathering for everyone involved with Explorer Scouts in the District in order to celebrate the past year and look forward to the next one. Again, you will need to work with the DESC to make sure the whole thing is well publicised, organised, and runs smoothly.

### **Approaches to Communicating with Explorer Scouts – direct, and via intermediaries (adults)**

We all know that the more people a piece of information has to go through before it reaches its destination, the more distorted it can become. So clearly, communicating information directly to the Explorer Scouts is preferable to asking someone else to do it. The question is how you are going to communicate equally effectively with the elusive fourteen year old who is unable to come to every meeting, as well as the busy and technologically advanced eighteen year old.

This may involve a bit of new learning on your behalf. Some of the communication methods available to you are:

- **E-mail** - by far the cheapest option, every young person should have an e-mail address at school, but they might not check it regularly, and if you are communicating during the school holiday, you could be on to a loser. (remember, not everyone has a home e-mail address).
- **Text messaging** – they all seem to bleep each other constantly, don't they? If you have a mobile get in on the action too. You can even send multiple messages from your PC to mobiles – try typing "Computer Text Messaging" into an internet search engine for examples of programmes that will allow you to do this.

- **Snail mail** – the old die hard, reliable mail.
- **Phone** – It depends how long you've got, how many to contact, how good their families are at taking messages etc. etc.
- **In person** – go to the meetings and see them.

Considerations may be:

- The technology available to you,
- the young people and the technology available to them,
- cost,
- time (both time available to you and how urgent the communication is).

In reality you will use a variety of methods. The most important consideration is *not to miss anyone out!*

#### **Handy Hint**

When any new Explorer Scout registers in the District, make sure that you get them to fill in all possible communication details, and then perhaps include a tick list asking them to indicate which methods of communication they would prefer and which not to bother with for them. An overall picture of this over the District may dictate to you which method of communication to use for any given piece of information. At regular and not infrequent intervals you will probably need to send around a list of communication details to the meetings (or go yourself with it, so they know who it is that's communicating with them!) and ask the Explorer Scouts to check and amend their details.

#### **If you are communicating via adults, how are you going to ensure that they get the message?**

- Make sure that the Leadership team is aware of the importance of communication (the DESC may be able to help here).

- Put the message in writing, make sure it has a date on it, and also the name of the person who the information should go to.

#### KEY POINTS

- ◆ **If the Explorer Scouts don't know what's happening, they won't turn up!**
- ◆ **Remember to keep them fully informed about the Balanced Programme on offer and any events and activities.**
- ◆ **Know your District's system for collecting subscriptions and membership data, and your role in this.**
- ◆ **Be familiar with as many modes of communication as possible, and know which are most effective in your District.**

**Don't miss anyone out!**



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