

# The key policies of The Scout Association



Item Code FS500005 Oct/09 Edition no 2

0845 300 1818

## Introduction

This factsheet states some of the key policies of The Scout Association so you have them together in one document for ease of reference. All adults in Scouting are expected to operate in accordance with the key policies of The Scout Association.

## The Fundamentals of Scouting

### *Purpose*

The Purpose of Scouting is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities.

### *Principles*

The Principles of Scouting are Duty to Self; Duty to Others; and Duty to God. We believe that the world is a better place when people are trustworthy, self-controlled and self-confident; work together to serve other people and to improve society; show responsibility for the natural world and proper respect for possessions and property; have self respect and respect for others; and have an active religious faith.

### *Method*

Scouting uses a Method, which is young people, in partnership with adults:

- enjoying what they are doing
- learning by doing
- participating in varied and progressive activities
- making choices for themselves
- taking responsibility for their own actions

- working in groups
- taking increasing responsibility for others
- taking part in activities outdoors
- sharing in prayer and worship
- making and living out their Promise.

## Religious Policy

The Scout Movement includes Members of many different forms of religion. The following policy has received the approval of the heads of the leading religious bodies in the United Kingdom.

All Members of the Movement are encouraged to:

- make every effort to progress in the understanding and observance of the Promise to do their best to do their duty to God
- belong to some religious body
- carry into daily practice what they profess.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

### *Young people*

The Scout Association is committed to extending Scouting, its Purpose and Method to young people in all parts of society.

No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:

- class
- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- gender
- marital or sexual status
- mental or physical ability

## The Scout Information Centre

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email [info.centre@scout.org.uk](mailto:info.centre@scout.org.uk) [www.scouts.org.uk](http://www.scouts.org.uk)

- political or religious belief.

All Members of the Movement should seek to practise that equality, especially in promoting access to Scouting for young people in all parts of society. The Scout Association opposes all forms of racism.

*Note: With reference to gender, Membership of the youth Sections of the Association is open to girls and young women of the appropriate ages subject to Policy, Organisation and Rules rules 3.6, 4.6 and 5.6*

### **Leaders and other volunteers**

To carry out its work the Association seeks to appoint effective and appropriate Leaders, and to involve other volunteers in supporting roles, all of whom are required to accept fully the responsibilities of their commitment.

The overriding considerations in making all appointments in Scouting shall be the safety and security of young people, and their continued development in accordance with the Purpose of the Association.

Accordingly, all those whom the Movement accepts as volunteers must be 'fit and proper' persons to undertake the duties of the particular position to which they have been appointed (including, if relevant, meeting the requirements of the Sponsoring Authority) and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of membership.

In making an appointment to a particular leadership or support position it may be appropriate to consider the gender and/or ethnicity of the potential appointee, in particular to ensure appropriate composition of leadership or supporting teams.

The physical and mental ability of a particular potential appointee to fulfil a particular role will always be a relevant factor to consider.

Within these constraints, and those imposed by the need to ensure:

- the safety and security of young people
- the continued development of young people and
- equal opportunities for all.

No person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:

- age
- class
- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race
- gender
- marital or sexual status
- mental or physical ability
- political or religious belief.

*Note: Paedophilia is a bar to any involvement in the Scout Movement.*

*Note: With reference to religious belief, the avowed absence of religious belief is a bar to appointment to a Leadership position.*

### **Safety Policy**

It is the policy of The Scout Association to provide Scouting in a safe manner without risk to health, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Association believes that this responsibility ranks equally with the other responsibilities incumbent upon those providing Scouting activities and functions.

It is the responsibility of all those involved in Scouting to seek, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that:

- all activities are conducted in a safe manner without risk to the health of participants
- the provision and maintenance of equipment and buildings for Members and others is safe and without risk to health and adequate for their welfare
- information, instruction, training and supervision is provided with the object of ensuring the health and safety of all those involved in Scouting activities or who may be affected by them
- appropriate arrangements are made to ensure safety and the absence of risks to health in connection with the use, transport, storage and

handling of equipment, and substances which are inherently or potentially dangerous.

### **Development Policy**

Subject to the Rules governing age ranges and mixed membership the Scout Movement is open to all young people of whatever background.

The Scout Association recognises, however, that access to Scouting is not equally available to all groups and communities across society as a whole.

The Operations sub-Committee of the Committee of the Council and the Regional Development Service at Headquarters support the Movement in its work in making Scouting available to all.

In particular, through the use of innovation and experiment, it supports local Scouting in meeting the needs of young people in areas of urban disadvantage or priority, in highly rural areas, and among the minority ethnic communities.

It also works in collaboration with other agencies to support those disadvantaged young people who might benefit from its programme and ethos, and who may never become full Members of the Movement.

### **Child Protection Policy (Young People First)**

It is the policy of The Scout Association to safeguard the welfare of all Members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Accordingly The Scout Association is committed to:

- taking into account in all its considerations and activities the interests and well-being of young people;
- respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the young people with whom it is working;
- taking all reasonable practicable steps to protect them from physical, sexual and emotional harm;
- promoting the welfare of young people and their protection within a relationship of trust.

### *Code of Behaviour:*

**DO** put this code into practice at all times

**DO** treat everyone with dignity and respect

**DO** set an example you would wish others to follow

**DO** treat all young people equally - show no favouritism

**DO** plan activities that involve more than one other person being present, or at least are within sight and hearing of others

**DO** follow recommended adult/young people ratios for meetings and activities

**DO** respect a young person's right to personal privacy

**DO** avoid unacceptable situations within a relationship of trust e.g. a sexual relationship with a youth Member over the age of consent

**DO** have separate sleeping accommodation for young people, adults and Young Leaders working with a younger Section

**DO** allow young people to talk about any concerns they may have

**DO** encourage others to challenge any attitudes or behaviours they do not like

**DO** avoid being drawn into inappropriate attention seeking behaviour e.g. tantrums and crushes

**DO** follow the Association's 'no alcohol' guidance when young people are in your care

**DO** make everyone aware of the Association's child protection procedures - young people, parents/carers, Young Leaders and other helpers

**DO** remember this code even at sensitive moments e.g. when responding to bullying, bereavement or abuse

**DO** keep other Leaders informed of where you are and what you are doing

**DO** remember someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned

**DO** take any allegations or concerns of abuse seriously and refer immediately

**DO NOT** trivialise abuse

**DO NOT** form a relationship with a young person that is an abuse of trust

**DO NOT** permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, bullying

**DO NOT** engage in inappropriate behaviour or contact - physical, verbal, sexual

**DO NOT** play physical contact games with young people

**DO NOT** make suggestive remarks or threats to a young person, even in fun

**DO NOT** use inappropriate language - writing, phoning, email or internet

**DO NOT** let allegations, suspicions, or concerns about abuse go unreported

**DO NOT** just rely on your good name to protect you

#### **If you have a concern about a young person's safety and well being:**

1. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner
4. Ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause any further concern

#### **If a young person tells you about abuse by someone else:**

1. Allow the young person to speak without interruption, accepting what is said
2. Offer immediate understanding and reassurance, while passing no judgement
3. Advise that you will try to offer support but that you must pass the information on
4. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
5. Write careful notes of what was said; use actual words wherever possible
6. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner

7. Ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause any further concern

*Note: In an emergency (young person at imminent risk of significant harm) contact police or social service/work department direct. Inform your District Commissioner of the action you have taken.*

#### **If you receive a complaint or allegation about any adult or about yourself:**

1. Immediately tell your Group Scout Leader or District Commissioner
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or was told
3. Sign, date and pass your notes to your District Commissioner
4. Try to ensure no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise

*Note: Any Adult in Scouting has the right to report any concerns, or suspicions about another Member in confidence and free from harassment.*

**You must refer; you must not investigate.**

#### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

"Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them." [*The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19*]

The Scout Association is committed to this ethos and seeks to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the prevention of all forms of bullying among Members. To this end all Scouting activities should have in place rigorous anti-bullying strategies.

#### **Responsibilities and commitments of an Appointment**

Each new Appointment will involve a number of responsibilities and commitments. These should be outlined, and explained, by your line manager when agreeing your job description.

### **Training obligations of the Appointment**

It is likely that while you will already meet many of the requirements of your new Appointment, there will be other areas where you will need further learning. In addition to this there may also be subjects for which training is obligatory. Your line manager should discuss appropriate training and learning requirements and opportunities with you.

### **More information**

More information on the Fundamentals of Scouting, and the Association's key policies, including information on responsibilities within those policies, can be found in chapters 1 and 2 of *Policy, Organisation and Rules*.

A key policies card is available from the Information Centre, to help you to explain these key policies to adults new to Scouting.