



YOUTH PROTECTION

Boy Scouts of America

A Parents' Guide To Safe Scouting



PARENTS

To realize the potential of Scouting, it is critical that the Boy Scouts of America take all possible steps to create and maintain a safe environment for all who participate. That involves understanding personal boundaries and knowing what appropriate behaviors are in Scouting. Research indicates one of the best deterrents against child abuse is an open and continuous conversation between parents and their children. The following information is offered to help your family establish and maintain a safe environment. This information can also empower you to stop abuse and seek the necessary help.

Child abuse might be a subject we would rather not talk about, but we must. Many of us find it challenging and difficult to begin this conversation with our children, and the risk is that we might never get around to it. Together, you and your program leader must work together to ensure all Youth Protection and Health and Safety policies are understood and followed. Your child and every child is that important. The information you will read is not meant to scare you. It is meant to raise your awareness about many forms of abuse and how to recognize it and report it. It is part of the BSA's commitment to creating safe environments for all youth. The Centers for Disease Control, the Vision for Violence Prevention, and youth-serving medical facilities committed to preventing child maltreatment refer to child abuse as a public health epidemic. The BSA is committed to investing resources and engaging their top experts to end all forms of child abuse and maltreatment.



HOW SCOUTING PROTECTS YOUR CHILD THE BSA'S BARRIERS TO ABUSE

Our goal in the BSA is to create and maintain a safe environment. These policies are helpful for anyone who works with children who are not theirs, and not just in Scouting. They are practices used by teachers, doctors, camp counselors, coaches, and adults who professionally work with children.

LEADER REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The chartered organization representative must approve the registration of the unit's adult leaders. Registration includes completion of application, criminal background check, mandatory YP training and Volunteer Screening Database check. YP is updated regularly.

ADULT SUPERVISION

Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. A registered female adult leader is required for units serving females.

RESPONSIBILITY

Adult leaders and youth members share the responsibility for the safety of all participants, including adherence to Youth Protection and Health and Safety policies.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Separate accommodations for adult males and females and youth males and females are required whether it is tenting, lodging cabin accommodations, or shower and latrine facilities.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The BSA has set specific program requirements in order to maintain consistent safety measures to protect youth. A few of these include 'the buddy system; open observation by parents and leaders; and required review of YP materials in handbook for rank advancement.'

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility to recognize, respond to, and report YP violations and abuse. All persons involved in BSA programs must report any instance of child abuse to local law enforcement or child protective services.

SPEAKING WITH A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES OR INDICATES ABUSE

When speaking with a child who discloses or indicates abuse, your role is to become the trusted adult. A trusted adult is someone with whom a child can talk freely about their feelings and who provides healthy support.



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Education

- Parents and youth are required to review the BSA's Youth Protection materials, available at the front of every handbook, as a condition of enrollment.
- Every application for youth membership advises parents about the basic principles of youth protection.
- Every parent completing a youth membership form acknowledges awareness of the BSA's Youth Protection policies.

Empowerment

Scouts are required to complete personal safety awareness training with parents and leaders as a requirement for rank advancement. The BSA teaches the "three R's" of youth protection, which convey an important message in a clear manner easily understood by youth members:

- **Recognize** situations that place them at risk, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
- **Respond** to suspected, attempted, or actual abuse, as well as policy violations that may prevent the full use of the barriers to abuse. If a peer is affected, reassure them that they are not to blame and encourage them to seek help.
- **Report** suspected, attempted, or actual abuse to a parent, trusted adult or law enforcement. This prevents further abuse and helps protect other children. Understand that you will not be blamed for what occurred.

Support

The Boy Scouts of America is outraged there have been times when individuals used our programs to gain access to and harm children, and for that we apologize to victims and their families. Nothing is more important than the safety of our youth members. We are committed to providing ongoing support to victims and their families, including counseling. We want to help victims heal on their own terms. Support is available to anyone currently or previously involved in the Boy Scouts of America through our dedicated 24/7 Scouts First Helpline **1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871)** or at scouts1st@scouting.org.

Review the complete Boy Scouts of America Youth Protection policy at www.scouting.org/bsayouthprotection.

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There are two types of Youth Protection–related reporting procedures all volunteers must follow:

- When you witness or suspect any child has been abused or neglected (See "Mandatory Report of Child Abuse" below).
- When you witness a violation of the BSA's Youth Protection policies. (*See below).

Mandatory Report of Child Abuse

Adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility to recognize, respond to, and report Youth Protection violations and abuse. All persons involved in BSA programs must report any instance of child abuse to local law enforcement or child protective services.

Steps to Reporting Child Abuse

- 1.) Ensure the child is in a safe environment.
- 2.) In cases of child abuse or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. In addition, if the suspected abuse is in the Scout's home or family, you are required to contact the local child abuse hotline.
- 3.) Notify the Scout executive or his/her designee.

Visit scouting.org/training/youth-protection/ to download the Incident Information Form. To learn more about incident reporting, visit scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/.

*If you think any of the BSA's Youth Protection policies have been violated, including those described within *Scouting's Barriers to Abuse*, you must notify your local council Scout executive or his/her designee so appropriate action can be taken for the safety of our Scouts.



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