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Questions and Answers About the BSA's Youth Protection

1) What policies are in place to foster Scouts' safety and well-being?

Scouting takes a multi-layered approach to youth protection. Here are the key elements:

- **Local Selection of Adult Volunteers With the Support of the National Organization:**
Local chartered organizations select and screen leaders who are known and trusted by the local community. These potential leaders then submit their application to the BSA, which submits the names to a third-party vendor for criminal background checks. Following that process, the BSA determines whether it has any information that would indicate that she or he does not meet our membership standards or has engaged in conduct that is inconsistent with the safety of youth.
- **Education and Training:**
Our education and training are specifically designed to teach Scouts, parents, and adult volunteers to recognize, resist, and report abuse—in and out of Scouting. The BSA provides parents with youth protection information on the youth application and in the parent guide found in Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbooks. Adult volunteer leaders must take Youth Protection training as a requirement for joining and must renew this training every two years. Youth also must review Youth Protection materials periodically as a requirement for rank advancement.
- **Policy Initiatives:**
We have established clear policies to help protect youth participating in our programs, including our policy that prohibits youth from being alone with an adult volunteer. These policies are clearly stated in training materials and on www.Scouting.org.

2) How are adult leaders selected?

All potential volunteer Scout leaders must apply through the unit's chartered organization. The involvement of these organizations (such as churches, schools, and civic groups) helps ensure that volunteers are known and trusted in the community. After local reference checks, approval by the chartered organization, and a national criminal background check, the applicant's information is submitted to the BSA and is checked against the organization's Ineligible Volunteer Files.

3) Have all registered adult Scout volunteers undergone criminal background checks?

Yes. All registered volunteers have undergone a criminal background check.

4) Is Youth Protection training a requirement for all adult volunteers?

Yes, all adult volunteers are required to complete mandatory Youth Protection training. To view the training, please [click here](#).

5) How is the BSA communicating with its members about sexual abuse and the things they can do to protect themselves?

Every Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbook includes a separate pamphlet that helps parents speak to their children about youth protection issues. Parents and youth review these materials periodically as the Scout advances in the program. These materials educate and empower youth members to be an active part of their safety by learning such things as the “three R’s” of Youth Protection:

- **Recognize** situations that place them at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
- **Resist** unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
- **Report** attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse and helps protect other children.

The BSA makes available Youth Protection videos and other resources to units to present on an annual basis to their members. Scouts must take Youth Protection training as a requirement for rank advancement.

To view these resources, please [click here](#).

6) What is the BSA's message to parents about youth protection issues?

Youth protection is of paramount importance to the BSA, and we are committed to making Scouting as safe as possible for all our members. Parents are our most important allies in protecting our youth. All aspects of Scouting are open to observation by parents, and we encourage them to maintain an open dialog with their children and that's why every Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbook includes a separate pamphlet that helps parents speak to their children about youth protection issues.

7) What should parents do if they suspect inappropriate behavior of any kind with a child?

All persons involved in Scouting shall 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. No person may abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person. The Scout Executive should be notified of this report, or of any violation of BSA's 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.

8) What specific steps has the BSA taken in the past decade to address volunteer misconduct within its organization and protect its members?

Recognizing that youth protection requires sustained vigilance, the BSA has continued to develop and enhance our Youth Protection policies to make Scouting as safe as possible for our members. Key enhancements of the past decade include the following:

- 2003: Initiated third-party, computerized criminal background checks on all new adult volunteers
- 2003: Introduced online Youth Protection training—“Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for

Adult Leaders and Parents”—to supplement in-person trainings.

- 2005: Revised “How to Protect Your Children” insert in Boy Scout and Cub Scout handbooks to aid parents in discussing youth protection issues with their children.
- 2005: Launched new Adult Leader Application that encourages immediate online training for Youth Protection and other immediate needs.
- 2008: Required all current volunteers to go through a criminal background check.
- 2008: Implemented Youth Protection requirements for youth to advance in rank.
- 2010: Established mandatory Youth Protection training for all of the BSA's volunteers.
- 2010: Hired a full-time Youth Protection director to continue to enhance the BSA's Youth Protection program.
- 2010: Updated Youth Protection materials to include scenario-based training to raise awareness of potential abuse—even in the Scouting program.
- 2011: Established a dedicated website focused on communicating the BSA's commitment to youth protection.
- 2011: Mandatory reporting of suspected abuse.

Throughout this period, the BSA has continued to develop and update educational materials for youth members, including a Youth Protection comic book series for Cub Scouts and personal safety awareness training videos, which are now used both within Scouting and by schools, sports programs, and other community youth groups. Most of these materials are now available in both English and Spanish.

9) Is it true the BSA maintains confidential reports on incidents of abuse within Scouting? How are they used?

Yes. The BSA is proactive in collecting and acting upon many kinds of information, including tips and hearsay, even if that information cannot be proven in a court of law. When the BSA receives such information from the local community, the BSA adds their name to the Ineligible Volunteer Files, whether or not the adults were Scout leaders and whether or not the youth involved were Scouts. Centralizing this information helps the BSA identify and keep out persons who are or might be ineligible to serve as volunteer leaders. Used in conjunction with national background checks, the Ineligible Volunteer Files enable Scouting to act more quickly, even on suspicion alone, to identify and keep out persons who have been determined to be ineligible to serve as volunteer leaders. Scouts are safer because of the Ineligible Volunteer Files.

10) Are recent enhancements to the BSA's youth protection efforts a direct response to recent litigation?

While recent litigation certainly contributes to the organization's collective knowledge, the BSA's youth protection efforts have consistently expanded along with the changing awareness of the dangers and challenges facing youth, and the BSA continues to review Youth Protection policies, procedures, and training materials to identify opportunities for continued improvement. The ongoing review and enhancement of how to best protect Scouting youth has always been the focus of the BSA and continues to include experts from various disciplines, including law enforcement and child psychology.

