

Understanding and
Preventing
Youth-on-Youth Abuse
Training for
Unit Leaders and Staff
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



SCOUTING U
Learn. Challenge. Lead.™

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Symbol Key



Content to state or share with participants



Question to ask participants and start conversation



Instructor notes and explanations

Background

The Boy Scouts of America places the greatest importance on creating the safest environment possible for our youth members. The organization's leadership has identified a need to provide additional Youth Protection training to unit leaders and staff regarding the prevention of youth-on-youth incidents that may occur during Scouting camp activities. Although the clear majority of youth enjoy a safe and wholesome experience at camp, negative and dangerous interactions are always possible. We need to be aware of not only the types of abuse that can occur between one or more youth participants but also how to build safeguards into Scout meetings, outings, and other activities to reduce or eliminate incidents. These leaders must be prepared so they can try to prevent incidents as well as recognize, react, and report when issues arise.

The BSA has created this facilitator-led syllabus with accompanying PowerPoint presentation for BSA staff, training staff and unit leaders. This course covers how to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior. The training is designed to be delivered by the camp or course directors to staff and leaders.

Emphasis has been placed on leader, volunteer, and professional responsibilities to prevent and reduce youth-on-youth incidents from occurring, utilizing established policies, procedures, and tools such as the response questionnaire for youth-on-youth incidents—and most importantly, leading by example. References to leader and staff are interchangeable throughout this lesson plan.

The module will provide instruction and talking points. Please note that some of these topics may be difficult to discuss. This training is designed to be a safe place for discussion of these topics before we face the tough situations in real life.

In addition, because camps and training courses are held in states across the United States, it is important that anyone running a camp or training course be aware of the reporting requirements for their specific state.

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Youth-on-Youth Incidents

Time: 10 minutes

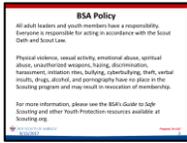
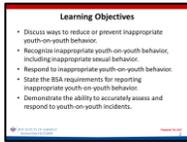
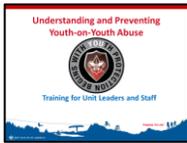
Objectives

The overall objective of this course is to improve the ability of seasonal staff, training staff and unit leaders to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior, including inappropriate sexual behavior, that might occur in any Scouting program.

- Discuss ways to reduce or prevent inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
 - Recognize inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior, including inappropriate sexual behavior.
 - Respond to inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
 - State the BSA requirements for reporting inappropriate youth-on-youth behavior.
 - Demonstrate the ability to accurately assess and respond to youth-on-youth incidents.
-

Materials

- PowerPoint presentation
 - Flip charts and markers
-



Introduction

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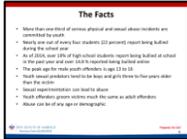
Youth-on-youth incidents are something we would rather not talk or even think about, but we must. Abuse does not always fit neatly into one category or a typical pattern or type of behavior. It may cross into multiple areas, including bullying, hazing, physical contact, sexual talk, initiations, games, exposure to inappropriate materials, and sexual contact and assault. It may be a single incident or evolve over several escalating incidents.

It's important that we remind everyone that youth-on-youth abuse can occur in Scouting during any activity, but especially where observation or adult supervision is limited. This includes overnight activities and events that occur in less-structured environments as well as secluded areas in regular meeting places. Higher risk situations include overnight hotel stays, overnight tenting and camping, and situations involving group latrine and/or showering facilities. Other factors may include youth with known and serious cognitive and behavior issues.

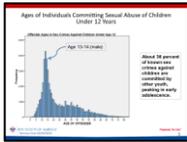
All adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility for acting in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, sexual activity, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, unauthorized weapons, hazing, discrimination, harassment, initiation rites, bullying, cyberbullying, theft, verbal insults, drugs, alcohol, and pornography have no place in the Scouting program and may result in revocation of membership.

This training cannot cover all possible types of incidents. Remember that good judgment, common sense, and placing the safety of the Scout first will always be of paramount importance. For more information, please see the BSA's Guide to Safe Scouting and other Youth Protection resources available at www.scouting.org.

The Facts



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Shows gender of target and age of perpetrator.



- More than one-third of serious physical and sexual abuse incidents are committed by youth according to the U.S. Department of Justice, Juvenile Justice Bulletin, 2009, “Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offenses Against Minors”.
- Nearly one out of every four students or 22 percent report being bullied during the school year according to the National Center for Education Statistics, 2015. Further, 19.6 percent of high school students report being bullied at school in the past year; 14.8 percent report being bullied online (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).
- Research indicates the peak age for male youth offenders is age 13 to 16.
- Targets of (sexual) abuse tend to be boys and girls three to five years of age younger than the perpetrator.
- Sexual experimentation can lead to abuse.
- Youth offenders who groom and abuse can be of any age or demographic.

Now Is the Time

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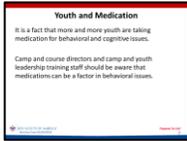


- Youth safety can be leveraged into a culture.
 - Youth watching out for youth
 - Willingness to tell adults what they see and fear
- Leaders and staff must foster a safe environment by building on the youth-driven culture of keeping peers safe from harm.
- Youth have become acutely aware of safety issues due to school shootings and media coverage of national abuse cases.



Youth and Medication

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One area to be aware of is that more and more youth are taking medication for behavioral and cognitive issues. Staff, training staff and unit leaders are encouraged to inquire about known issues at pre-camp and leader meetings to ensure a positive experience for all. Unit leaders and staff should be aware that medications can be a factor in behavioral issues.



Unit leadership should coordinate and communicate with Camp Directors and need to know staff on any medication and behavior issues

Situational Awareness

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The effectiveness of the BSA’s Youth Protection program depends on the commitment of every leader to remain situationally aware and be willing to act when indicated. The consequences of one incident can be devastating for all involved.



Simply put, situational awareness is being aware of everything going on around you. It means adopting an attitude that recognizes that if it does not seem or sound right, the situation mandates further investigation (awareness).

Youth protection can be achieved only through the shared involvement of everyone in Scouting. If we fail to keep our Scouts safe, the consequences can be devastating to the youth, family, and unit.

Experience

Staff and unit leaders should be mindful of older staff and youth members going into the cabins and tents of younger staff and youth members and performing an



“initiation”. Examples include holding down the target, so the “initiation” can be performed. This is hazing and must be stopped. At a minimum, it may be classified as a criminal offense, but it could be considered an assault or a sexual assault.

Solutions include:

- Addressing this activity as a part of the sexual harassment training for all camp and youth leadership training staff. This training is in addition to the unlawful sexual harassment training that is required of all staff. Many incidents occur during the operation of summer camp and youth leadership training courses that fall outside of this training.
- Assigning a staff resident advisor in each cabin. This RA is responsible for each member of the cabin (eight to a cabin).
- In staff settings, having separate conversations with each age group and gender about appropriate behavior, locations and situations where they are and are not allowed, appropriate attire, appropriate interactions, and hazing.
- Reinforcing the policy that NO adults or adult participants (over 18) are to be in the youth (under 18) lodging.

“Youth-Led” Requires Appropriate Supervision



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BSA Policy:

- Youth leadership and Scout behavior is monitored by adult leaders.

Areas of Concern:

- Increasing number of youth abuse incidents, damage to property, fights, and Code of Conduct violations

- Group and cyber bullying
- Sexual experimentation
- Harassment (gender, gender identity, race, religion, nationality, etc.)
- Invasion of privacy



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Areas of Emphasis:

- Youth protection is not a check the box training
 - Understanding the dynamics of longer-term camping and training courses
- Continuous presence - Leaders not taking a break/backseat
- Unsupervised and inappropriate discipline - Leaving discipline to youth/camp staff
- Turning a blind eye to pranks/vandalism - Adopting a "They are just kids being kids" attitude
- Incident numbers increasing as camp progresses
- Impermissible traditions and rituals vs. approved program



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Recommendations:

- Facilitate a youth-led but adult supervised program.
- Monitor youth leadership and behavior.
- Provide adequate leadership including the investigation of "sights and sounds." Especially at night.
- Actively engage and intervene.
- Discuss lights out and bed checks.
- Present pre-camp Youth Protection sessions.
- Discuss differences in the roles of camp staff and adult unit leaders.



- Leaders serve in a guidance capacity and may never abdicate that responsibility.
- Leaders anticipate, identify, and monitor high-risk areas specific to programs.
- Encourage a “when in doubt” ask questions culture
- Random tent/bed checks adhering to Youth Protection policies



What are some incidents you have encountered in the past that were aggravated by lack of adult supervision? How can we plan so that these things do not happen in the future?



Keep the conversation focused and specific, working to identify and plan for known concerns.

Camp and Training Traditions vs. the BSA Program



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Areas of Concern:

- Traditions that are not authorized or are prohibited in BSA programs may, in fact, be abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing, initiations, or violations of the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and state law.
 - Initiations and humiliating acts such as



- paddling, blindfolding, nudity, etc.
- Tying up or restraining
- Requiring singing or other acts to recover lost items
- Even innocent challenges can get out of hand
 - Taunting due to physical inability to swim, run or do push-ups
 - Loss of competition due to individual performance

Examples include initiations and humiliating acts such as paddling a Scout; tying a Scout to a tree; forcing a Scout to sing for lost items; or taunting due to physical limitations such as failure to run or the inability to do push-ups.



*Are you aware of some other activities or areas of concern?
How can we address these concerns so that they do not happen in Scouting?*



Keep the conversation focused and specific, working to identify and plan for known areas of concerns.



Areas of Emphasis:

- Youth or, worse, adults saying, “It’s tradition; we have always done it”
- Adults turning a blind eye to avoid dealing with it or implicitly accepting the behavior
- Evening and nighttime hours
- Scouts engaging in unsupervised activities in secluded areas
- New-to-Scouting youth and younger youth victimized by older youth seeking retaliation for when they were abused, hazed, or initiated
- Fear of being “the one” to break or end the “tradition”

Bullying Is a Growing Problem



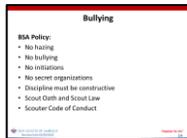
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Bullying is a widespread and serious societal problem that has a negative impact on the “target.” (We do not use the term “victim.”) Nationally, more than one-third of serious physical and sexual abuse incidents occur at the hands of other youth who are older or in positions of leadership and able to manipulate using their size or knowledge difference. In Scouting, outdoor settings may provide opportunities when continuous adult supervision is not possible.

Bullying can occur in latrines and showers or other areas where there is limited adult supervision. All forms of bullying can be contributing factors to self-harm and suicidal thoughts.

Bullying



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BSA Policy:

- No hazing
- No bullying
- No initiations
- No secret organizations
- Constructive discipline
- Scout Oath and Scout Law
- Scouter Code of Conduct

Bullying at Camp or Training: Situational

Awareness



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Areas of Concern:

- Group/gang bullying (roving bully groups) of youth away from their home unit
- Pushing youth out of meal lines
- Pinning, threatening, or touching youth in restroom or shower facilities
- Making fun of/targeting youth with disabilities and other perceived differences that include obesity, sexual orientation, minority or social status, or religious faith
- Pantsing, pulling back/down shower curtains
- Ridicule or group verbal abuse, including serious or excessive teasing (i.e., merit badge or group activities)
- Name calling
- Insulting nicknames
- Derogatory statements about social status, religion, national origin, race, color, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, personal appearance, intelligence, habits, hobbies, school performance, physical size, ability, appearance, and similar personal subjects



Areas of Emphasis:

- Large environment and anonymity of camp setting conducive to negative behavior
- Difficulty identifying culprits due to multiple units unknown to each other
- Fear of reprisal
- Fear by targeted and victimized youth
- Unengaged leaders



Unfortunately, most incidents of abuse of youth are not stopped and go unreported. This occurs for



several reasons:

- Youth are often afraid no one will believe them, or they will not be accepted if they say something about the abuse.
- The youth may feel responsible or blame themselves for the abuse or feel that others will see them as weak for “letting” it happen or not standing up for themselves.
- Some youth may have participated in an activity and later regretted it or realized that they were manipulated. Youth are often intimidated by the perpetrator, whether an adult, older youth, or peer. And the unknown can be a scary thing. What will happen to them or the perpetrator if they speak up?

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Recommendations:

- Scout-like behavior does not include any form of abusive behavior. Participating or engaging in abuse may result in immediate removal from camp activities and Scouting. Abuse will be reported to law enforcement when appropriate or required.
- See it, stop it, report it. Remove perpetrators immediately if warranted.
- Require more adult supervision in target areas (latrines, changing areas, showers).
- Hold pre-camp meeting to explicitly state behaviors that will not be tolerated.
- Put an emphasis on large buddy groups for safety.
- Emphasize to youth that voicing opinions is OK and safe.
- Discuss bystander/upstander responsibility.
- Recognize those who report/upstanders.
- Pass information up the chain



You are the key to creating a safe, environment for Scouting youth. You define the expectations. Experts say that leaders can sometimes tell when a youth who



is new to the unit may become a target for bullying. Individual factors such as temperament, social competence, physical condition (e.g., overweight/underweight), speaking another language at home, special health-care needs, perceived differences (e.g., sexual identity or orientation, race/ethnicity, religion), or the presence of a disability may put a youth at greater risk of being bullied. Leaders should be reminded to identify these youth and take measures to help ensure their smooth integration into the unit.

Leader intervention is key, because youth may be reluctant to report abuse. It is important to repeat key messages, reinforce the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and encourage youth reporting. Youth need to understand that it is their role to watch out for others and it's OK to report all abuse and safety concerns to leaders.



Recognize the Upstander

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An upstander is someone who takes action, particularly when the easiest or most acceptable course is to be a bystander and do nothing. An upstander in Scouting always applies the Barriers to Abuse and the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and does not allow another to be bullied, harassed, or abused.

- Be an upstander; get involved.
 - If you see something, stop it.
 - If you know or suspect something, report it.
 - If you are not sure, seek advice from an expert.

Scouts First Helpline

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Bullying is a serious issue that requires immediate intervention by adults.



In instances where there is a threat of physical harm or serious mental health concerns, immediately report to law enforcement and the Scout executive, and if unavailable, contact the Scouts First Helpline at 844-Scouts1 (844-726-8871).

Ensure notification has been made to the parents/guardian.

What are some bullying incidents you have encountered in the past? How were these incidents dealt with? Is there anything we can plan to do so that these things do not happen in the future?

Keep the conversation focused and specific, working to identify and plan for known concerns.



Lack of Respect/Harassment of Coed Staff and Participants



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Areas of Concern:

- Unwanted sexual or suggestive advances and harassment
- Verbal harassment and use of disrespectful terms
- Unwanted touching

This is an overlooked area of preparation for scouting activities. Nearly all camps and training courses have coed staff and participants. Many youth attending camp have not experienced a resident situation with coed peers. It's important that all Scouts understand what is expected of them with regard to their behavior and how to interact with co-ed staff and participants.

Areas of Emphasis:

- Jokes, smirks, photo taking, pointing, ogling
- “Peeping Tom” activities in private areas
- Leaders and youth “leering” at others in pools, lakefront, climbing wall areas
- Game such as “Guess What Color?” and “ranking” other youth or staff
- Leader comments such as “Females don't belong at camp” and “Females are inferior counselors”
- Failure of leadership to prepare youth by setting proper expectations and providing proper examples
- Immature youth in coed environment
- Youth not accustomed to being around members of the opposite sex

These and other like behaviors will NOT be tolerated.

Harassment



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Define Expectations:

- Immediately and appropriately call attention to the behavior—be obvious that action is being taken without causing shame or embarrassment.
- Use the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Code of Conduct as tools.
- Require respectful conduct by all leaders, staff, and youth.
- Make it clear that sexual matters of any type have no place in Scouting—including relationships, discussions, and online content.

Create a Culture for a Safe Environment



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Recommendations:

- Post information on the Scouts First Helpline (1-844-726-8871), which offers 24/7 reporting and support.
- Give youth permission/encouragement to report to “protect your own.”
- Explain the difference between bystanders and upstanders.
- Recognize upstander behavior *in an appropriate manner*.
- Encourage group reflection on expected behavior.

What are some incidents you have encountered in the past? Remember that the issue may not just be coed. There may be same-sex incidents we need to be aware of as well. How can we plan so that these things do not happen in the future?



Keep the conversation focused and specific, working to identify and plan for known concerns.



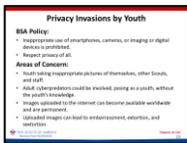


Invasions of Privacy

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Having and enforcing BSA and camp policies on the use of cellphones, tablets, and cameras can do a lot to help prevent the invasion of others' privacy. As a part of those policies, electronic devices should never be allowed in restrooms or any other places where privacy is expected. If a device is found in one of those areas, secure the device and immediately notify the camp director or Scout executive.



Privacy Invasions by Youth

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BSA Policy:

- Inappropriate use of smartphones, cameras, or imaging or digital devices is prohibited.
- Respect privacy of all.

Areas of Concern:

- Youth taking inappropriate pictures of themselves, other Scouts, and staff
- Possible involvement of adult cyberpredators, posing as a youth, without the youth's knowledge
- Permanency and worldwide availability of images uploaded to the internet
- Possibility of uploaded images leading to embarrassment, extortion, and sextortion

Areas of Emphasis:

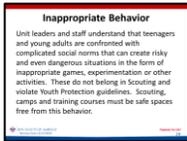
- Wide availability of smartphones for youth
- The ease of taking pictures/videos
- The ease of uploading and sharing images/videos
- Apps like Snapchat that make it difficult for police to recover sent/shared/deleted sexting images

Recommendations:



- Abide by the camp policy for the use of cellphones and tablets before camp begins, share the policy with campers, and then follow through.
- Do not allow devices in restrooms.
- Immediately notify your camp director if an incident occurs.

Inappropriate Behavior



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Leaders and staff understand that teenagers and young adults are confronted with complicated social norms that can create risky and even dangerous situations in the form of inappropriate games, experimentation, or other activities. These do not belong in Scouting and violate Youth Protection guidelines. Scouting and camps must be safe spaces free from this behavior.

BSA Policy:

- Adult leaders and youth members share the responsibility for the safety of all participants in the program, including adherence to Youth Protection and health and safety policies.
- 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 BSA's *Guide to Safe Scouting* and other Youth Protection resources available at www.scouting.org.

Youth abusers may use enticements, gifts, game playing, initiation and favoritism as a ruse to engage younger and impressionable youth into inappropriate activities. Some youth may use a technique such as, “Let me give you” or “Let me show you” things like porn, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or other inappropriate materials or say things like, “You’re so much more mature than the other Scouts your age.”

Consensual and Nonconsensual Relationships – Youth-on-Youth



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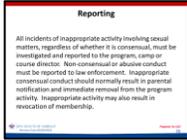
BSA policy clearly states that sexual activity and all forms of public displays of affection are prohibited. Public displays of affection include holding hands, frontal embraces, and kissing.

- It is natural for youth to create relationships and friendships.
- Supervision, monitoring, and communication by adult leaders and camp staff are key elements in preventing the following:
 - Youth engaging in any form of sexual activity
 - Youth engaging in abusive nonconsensual sexual activity or relationships
 - Youth attempting to meet up
 - Inappropriate public displays of affection and ALL sexual activity is prohibited in Scouting.

Strict adherence to Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse is key. Adult supervision during tenting and nighttime activities is critical as well as monitoring high-risk areas (e.g., restrooms and changing areas).

This also includes not assigning youth members more than two years apart in age to sleep in the same tent and enforcing policies prohibiting the use of alcohol and drugs. Additional key barriers include use of the buddy system and respect for privacy.

Reporting



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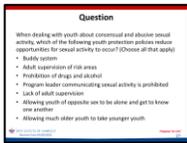
All incidents of inappropriate activity involving sexual matters, regardless of whether it is consensual, must be investigated and reported to the camp or course director.



Nonconsensual or abusive conduct must be reported to law enforcement.

Inappropriate consensual conduct should normally result in parental notification and immediate removal from the program activity. Inappropriate activity may also result in revocation of membership.

Question



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When dealing with youth about consensual and abusive sexual activity, which of the following youth protection policies reduce opportunities for sexual activity to occur? (Choose all that apply.)



- Buddy system
- Adult supervision of risk areas
- Prohibition of drugs and alcohol
- Program leader communicating that sexual activity is prohibited
- Lack of adult supervision
- Allowing youth of opposite sex to be alone and get to know one another
- Allowing much older youth to take younger youth



All Apply.

Allow time to discuss how these youth protection policies reduce opportunities for sexual activity to occur.





Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted 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. Those who serve in positions of leadership and supervision with youth outside the Scouting program will find these policies help protect youth in those situations as well.

You should make sure that you and those you work with in Scouting are aware of and follow these policies. They can be found at:

www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/

Responding to Policy Violations and Abuse

There are two types of Youth Protection-related reporting:

If you witness or suspect any child has been abused or neglected, follow the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy.

If there is a violation of the BSA's Youth Protection policies that put a youth at risk, follow the BSA's Reporting Violations of BSA Youth Protection Policies guidelines.

A violation of BSA Youth Protection policies is not always a case of child abuse. It may indicate a potential for abuse or an action being misinterpreted as a violation of a policy, such as no one-on-one contact, which would require steps to educate the violator. Common sense and good judgment must always be used.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse



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While the BSA has mandated that all Scouters are required to report abuse (see Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse), state reporting requirements vary. Immediate notification to the camp director and/or the council Scout executive is required. If unavailable contact the Scouts First Helpline at 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871) to ensure proper reporting has occurred. See “Your Responsibility” (in Scouting’s Barriers to 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, or exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child sexual abuse materials, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. No person may abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person. This duty cannot be delegated to any other person. State laws may mandate how and when abuse is reported; local councils should provide that information to all leaders.

Some states may define emotional abuse requiring mandatory reporting to include serious forms of bullying or harassment; be familiar with what your state requires.

Because these reports are required by law, mandated reporters of abuse should be told they are required to report to proper authorities. Discuss allegations or reports of abuse only with proper authorities, the Scout executive, and the Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1/1-844-726-8871). This helps prevent rumors, speculation, and misinformation from being disseminated.

Reporting Serious Violations

of BSA Youth Protection Policies



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If you have reason to believe any of the BSA's Youth Protection policies, including those described within Scouting's Barriers to Abuse, have been violated and that a youth was put at risk, you must immediately notify the camp director or council Scout executive. If unavailable, contact the Scouts First Helpline at 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871).

If you have reason to believe a BSA's Youth Protection policy or any of the Barriers to Abuse have been violated but no youth was put at risk it still must be reported to the leader of the unit, program or event.

Incidents requiring immediate notification to the Scout executive, camp director, Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1/1-844-726-8871), or event leader (and, if appropriate or requested, law enforcement officials) include:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability
- Any situation where the BSA'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 necessary, immediate additional action should be taken to provide for the safety of the person making the threat)

It's imperative that all leaders demonstrate the ability to accurately assess and respond to youth-on-youth issues.

Summary

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Clear communication with leaders about expectations is vital as leaders can help minimize the risk of youth-on-youth incidents by active vigilance of the environment and behavior of youth. Leaders should ask questions or look into suspicious behavior or circumstances, as well as curious sights and sounds. By reinforcing and enforcing Youth Protection guidelines, leaders help keep Scouts safe.



The BSA requires that abuse and youth protection violations be properly reported, managed, and documented. Remember that Scout safety and youth protection are everyone's business.

PowerPoint Slide – Optional



Allow time for additional questions.



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Appendix

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Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

Note to facilitator: Always check

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/qss/qss01/#a> for most recent version; print copies for your class.

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA 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. All parents and caregivers should understand that our leaders are to abide by these safeguards. Parents and youth are strongly encouraged to use these safeguards outside the Scouting program. Registered leaders must follow these guidelines with all Scouting youth outside of Scouting activities.

Registration Requirements

The chartered organization representative, or in their absence the executive officer of the chartered organization, must approve the registration of the unit's adult leaders.

Registration includes:

- Completion of application including criminal background check and mandatory Youth Protection training
- Volunteer Screening Database check

Current Youth Protection training is required for leaders when renewing their registration or at unit charter renewal.

Adult program participants must register as adults and follow Youth Protection policies.

Adult Supervision

Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided. ([FAQ's](#))

All adults accompanying a Scouting unit who are present at the activity for 72 total hours or more must be registered as leaders. The 72 hours need not be consecutive.

One-on-one contact between adult leaders and youth members is prohibited both inside and outside of Scouting. ([Transportation FAQ's](#))

- In situations requiring a personal conference, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.

- Private online communications (texting, phone calls, chat, IM, etc.) must include another registered leader or parent.
- Communication by way of social media (Facebook, Snapchat, etc.) must include another registered leader or parent.

Discipline must be constructive.

- Discipline must reflect Scouting's values.
- Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are also prohibited.

Responsibility

Leaders must ensure that all participating in Scouting activities abide by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

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

- Adult leaders are responsible for monitoring behavior and intervening when necessary.
- 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.

All leaders are required to adhere to the Scouter Code of Conduct.

Accommodations

Separate accommodations for adult males and females and youth males and females are required.

Tenting

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth.
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Cub Scouting, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family.
- In all other programs, youth and adults tent separately. ([FAQ](#))
- Spouses may share tents.

Lodging/Cabin Accommodations

Whenever possible, separate cabins or lodging should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. Where separate accommodations cannot be provided due to group size or limited availability, modifications may be made. Where completely separate accommodations are not available, additional supervision is required. ([FAQ](#))

- If adults and youth of the same gender occupy single-room accommodations, there must be a minimum of two adults and four youth, with all adults being Youth Protection trained.
- Physical separation by other means, including temporary barriers or space, should be used only when no other arrangements are possible.
- These modifications are limited to single-gender accommodations.

Restrooms

Separate shower and latrine facilities should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate times should be scheduled and posted.

Privacy of youth is respected.

- Adults and youth must respect each other's privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp.
- Adult leaders should closely monitor these areas but only enter as needed for youth protection or health and safety reasons.

Program Requirements

The buddy system should be used.

The use of smartphones, cameras, mirrors, drones, etc., in places or situations where privacy is expected is prohibited.

All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

The BSA does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program.

Hazing and initiations are prohibited and have no part during any Scouting activity.

All forms of bullying and harassment including verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited.

Inappropriate public displays of affection are prohibited.

Sexual activity is prohibited.

Appropriate attire is required for all activities.

Reporting Requirements

Adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility to recognize, respond to, and report Youth Protection violations and abuse.

Reporting

Youth Protection Policy Violations

- Serious Youth Protection policy violations or behaviors that put a youth's safety at risk must be reported to the Scout executive.
- Alternatively, policy violations may be reported to the Scouts First Helpline when the Scout executive is not available.
- Online reporting is also available at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

- All persons participating in Scouting programs are mandated reporters of child abuse.
- Reports must be made to local law enforcement and child protective services. State law may require additional reporting.
- This reporting duty cannot be delegated to any other person.

- Reporting to the Scout executive or Scouts First Helpline ensures that follow-up can occur for the safety of our Scouts. Scout executives and Scouts First coordinate follow-up actions.

Scouts First Helpline

As part of its “Scouts First” approach to the protection and safety of youth, the BSA has established a dedicated 24-hour helpline to receive reports of known or suspected abuse or behavior that might put a youth at risk.

1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871)

When to use it:

- Anytime you believe a youth has been harmed or their safety and wellbeing is at risk, and you cannot immediately reach your Scout executive or local council.
- If a Scout is bullied because of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and local help is unable to resolve the problem.

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

BSA Incident Reporting Resources:

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/

Additional Resources:

[Youth Protection Webpage](#)

[Youth Protection Training](#) 

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#)

[Scouter Code of Conduct](#) 

State-by-state mandatory reporting information: www.childwelfare.gov

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Boy Scouts of America Scouter Code of Conduct

On my honor, I promise to do my best to comply with this Boy Scouts of America Scouter Code of Conduct while serving in my capacity as an adult leader:

1. I have or will complete my registration with the Boy Scouts of America, answering all questions truthfully and honestly.
2. I will do my best to live up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, obey all laws, and hold others in Scouting accountable to those standards. I will exercise sound judgment and demonstrate good leadership and use the Scouting program for its intended purpose consistent with the mission of the Boy Scouts of America.
3. I will make the protection of youth a personal priority. I will complete and remain current with youth protection training requirements. I will be familiar with and follow:
 - a. BSA youth protection policies and guidelines, including mandatory reporting: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/
 - b. *The Guide to Safe Scouting*: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/
 - c. The Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/resources/sweet16/
4. When transporting Scouts, I will obey all laws, comply with youth protection guidelines, and follow safe driving practices.
5. I will respect and abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, BSA policies, and BSA-provided training, including but not limited to, those relating to:
 - a. Unauthorized fundraising activities
 - b. Advocacy on social and political issues, including prohibited use of the BSA uniform and brand
 - c. Bullying, hazing, harassment, and unlawful discrimination of any kind
6. I will not discuss or engage in any form of sexual conduct while engaged in Scouting activities. I will refer Scouts with questions regarding these topics to talk to their parents or spiritual advisor.
7. I confirm that I have fully disclosed and will disclose in the future any of the following:
 - a. Any criminal suspicion, charges or convictions of a crime or offense involving abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or any misconduct involving minors or juveniles
 - b. Any investigation or court order involving domestic violence, child abuse, or similar matter
 - c. Any criminal charges or convictions for offenses involving controlled substances, driving while intoxicated, firearms, or dangerous weapons.
8. I will not possess, distribute, transport, consume, or use any of the following items prohibited by law or in violation of any Scouting rules, regulations, and policies:
 - a. Alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, including marijuana.
 - b. Concealed or unconcealed firearms, fireworks, or explosives.
 - c. Pornography or materials containing words or images inconsistent with Scouting values.
9. If I am taking prescription medications with the potential of impairing my functioning or judgment, I will not engage in activities which would put Scouts at risk, including driving or operating equipment.
10. I will take steps to prevent or report any violation of this code of conduct by others in connection with Scouting activities.

Signature

Date