

UPDATES

SCOUTING SAFELY

UPDATED Policies and
Guidelines for District and
Council Overnight events

SCAN FOR RESOURCES



Excerpts from:
The Guide to Safe Scouting
The Outdoor Program Committee Guide
BSA Policies & Guidelines



BOY SCOUTS
OF AMERICA®

Hawkeye Area Council

www.hawkeyebsa.org



OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFE SCOUTING



The Hawkeye Area Council and the Boy Scouts of America place great importance on creating the most secure environment possible for our youth members. To maintain such an environment, the BSA has developed numerous procedural and leadership selection policies and provides parents and leaders with resources for its programs.

The council requires all participants in its programs to be aware of and adhere to all measures designed to protect our youth. These are the BSA's youth safety guidelines for conducting multiple-unit, district, and council overnight events. *The Guide to Safe Scouting*, *The Outdoor Program Committee Guide*, and other BSA policies and guidelines apply to all camping and overnight activities involving Scout youth.

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

The BSA is **updating the adult supervision requirements** for overnight activities. This update enhances the minimum “two-deep leadership” requirements by additionally requiring **every adult** 18 years or older present on overnight activities to be a **registered member** of the BSA.

There is a **limited exception for parents and court-appointed legal guardians** (“guardian” or “guardians”) of Cub Scout youth attending overnight events with their own children or wards (“own child” or “own children”) due to the family-centric nature of Cub Scouting.

The following pages include excerpts and policies from the BSA's safety documents





PROTECTING OUR YOUTH

Unit Leaders are responsible for the care and safety of the Scouting youth during all Scout activities, including during attendance at summer camps, district, and council events.

Units and Unit Leaders who do not adhere to the adult registration, YPT and other BSA guidelines and policies risk personal liability for any incidents or accidents that may occur as the BSA insurance and indemnification programs do not extend to non-registered or non-YPT compliant adults.

Please refer to ***The Guide to Safe Scouting*** for the most current information on safety in Scout programs.

If you have questions or concerns about Youth Protection, contact Sarah Dawson, Scout Executive at Sarah.Dawson@Scouting.org or 319-862-0541.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)
[Youth Protection and Barriers to Abuse FAQs](#)

BSA REGISTRATION AND YOUTH PROTECTION TRAINING



Cub Scouts

All adults **EXCEPT** parents or guardians **must** be registered with the BSA in fee-required positions to camp or participate in any overnight activities with Cub Scouts.

This includes Wolf, Bear and Webelos summer camp; Webelos Adventure Weekend; unit, district, or council-organized Family Camp; or district Camporees such as Arrow of Light Webelos participating in events hosted and run by Scouts BSA troops.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines also apply to any council special events when Cub Scouts are camping or otherwise participating in activities overnight, even if the event includes other program levels of Scouting.

Note that the parent/guardian registration exemption does NOT extend to family members such as aunts/uncles, grandparents, or other persons even if they are living in the youth's household but are not a parent or guardian.

Lion Cub Partner or Tiger Cub Partner does NOT meet this registration requirement.



Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts & Venturing

All adults INCLUDING parents or court-appointed legal guardians (“guardian” or “guardians”) **must be registered** with BSA in fee-required adult positions* to camp or participate in any overnight activities with Scouts BSA.

NOTE: A Merit Badge Counselor does not meet this registration requirement. Sea Scouts and Venturers adult program participants ages 18-20 must meet the same registration and YPT requirements as other adults.

YOUTH PROTECTION TRAINING IS REQUIRED FOR ALL ADULTS

This is for adults 18+ including parents or guardians participating in camping or other overnight activities. Adults must complete online mandatory BSA Youth Protection Training and retake the course at least every two years.

YPT is provided online only at [My.Scouting.org](https://my.scouting.org). All adults in attendance at campouts must have a current certificate of YPT that is valid through every day of overnight camping or overnight activities with the Scouts, which includes summer camps; unit campouts or “lock-ins” and district/council camping or other overnight events such as Webelos Adventure Weekend.

- Individuals with expired YPT or who are not registered with BSA (noting the parental/guardian exception for Cub Scouts) may NOT participate in overnight Scouting activities.
- Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities including all 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 or female adult program participants.
- Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.
- The unit registration and YPT requirements do not include adults participating in open family events not involving overnight activities, such as a district Pinewood Derby; Scout Day at sports venues or fundraising events where the public are encouraged to attend; nor does it apply to adults only providing transportation to Scouts without any supervision of the youth by the driver at the unit activity upon arrival. All adults, including those not registered with BSA are encouraged to take the online YPT courses.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA TENTING POLICIES



Cub Scouts

In **Cub Scouting** programs **ONLY**, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family, including siblings that may be registered in other BSA programs.

- Youth in Bear and younger age groups must sleep in a tent with their own parent or guardian. Webelos youth may tent with another youth of the same gender and within two years of age, or they may tent with their parent or guardian.

Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts, Venturing

For **Scouts BSA**, **Sea Scouts**, and **Venturing** youth participants shall tent with other youth participants of the same gender and within two years of age. Adults 18+ cannot tent with youth under the age of 18.

- Sea Scouts and Venturing programs: Adult participants ages 18-20 also cannot tent with youth under the age of 18.
- Youth who are registered with HAC with a special need or disability who may require a parent or guardian to tent with them whether at a unit or district/council event or summer camp, must develop a plan in conjunction with the HAC Scout Executive Sarah Dawson to address their specific needs.
- Where multiple program levels of Scouting are participating in an overnight activity, organizers should provide spaces designed to maintain discrete unit integrity by allocating adequate space for each participating pack, troop, ship or crew to camp as a separate unit. Within such spaces, units shall be responsible to maintain privacy with separate tents for families, for youth by gender and age, and for adults by gender.



THE BUDDY SYSTEM

The Buddy System is to be used for **ALL** activities, including unit, district and council activities.

If a unit does not have two youth who meet the Buddy System gender and age requirements, the unit cannot conduct the activity unless it cooperates with another unit at the same program level to provide buddies that meet the necessary age and gender requirements.

CUB SCOUTS

For Cub Scouts in Bear and younger age groups, the parent or guardian shall be the youth's buddy.

WEBELOS, SCOUTS BSA SEA SCOUTS & VENTURING

For Webelos, Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts and Venturing, the Buddy System requires that two (and not more than three) youth participants of the same gender and within two years of age are joined together for tenting and participating in any activities where they are not part of a larger group of Scouts and under the direct supervision of at least two registered leaders.

Note: For the Sea Scouts and Venturing programs, adult program participants ages 18-20 cannot be buddies with youth under the age of 18.

**OUR
COMMITMENT**
TO SAFE SCOUTING



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA POLICES AND GUIDELINES



THE SCOUT OATH & LAW



On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.



THE OUTDOOR CODE



As an American, I will do my best to:

Be clean in my outdoor manners.

Be careful with fire.

Be considerate in the outdoors.

Be conservation minded.



THE GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING



The Guide to Safe Scouting is an overview of Scouting policies and procedures gleaned from a variety of sources.

For some items, the policy statements are complete.

Unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting such activities.

All youth and adult participants are expected to act in accordance with the **Scout Oath**, **Scout Law**, **Outdoor Code** and follow the current edition of [**The Guide to Safe Scouting**](#).

- 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.
- Each activity area will follow BSA requirements for Youth Protection and the appropriate safety guidelines for the specific activity (such as water activities, climbing, shooting sports). The camp Staff and Commissioners shall be trained in these safety measures to the level required by the BSA. The Staff and Commissioners will uniformly enforce these safety and Youth Protection rules.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

AGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

When planning the activities for the youth, give particular attention to whether the events are **age-appropriate** and of the type permitted by BSA for that specific program level.

3 Important references for planning and conducting activities

1. [Age-Appropriate Guidelines](#)
2. [Prohibited Activities](#)
3. [SAFE Checklist](#)



- Note that within the Cub Scout program, age-appropriate and permitted activities are different for Lions, Tigers, Wolves, Bears and Webelos youth; and that Scouts BSA and Sea Scouts/Venturing youth also have program differences, even though the youth may be the same age.
- Event and Unit Leaders must take proper care to comply with these guidelines to protect the youth and to be covered by BSA insurance.

[SAFETY MOMENTS](#)

Unit Leaders are strongly encouraged to incorporate safety moments into all activities that are shared with the youth and/or adults, including at regular unit meetings, campouts and daily while attending summer camps. Safety Moments are opportunities to prepare for an activity, review safety measures and report incidents correctly.

The BSA has prepared presentations on numerous topics in a new series that includes incident reporting helps, safe use of medication in Scouting, weather-related safety, winter activity, and winter sports. These can be found at **Safety Moments**. Some Safety Moments are for an Adult Audience Only, which will be indicated at the top of the Safety Moments page.

OTHER ACTIVITIES TO PROTECT YOUTH & ADULTS

National BSA Youth Protection Standards must always be followed by every person at the event - Scouts, Unit Leaders, Parents/Guardians, Commissioners, Staff and Visitors - NO EXCEPTIONS.

•ABUSE & BULLYING

Anyone caught or suspected of abusing a Scout will be required to immediately leave camp property pending outcome of the investigation by the local law enforcement. All forms of bullying, hazing and harassment including verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, and cyberbullying are prohibited as forms of Scout abuse and will be prosecuted.

•MANDATORY REPORTING

Every Adult Leader, Parent/Guardian, Commissioner and Staff member is a mandatory reporter of violations of youth protection laws which requires you to report any actual or suspected incident of abuse.

Youth protection incidents are not to be investigated by Units or HAC Staff. The person discovering the suspected abuse should personally inform the Event Director or Scout Executive Sarah Dawson immediately but should not discuss the incident with others nor attempt to investigate any alleged incident. It is extremely important that you not discuss any suspected or known abuse that you have reported with any camper, leader, or Staff member other than the Event Director or Scout Executive to whom you have reported.

The reporter has legal protection from being revealed as the source of the report, but that protection is negated if he or she discusses the matter with other people.

•APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

Scout-appropriate language is the standard for all persons at a Scouting event. Sexual conversations of any nature including “jokes” are prohibited. Racial, ethnic, religious, sexist (including sexual orientation and gender identity) comments, jokes and slurs are prohibited. All youth and adults must follow Youth Protection Standards for language and behavior.

•IDENTIFICATION

Identifying registered overnight campers is a safety measure to help prevent unauthorized access to the youth and the event. A distinctive identification method such as a wristband, event T-shirt or neckband shall be used to identify authorized participants.

•VISITOR POLICY

Visitors, if permitted, must check in with event staff before entering camp and must always wear the designated identification while at the event.

•PRIVACY

Adults must not enter tents nor shower with youth members and shall respect the privacy of all youth and other adults. Restrooms shall be designated for use by appropriate gender and age groups unless facilities are available for individual use only. The only exception to this rule is if the Scout is registered as Special Needs, the parent may apply to the HAC Scout Executive or his designee for consideration of the Scout's circumstances.

•SOCIAL MEDIA

Abiding by the "two deep" leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media, which means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or other similar messaging features provided through social media sites.

All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum (e.g., the Facebook wall). Email communication between adults and youth should always include one or more authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread.

Social media and other electronic communications may not be used to harass, bully, or demean another person, nor to engage in any commentary that is racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, or sexist (to include sexual orientation or gender identity). These restrictions include communications between adults and youth as well as youth with other youth.

All social media channels are, by nature, designed to be social, that is, shared with members of the public. As such, whatever social media activities you engage in should be completed with the understanding that the public will see them and may engage in an online dialogue with you as a result. You should not do anything on a social media channel that reflects poorly on you, other individuals in your council or unit, the Boy Scouts of America, or anyone else. Before posting any content on any social media channel, you should first ask yourself if that content is in keeping with the precepts of the Scout Oath and Law.

•PDA

Inappropriate public displays of affection and sexual activities are prohibited in the Scouting Program.

