

The BSA's Commitment to Youth Safety

Today, Scouting is safer than ever before. Importantly, the BSA is aware safety is not a static issue and is always looking for ways to improve its youth protection program to ensure it is utilizing the most up to date policies and procedures to protect children. Currently, the BSA's multi-layered safeguards include the following measures, all of which act as barriers to abuse:

- Extensive, mandatory youth protection training for all volunteers and employees;
- Partnership with the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation to educate and empower youth through the new "Protect Yourself Rules" videos to educate children to understand and recognize abuse while empowering them to get help any time they are made to feel uncomfortable;
- A leadership policy that requires at least two youth-protection trained adults be present with youth at all times during Scouting activities and bans one-on-one situations where adults would have any interaction alone with children – either in person, online, or via phone or text;
- A BSA team dedicated to addressing concerns raised about any individual in Scouting;
- A thorough screening process for new adult leaders and staff including criminal background checks; and
- The prompt mandatory reporting of any allegation or suspicion of abuse to law enforcement.

The BSA supports universal measures to keep kids safe and continue to advocate for the creation of a national database to which all youth-serving organizations could contribute and use to screen volunteers.

The BSA also offers a 24/7 Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1) and email contact address (scouts1st@scouting.org) for help reporting suspected abuse or inappropriate behavior. For more information about the BSA's youth protection policies, please visit [Scouting.org/YouthSafety](https://www.scouting.org/YouthSafety).

About the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America provides the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training, which helps young people be "Prepared. For Life.®" The Scouting organization is composed of more than 1 million youth members between the ages of 5 and 21 and approximately 650,000 volunteers in local councils throughout the United States and its territories. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, please visit www.Scouting.org.

Learn about the BSA's youth protection policies in place today at www.scouting.org/youth-safety.

Media Contact

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Youth Protection and Barriers to Abuse FAQs

Updated 8/2/2023 – ♦ indicates latest updates

Adult Supervision

Q: If my son or daughter is meeting with a registered merit badge counselor and is the only Scout present, is supervision by two registered adults still required?

A: No, provided you as the parent or legal guardian are present during the merit badge counseling session. If more than one Scout is present, all Barriers to Abuse supervision requirements must be met.

Q: If my son or daughter is the only Scout present for a unit fund-raising activity such as neighborhood or storefront sales is supervision by two registered adults still required?

A: No, provided you attend with your child during the entire fundraising activity. If more than one Scout is present, all Barriers to Abuse supervision requirements must be met.

Q: Why is a female adult 21 years of age or over required whenever female youth are present, but not the other way around?

A: The requirement to ensure that a registered female adult is present at activities serving girls is not dissimilar to policies we've enacted in the past for Venturing when male and female adult leaders were required for certain co-ed activities. At this time, we believe that these are the best, most appropriate measures for our movement. We hope you understand that these requirements were given substantial and thorough consideration.

Q. Do Lion and Tiger Den meetings require two-deep leadership since adult partners are present?

A. Yes. A Lion or Tiger adult partner is not considered a registered leader for meeting two-deep leadership requirements. Lion or Tiger partners, as well as other pack leaders, provide a pool of adults who could be registered as an assistant den leader to meet this requirement.

Q. If only one leader shows up, does that mean we have to cancel the meeting or activity?

A. Yes. This policy is in place to prevent abuse in and out of Scouting. Adults should never be alone with youth who are not their children.

Q: Does a Cub Scout parent or legal guardian have to be a registered leader to participate in a Cub Scout overnight program with their own child/ward?

A. No. However, they cannot serve as unit or den two deep leadership or supervision.

Q: What is an adult program participant?

A. An adult program participant is an individual aged 18 or older (most often aged 18-20) who is registered as a program participant in which youth members are also eligible to participate (for example Venturing, Sea Scouting, and Exploring). Adult program participants are subject to the same youth protection policies and guidelines as adult Scouters.

Q: I am an adult attending a pack, troop, crew, or ship overnight activity, do I have to be registered?

A. Yes, if you participate/stay overnight, you must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or as an adult program participant. Adult volunteers must register in the position(s) they are serving in and be approved by their charter partner where applicable.

For example, a parent attending a Scouts BSA campout could register as a committee member, unit Scouter reserve, Assistant Scoutmaster etc, depending on their unit role. Adults may select from the list in the FAQ below of adult leader position options provided in the "[Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America](#)" that is available for their unit type.

Also, see Cub Scout Exception for parents or legal guardians.

Q: I am an adult attending a district or council overnight activity, do I have to be registered?

A. Yes, if you participate/stay overnight, you must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant. Adult volunteers must register in the position(s) they are serving in.

For example, an adult volunteer attending an overnight Order of the Arrow event must be registered in a unit, district, or council position. Adults may select from the list in the FAQ below of adult leader position options provided in the "[Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America](#)" that is available for their unit, district or council position. **Registration as a merit badge counselor does not meet this requirement.**

Q: What position should I register in to stay/participate in overnight programs?

A. Adults may select from the list below of adult leader position options provided in the "[Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America](#)" that is available for their unit, district or council position. Adult volunteers must register in the position(s) they are serving in. Adults registering in a unit position must be accepted and approved by the head of the chartered organization or the chartered organization representative.

Unit Positions

- Assistant Cubmaster
- Assistant Scoutmaster
- Assistant Webelos Leader
- Assistant Den Leader
- Chartered Organization Rep.
- Committee Chairman
- Committee Member
- Cubmaster
- Den Leader
- Explorer Post Advisor
- Lion Coordinator
- Lion Den Leader
- Mate
- New Member Coordinator

- Pack Trainer
- Post Explorer Post Associate Advisor
- Post Committee Chairman
- Post Committee Member
- Principal / Executive Officer
- Scoutmaster
- Skipper
- Tiger Den Leader
- Unit Chaplain
- Unit College Scouter Reserve
- Unit Scouter Reserve
- Venturing College Sctr Reserve
- Venturing Crew Advisor
- Venturing Crew Assoc. Advisor
- Webelos Leader
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Council and District Positions

- Assistant Council Commissioner
- Asst Roundtable Commissioner
- Asst. District Commissioner
- College Scouter Reserve
- Council Advisory Council
- Council Assistant Treasurer
- Council Associate Member
- Council Camp Staff (Adult)
- Council Camp Staff (Youth)
- Council Chaplain
- Council Commissioner
- Council Committee Member
- Council Executive Board Member
- Council Expl/LFL Committee Chr
- Council Expl/LFL Committee Mbr
- Council Honorary Member
- Council Member-at-Large
- Council President
- Council Religious Emblems Coord
- Council Scout Alumnus
- Council Service Team Chair
- Council Service Team Member
- Council Treas
- Council Vice-President
- Dist Exploring/LFL Committee
- District Chairman
- District Chaplain
- District Commissioner
- District Exploring / LFL Comm Chr

- District Member-at-large
- District Religious Emblems Coord
- District Service Team Chair
- District Service Team Member
- District Vice-Chairman
- LFL Stem Day Camp Staff (Adult)
- LFL STEM Day Camp Staff (Youth)
- Neighborhood Chairman
- Neighborhood Committee
- Roundtable Commissioner
- Scouter Reserve
- Unit Commissioner
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Q: Why does registration as a merit badge counselor not meet the registration requirement to participate/stay overnight?

A. A merit badge counselor is an important position supporting Scouts BSA units; however, a merit badge counselor is not a unit position nor does their district/council role require overnight participation.

Merit badge counselors may select from the list of adult leader position options provided in the “[Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America](#)” that is available for another role they serve in within their unit, district or council to stay/participate in overnight Scouting events and activities.

◆ Q: Do the September 1, 2023, changes mean that third party vendors must be registered with the BSA?

A. No. Youth Protection and supervision remains the responsibility of the unit and Scout leaders. Vendors and other third parties must be licensed businesses that carry proper liability insurance, units should be sure that they use reputable services. Vendors such as museums, climbing guides, hiking guides, rafting services all fall into these categories. Unit leadership must ensure that all BSA policies and guidelines are followed when using these services, unit leaders must still have proper training.

Q: Do “Unit Functional Position codes” like Unit Advancement Chair or Unit High Adventure Chair found in the “Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America” fulfill this registration requirement?

A. No.

Q. Our Scouts BSA boy troop and our Scouts BSA girl troop are linked and would like to host a joint outing or activity. Do we have to provide adult leadership from each troop?

A. Yes, each troop is a separate unit, and therefore, each troop/unit must provide its own two-deep leadership, meeting the leadership requirements outlined in Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse.

Q. The Barriers to Abuse states “One-on-one contact between adult leaders and youth members is prohibited both inside and outside of Scouting.” What does ‘inside and outside of Scouting’ mean?

A. The BSA has adopted its youth protection 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. Registered leaders must follow these guidelines with all Scouting youth outside of Scouting activities. There are careers that may require one-on-one contact with youth, however aside from those roles, volunteers must abide by the youth protection policies of the BSA even outside of Scouting activities.

This policy is in place to prevent abuse in and out of Scouting. Adults should never be alone with youth who are not their children.

Q. Does this mean my son cannot have a sleepover if I am the only adult present?

A. Yes, if any of the children other than your own child is a Scout, we strongly encourage all adults to use the Barriers to Abuse in and out of Scouting.

Q. Are there times when youth can gather, meet or conduct activities without adult supervision?

A. No. Two-deep adult supervision by registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required for all Scouting activities and must meet the leadership requirements outlined in Scouting's [Barriers to Abuse](#). This includes patrol activities.

Q. Our council camp has Adirondack shelters that sleep 8 youth, should we treat them as tents or lodging?

A. Lodging.

Q. Why do youth tent separately from parents outside of Cub Scouting?

A. Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts, and Venturing are youth led programs. The Cub Scout program is family-oriented.

Q. Can I share a tent with my son or daughter who has special needs?

A. Youth and adults tent separately in the Scouts BSA, Sea Scouts, and Venturing programs. Youth who have a special need or disability who may require a parent or legal guardian to tent with them must develop a plan in conjunction with their local council Scout Executive to address their specific needs.

Q. Can a Scout choose to tent alone?

A. Yes. There is no prohibition on tenting alone if unit leadership and logistics can accommodate that request. As always, [all BSA youth protection policies](#) must be followed.

Q. My family is attending a Cub Scout pack campout, may our family share a tent?

A. Yes, 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.

Q. For Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouting, what does "Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age" mean?

A. Youth who share a tent cannot be more than two years apart in age. For example, a 13-year-old Scout could share a tent with anyone between the ages of 11-15 but not someone who was 10 or 16+.

Transportation

Q. How do the Barriers to Abuse apply to transportation?

A. An adult may not drive or be alone in the car with a Scout unless that Scout is their own child. An adult may drive two or more Scouts.

Q. Can 18-year-old Scouts transport other Scouts, if so, what are the qualifications for this?

A. Yes. Drivers must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age. **Scouting youth (under age 18) are not insured under the Boy Scouts of America commercial general liability policy.** Transportation guidance can be found in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

◆ Program Requirements

Q. Can buddy pairs be co-ed in any of Scouting's programs?

A. No. Buddy pairs may only be single gender, not coed. Reminder, the buddy system must be used at all times. Buddy pairs can only be made between youth members. Adult program participants cannot buddy with youth members, even if they are registered in the same program.

Q. Can a leader bring their Scouts BSA son or daughter to an opposite gender troop activity?

A. No. Scouts BSA program integrity requires single gender units and single gender buddy pairs.

Q. Can any Scouts BSA member attend camp on their own?

A. Yes, as part of a provisional unit at camp. Contact your local council for availability.

Q. Can Scouts BSA girl and boy troops share a campsite?

A. Yes, if the campsite's layout and amenities meet all the requirements of Scouting's [Barriers to Abuse](#), including privacy and separate accommodations. Each unit must also meet adult supervision requirements, providing two deep leadership for each unit.

Q. Our Scouts BSA boy troop and our Scouts BSA girl troop are linked and would like to host a joint outing or activity. Only one girl or only one boy can attend from their specific troop. Is this ok?

A. No. The buddy system must be used and buddy pairs must be single gender. Therefore, each troop must have at least two members attend the outing in addition to adult supervision, meeting the leadership requirements outlined in Scouting's Barriers to Abuse.