# YOUTH PROTECTION
## Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for our youth members. Youth protection requires sustained vigilance, and we work every day to protect children through mandatory policies and procedures at every level of our organization. We are also committed to continuous improvement in our approach to youth protection.

## *HOW IT WORKS*

## ADULT VOLUNTEERS

### STEP 1
*Application*

All adults who have been selected as potential leaders of youth by a chartered organization must provide references, past addresses, other community affiliations, and affirm that they have had no criminal accusations made against them.

### STEP 2
*Adult Leader Youth Protection Training*

No person can become a registered leader in Scouting without first completing the BSA's youth protection training. All registered adult volunteers are required to complete the training. No BSA unit may be re-chartered unless all registered leaders have completed the BSA's youth protection training. The training is available online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### STEP 3
*Chartered Organizations Reference Check*

Chartered organizations provide local insight and ongoing supervision. The involvement of local chartered organizations (churches, schools, or civic groups) helps ensure that volunteers are known and trusted in the community.

### STEP 4
*Criminal Background Check*

The BSA requires criminal background checks on all Scout leaders. The background checks are administered by a nationally-respected third party that also provides this service to many local, state, and federal governments; educational institutions; and other nonprofits.

### STEP 5
*Volunteer Screening Database Check*

Before an applicant can join or volunteer with Scouting, the BSA verifies that he or she is not included in our database of individuals that have been prohibited from participation. The database prevents individuals from re-registering in Scouting who were removed for a range of misconduct and inappropriate behavior inside or outside the organization, including allegations of abuse.

We constantly evaluate and invest resources to strengthen our policies and ensure they are in line with, and where possible, ahead of best practices for prevention. To support this ongoing effort we regularly consult with survivors and experts from law enforcement, child safety, psychology, and other relevant fields.

The BSA has established a multi-tiered youth protection approach focused on volunteer screening, education, and training for everyone in the program, and clear policies to protect youth, including prohibiting one-on-one contact between adults and youth members. All units, adult leaders, and youth members have a responsibility to adhere to and enforce youth protection program policies.

## THE BSA LAYERS OF PROTECTION




## PARENTS AND SCOUTS

### *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.**

Always report any suspicion of abuse or inappropriate behavior to the 24/7 Scouts First Helpline: **1-844-SCOUTS1 or 1-844-726-8871**

**Prepared. For Life.®**

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®