

OLD COLONY COUNCIL

YOUTH PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR SCOUT CAMP LEADERSHIP

Summer camp is an important part of the program of the Boy Scouts of America. It is in the camp atmosphere and in the outdoor program that the character building and citizenship purposes of the Scouting program are best taught. It is also at camp that the responsibilities for caring for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers, and Explorers becomes a 24-hour-a-day duty.

Members of the Boy Scouts of America come from all kinds of backgrounds, and they bring their experiences to camp with them. In meeting your leadership responsibilities, you may be confronted with situations that are alien to your experience. You may be unsure how to resolve them. Child abuse is one such situation, and regardless of your background, you are responsible for the physical and emotional safety of those in your care. Be a source of strength and help the Scouts in your camp.

Reporting Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation

Child Abuse is a crime against youth. Child abuse can involve the mental, physical, and sexual victimization of children. Most camp staff and unit leaders are not trained to make judgments about whether a child has been a victim of any kind of child abuse. The Boy Scouts of America has made it a policy that the Scout Executive of each council, as well as key members of the professional and volunteer staff becomes familiar with child abuse and its various manifestations. This guideline follows both the Youth Protection principles of our National Office, as well as Massachusetts State Law.

If you suspect that a child in camp is a victim of child abuse you **must** report this to your camp directors. They will discuss your suspicions with you and possibly talk to the child. In most cases, persons with knowledge of suspected child abuse are required to report the case to the child protective services agency. Failure to report leads to criminal penalties in the State of Massachusetts. All states provide immunity from prosecution for reporting suspected child abuse in good faith. Your camp directors will be able to explain these responsibilities to you.

Detecting Sexual Molestation

Some forms of abuse may not leave obvious physical evidence. There are, however, behavioral signs that may indicate abuse. This is especially true of children who have been sexually molested. You should be alert to these signs of sexual abuse:

1. Change in behavior, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearfulness, crying
2. Bed-wetting, nightmares, fear of going to bed, or other sleep disturbances
3. Inappropriate sexual activity or showing an unusual interest in sexual matters
4. Regression to infantile behavior
5. Pain, itching, bleeding, fluid or rawness in the private areas. These problems should be attended to by a physician or nurse.
6. A fear of certain places, people or activities – especially being alone with certain people.

You should note that some of the behaviors might have other explanations. A child who comes to summer camp or other outdoor activities is coming to an unfamiliar environment and may experience homesickness, or anxieties that can lead to behaviors similar to the signs of sexual molestation. Do not simply discount the behavior as homesickness, however. Immediately bring it to the attention of the camp director or camp nurse. Even if the child's behavior is a result of

homesickness, his outdoor experience can be much more enjoyable if the cause of the distress is addressed. You are in a position to be a real help to youth placed in your care.

What to Do

At some point, a youth in your care may tell you that someone has molested him. If this happens, we want you to be prepared to help the child. Follow the guidelines below if a child indicates that he or she may have been the victim of abuse or exploitation:

Don't panic or overreact to the information disclosed by the child

Don't criticize the child

Don't make phone calls

Do respect the child's privacy. Take the child into the Camp Office away from other Scouts. It is important to discuss the child's situation only with the Camp Director and/or camp nurse who will discuss the situation with the Scout Executive and with the child protective services agency. It should not become the topic of conversation in the staff lounge. Camp is a hard place to keep information confidential. Your scouts should not become the subject of camp gossip.

Do make sure that the child feels that he is not to blame about what happened. Tell the child that no one should ask him to keep a special secret and that it is okay to talk about what happened with appropriate adults. Try to avoid repeated interviews about this incident. This can be very stressful for the child. Do regard this always as an urgent matter.

Precautions Against Accusations of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

Child abuse is a serious criminal offense. As a camp leader with the responsibility for caring for children, you may be placed in sensitive situations making you vulnerable to claims of child molestation. If you take these simple precautions, however, you need not be afraid of groundless accusations.

1. Have other leaders present when supervising showers, changing into swim suits, and other circumstances in which the child may be dressing and undressing.
2. Respect the privacy of the child. Do not become intrusive in such areas as bodily functions more than is necessary to monitor the health and safety of the child.
3. The child has the right to reject displays of affection if he feels uncomfortable about them. Not every child comes from a background in which affection is openly displayed. Respect the child's wishes.
4. Protect your own privacy – In some camp living situations, camp staff live with their campers – there will be a natural curiosity about boyfriends or girlfriends, personal relationship, and with some of the older campers, sexual activity. You should use common sense in discussing these subjects with your campers, and keep private the details of those areas of your life that are nobody's business but your own.

Sexual exploitation should not be confused with physical contacts that are true expressions of affection or friendship. A warm and health relationship can exist between the camper and the staff if staff members respect the child and place reasonable limits on their physical interaction.

It is the policy of the Old Colony Council that all incidents, whether real or imagined, of child abuse be reported to the Camp Director. The Camp Director will discuss the report with the Scout Executive and a decision will be made on following up on the report. The Council will take every strong position on child abuse and in all cases will discuss the report with the Department of Social Services and or the District Attorney.

In order for the Department of Social Services to accept a report and begin an investigation, a specific allegation that a child has been (1) sexually abused, or (2) that the harm or threatened harm has come by the acts of omissions of the person responsible for the child's welfare.

The Department does not investigate cases based on a statement about a child's general condition. There must be some connection between the condition and "harm" or "threatened harm" to a specific child, and that harm or threatened harm must allegedly be imposed by a "person responsible for the child's welfare".

In order for the Department of Social Services to accept a report noting that a child has undergone a marked behavior change or a report indicating a child's parents are drinking heavily, in and of itself, would not justify investigation.

You are encouraged, when you are unsure whether a situation constitutes a report, to discuss it with the Camp Director or Scout Executive. State law protects you when reporting child abuse cases. Although your identity can be kept confidential, your open participation in the process can provide the most benefit to the child and the parent. If you do request that your identity be withheld, it will be, unless the case goes to court. If there is a court hearing, your identity must be disclosed, but state law provides you with civil or criminal immunity which may arise from a report made in good faith.

INSURANCE INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Listed below are brief outlines of insurance coverage provided by or through the local council:

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance

This coverage provides protection for the council, all Scouting professionals and employees. Scouting units, chartered organizations and volunteer Scouters (whether or not registered) with respect to claims arising in performance of their duties in scouting. Coverage is more than \$15,000,000 for bodily injury and property damage.

The insurance provided Scouting volunteers through the BSA General Liability Insurance program is excess over any other insurance the volunteer might have to his or her benefit, usually a homeowners, personal liability, and auto liability policy. There is no coverage for those who commit intentional or criminal acts.

By providing insurance coverage to volunteers on an excess basis, BSA is able to purchase higher limits. Because of the high limits, volunteers should **NOT** be placed in a position where their assets are jeopardized because of a negligence liability claim or lawsuit.

Automobile Liability Insurance

All vehicles **MUST** be covered by a liability insurance policy. The amount of this coverage must meet or exceed the insurance requirement of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. (It is recommended, however, that coverage limits are at least \$50,000/\$100,000/\$50,000). Any vehicle carrying ten (10) or more passengers is required to have limits of \$100,000/\$500,000/\$100,000 or \$500,000 single limit. In case of rented vehicles the requirement of coverage limits can be met by combining the limits of personal coverage carried by the driver with coverage carried by the owner of the rented vehicle. All vehicles used in travel outside the United State must carry a liability insurance policy that complies with or exceed the requirements of that country. The council's automobile liability insurance is excess of the insurance the owner of the auto carries, providing insurance protection about the limits carried on the auto up to the council's \$15,000,000 limit of coverage. A tour permit or a council short term camping permit is required when units travel overnight or outside their district. The council should establish more specific guidelines setting forth when local council tour permits are required. National tour permits are required for all trips more than 500 miles. These permits should list the drivers' names and limits of automobile liability insurance carried.

Unit Accident Insurance Plan (Mutual of Omaha)

Unit Accident Insurance is available through the council; information is sent to units each year in their charter renewal kits, and the coverage must be applied for by the unit. This plan provides coverage for accident medical expenses and accidental death and dismemberment while participating in any approved and supervised Scouting activity, including going to and from meetings. New members are automatically covered under the plan until the renewal date. Non-Scouts attending scheduled activities (including group travel to and from such activities) for the purpose of being encouraged to participate in Scouting are also automatically covered. However, the plan does not cover parents, sibling or other guests.

Council Accident & Sickness Insurance (Mutual of Omaha)

This Accident and Sickness Insurance may be provided for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Explorers and adult volunteer leader registered in the council, and covers them for accidents and sickness (as well as accidental death and dismemberment) while participating in any official Scouting activity. This coverage is applied for by the council and is in effect on an annual basis.

Additional information on coverage, limits, etc., may be obtained by contacting the council office.

Camper's Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan (Mutual of Omaha)

This Accident and Sickness Insurance is provided for all Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Explorers, adult volunteer leaders and all other persons registered and attending official council events (i.e. summer camp, day camps, wood badge courses, etc.), if purchased by the council. It is purchased for specific events of the council and provides coverage for medical expenses for accident and sickness and accidental death and dismemberment. Additional information on coverage, limits, etc., may be obtained by contacting the council office.

ALL SERIOUS INCIDENTS, ACCIDENTS AND/OR SICKNESS, OR IF A SUMMONS IS SERVED ON A VOLUNTEER, PLEASE REPORT TO THE COUNCIL SERVICE CENTER IMMEDIATELY.

Call (781) 828-8360 and ask for Rick Poirier if you have a question related to insurance.

Procedures for Intrusion of an Unauthorized Person At Camp Squanto

1) Periodic review of security concerns of the site

- Leaders will be instructed to “stop in” their campsites throughout the day on a regular basis.
- The Camp Staff will be trained in all of the following procedures and are encouraged to walk around camp during program hours to look for intruders.
- Taps is at 10:00 pm daily. Under the direction of the night “Officer of the Day”, staff will walk through all camp areas looking for anyone or anything out of the ordinary. This will also be done in the parking lot.
- Staff taps are at 11:00 pm. Staff can also assist in watching for anything out of the ordinary. The Directors are equipped with radios to call the Administration Building / Camp Director at any time.

2) Training for staff and campers when appropriate, about steps to take in such instances.

The following steps will be shared with the staff during staff training week, with the leaders during the leader meetings, and Senior Patrol Leaders during their meetings.

1. All visitors must report to the Administration Building to sign in and sign out. This book will be monitored by the Camp Director or his/her designee.
 2. If an unauthorized person is suspected, notify the closest program area. Most major program areas are equipped with a radio and should contact the Administration Building / Camp Director and stand by to give or receive further instructions from the Camp Director or his/her designee.
 3. Once the Camp Director is notified of the situation, he/she will proceed to the area with the program director or another adult to question the destination of the individual in question.
 4. If the person in question flees, the “checklist for Intrusion of an Unauthorized Person” form should be completed as soon as possible.
 5. Program areas should continue, unless the situation warrants the sounding of the camp alarm. All Scouters, Scouts, and Staff are instructed to report to the Sports Field and do a roll call.
 6. The Scout Executive is notified of the situation. An assessment is made to the severity of the problem and call the Plymouth Police, if needed.
- Leaders will be instructed to train their scouts on the above procedures. Most importantly, stress to the scouts NOT to approach the person and to find an adult immediately. The Buddy System should be strictly enforced at all times.
 - The staff will participate in an Emergency Drill during staff week. In addition, they will conduct a scenario of an unauthorized person entering camp.

- The checklist attached will be kept by the telephones in the Administration Building and in the Camp Director / Program Director vehicles.
- We have a letter from the Plymouth Police on file for service. In addition, we are to call the barracks to remind them of the camp season. Also, they will call the Administration Building if there are problems or concerns in the area. It has been very helpful to have a working relationship with the Police Department.
- Lastly, no one should speak to the media. An official media spokesperson will be designated by the Scout Executive.

3) **Procedures regarding the release of Campers who are minors to a parent or to persons other than a legal parent or guardian at the Camp Squanto Scout Reservation**

1. If a parent/legal guardian needs to pick up their child during his week at camp, the following procedure will be followed. They need to sign out the child in the Administration Building.
 - a. Have a note attached to the Scouts Medical Form
 - b. Sign out their scout at the Administration Building
 - c. If no note is attached to the medical form, the medical form parental signatures will be used to verify the signatures and information
 - d. Complete a “Camp Squanto Release of Scout Form”.
 2. If a person other than a legal parent or guardian needs to pick up a camper, the following procedures will be followed.
 - a. Have a note attached to the Scouts Medical Form.
 - b. Complete the “Camp Squanto Release of Scout Form”, with Scoutmaster’s signature. Verification of identification required with photo ID.
 - c. If no note is attached to the Medical Form, a note must accompany the adult signing out the scout with the signature verified by use of the Medical Form.
 - d. If the signature is not verifiable, or no note is available, the Scoutmaster & Camp Director will contact the parents by phone. If not verifiable or the Camp Director is uncomfortable with the information, **the scout will not be released.**
- The Camp Squanto Leader’s Guide Book states the above procedures as National/Camp Policies. These new policies will also be discussed at all Leader Orientation Meetings.
 - This procedure is to ensure the safety of your/our youth.
 - In addition, the staff will also follow procedures. We conduct a mandatory meeting of parent/guardians of our staff during our Staff Training Week. This policy will be explained at this time.

4) **Visitors**

1. Any person over the age of 21 who will be staying in camp for more than 1 hour, must check in with the medical officer and receive a wrist band, which must be worn at all times while in camp.
2. Exception – during special events – Sunday supper, Apache Relay and O/A Callout, and Saturday closing ceremonies. The above will go into effect one hour after the event is over.