

POLICY

Youth Protection



Issued with the authority of the Chief Commissioner
and Chief Executive Officer of Scouts NSW

Chief Commissioner signature		Chief Executive Officer signature	
Sponsor	Child Protection and Issues Management Officer		
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Youth Protection

All suspicions, concerns or allegations about criminal matters or child protection matters should be reported directly to the Chief Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner (Youth Safety, Support and Compliance), the Chief Executive Officer or the Child Protection Officer at the NSW State Office on:

Tel: 02 9735 9000 or via
YouthProtection@nsw.scouts.com.au

Imminent Danger

If a person is in danger, immediately contact NSW Police on 000.

1 Purpose and scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to set out how Scouts NSW provides a child safe environment that counters the risk of Youth involved in Scouting being abused. Scouts NSW endorses the Scouts Australia *Child Protection Policy* from which this policy derives.
- 1.2 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the linked Scouts NSW *Youth Protection Procedure* document which gives effect to this Policy.
- 1.3 Scouts NSW is committed to operating as a child safe organisation and implementing child safe policies and practices in accordance with the elements of a child safe institution outlined by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report entitled *Creating Child Safe Institutions*.
- 1.4 All children have the right to feel safe. A child safe environment in Scouts NSW is achieved by:
- Providing a clear framework for the careful selection, recruitment, training and management of Adults that has full regard to child protection;
 - Having in place a clear, transparent and easily understood Policy and Procedure to protect our Youth and Adults and ensure that our Adults do not put either our Youth or themselves at risk;
 - Clearly explaining to parents, Youth, Adults and staff what the Policy and Procedure are, how and why they operate and ensuring that they are understood;
 - Ensuring that allegations of Child Abuse or suspected Child Abuse are dealt with in a timely, consistent and correct manner and through the right channels; and
 - Having an auditable feedback method to ensure the Policy and Procedure remain relevant and effective and can be improved where necessary.
- 1.5 This Policy applies to all Youth participating in Scouting and all Adults in control of or in contact with those Youth.
- 1.6 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Scouts NSW Code of Conduct (LSG23) “the Code of Conduct”. The Code of Conduct reflects Scouts NSW’s commitment to providing a safe environment for all youth members participating in the Scout Program and reflects a zero tolerance policy towards bullying, neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse of any kind.
- 1.7 This policy also extends and provides interpretation of the policies of Scouts Australia as set out in *Policy and Rules*.
- 1.8 For the purposes of this Policy:
- “Adult” means any person 18 years of age or older, and includes any employee, Leader, Adult Supporter or Rover Scout who is involved in the delivery of Scouting in any form no matter the frequency, duration, formal level of authority or whether the person is or is not a registered member of Scouts Australia.
- “Adult Helper” means an adult holding a Certificate of Membership with Scouts NSW who provides assistance to a leader and is bound by the policies and rules of Scouts Australia.

“Adult Supporter” means any adult who, from time to time, assists Scouting in some way, but does not hold a Certificate of Adult Membership with Scouts NSW.

“Board” means the Board of Scouts NSW.

“Child Abuse” has the meaning given to that term in Scouts Australia’s *Child Protection Policy*;

“Child Protection Officer” means the Child Protection and Issues Management Officer, based at the Scouts NSW State Office.

“Procedure” means the Scouts NSW *Youth Protection Procedure* document.

“Scouts Australia” means the national Scouting body, The Scout Association of Australia.

“Scouts NSW” means the New South Wales Branch of Scouts Australia.

“Youth” means a person less than 18 years of age involved in any Scouting activity, whether or not they have formally been registered as a member.

2 Policy statement

- 2.1 Scouts NSW has a duty of care to all Youth when involved in Scouting and to provide a child safe environment that protects them to the best of its ability from Child Abuse, while not detracting from their ability to develop by graduated challenges appropriate to their development and ability. All Adults are accountable to deliver that duty of care on behalf of Scouts Australia at all times.
- 2.2 Scouts NSW will ensure to the best of its ability when recruiting, selecting and managing Leaders, Adult Helpers and Adult Supporters who are in control of, or in contact with, Youth that they understand this duty of care and agree to ensure that is responsibly exercised in accordance with the Code of Conduct and the Scout Law and Promise.
- 2.3 Scouts NSW is committed to providing a safe environment for Youth participating in its program that applies zero tolerance of Child Abuse of any kind. Because Child Abuse can take many forms and be perpetrated in many ways, Scouts NSW requires Adults to be alert to abuse in all of its manifestations.
- 2.4 Adults must report any conduct seen or heard that is inconsistent with the Code of Conduct and/or the values expressed in the Scout Promise and Law.
- 2.5 Without fail, Adults must report immediately any suspicion or allegation of Child Abuse of Youth in their care in the manner specified in the related Procedure document. A failure to report such behaviour may be treated by Scouts NSW as a Serious Misconduct Issue capable of resulting in the termination of Membership.
- 2.6 Child protection matters arising in the context of a Scouting activity are subject to internally mandated reporting procedures by virtue of the Scouts NSW *Youth Protection Policy*. This includes any situation where a child discloses or is at risk of Child Abuse in situations outside of a Scouting activity (e.g. home).
- 2.7 As prescribed in the Procedure, when a report of Child Abuse is made to Scouts NSW, it will be referred to the NSW Police and/or the Department of Family and Community

Services immediately, as applicable to the nature of the concern, by Scouts NSW Branch management.

- 2.8 Responding to allegations of Child Abuse must be undertaken with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality. The welfare of Youth involved in Scouting is of paramount importance. Accordingly, the Chief Commissioner of Scouts NSW or his or her delegate, in their sole discretion, may summarily exercise the prerogative to suspend or terminate a person's membership in response to an allegation of Child Abuse. Likewise, the Chief Commissioner or his or her delegate may terminate the membership of any person about whom they have sufficient doubt, even if an allegation is not proven against that person to the criminal standard of proof. Similarly, Scouts NSW is not obliged to proceed with an application for membership of any Applicant.
- 2.9 Parents of Youth are to be provided with a copy of this Policy and the related Procedure when their child joins and is registered with Scouts NSW as a member.

3 Youth protection procedure

- 3.1 Scouts NSW has a Youth Protection Procedure in place which is consistent with this Policy and approved by the Chief Commissioner of Scouts NSW.

4 Review

- 4.1 This Policy and the Youth Protection Procedure will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if directed by the Chief Commissioner, by a committee consisting of the Deputy Chief Commissioner Issues Management, the Child Protection Officer and one uniform member appointed by the Chief Commissioner. That committee will provide a report to the Chief Commissioner, together with any recommendations arising from the review. Proposals for change to this document may be submitted to the Scouts NSW Child Protection Officer.

5 Authority

This Policy is approved under the Authority of the Chief Commissioner of Scouts NSW.