



Youth Protection Overview



BSA Youth Protection

Our highest priority is the safety and well-being of our youth members and participants. This training is one part of a comprehensive youth protection training program that formally began in 1988. It is designed to help prevent child abuse in all of its forms — whether verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or neglect. This training is required once every two years.

This course is also available on-line. You do not have to be a registered member or have a member ID to take Youth Protection training on-line. To take Youth Protection training go to www.MyScouting.org and create an account. From the MyScouting.org portal, click on E-Learning and take the Youth Protection training.

Statistics on Bullying

1. Nearly 1 in 3 students is involved in bullying.

It's estimated that nearly 30% — or 5.7 million children — are involved in bullying, as victims, perpetrators, or both.

2. While school violence as a whole is declining, bullying behaviors are on the rise.

3. Kids who are obese, gay, or have disabilities are up to 63% more likely to be bullied than other children.

Studies have shown that [obese children](#) are 63% more likely to be targets of bullying. [Gay youth](#) are also significantly more likely to be bullied.



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Kids with learning [disabilities](#), speech impediments, ADHD, and medical conditions that affect their appearance (such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and spina bifida) are also at higher risk of being bullied. Kids with autism spectrum disorders are three times as likely as their non-affected siblings to experience bullying.

4. Boys are more likely than girls to bully others.

According to studies, boys are more likely than girls to report that they bully others. Boys are also usually only bullied by other boys, while girls report being bullied by both boys and girls.

5. Boys and girls get bullied in different ways.

The most frequent type of bullying experienced by both boys and girls is verbal bullying. But that's where the similarities end. Boys are far more likely to be hit, slapped, pushed, or be exposed to other types of physical bullying. Girls, on the other hand, are at higher risk for being socially excluded, having rumors spread about them, or being targeted with sexual comments.

Statistics on Child Abuse

- Neglect is the most common form of Child Abuse
- Children with disabilities are 30% more likely to be abused than non-disabled children
- Girls are 3 times more likely to be sexually abused than boys
- Boys are still less likely to report sexual abuse out of fear of being labeled a "homosexual"

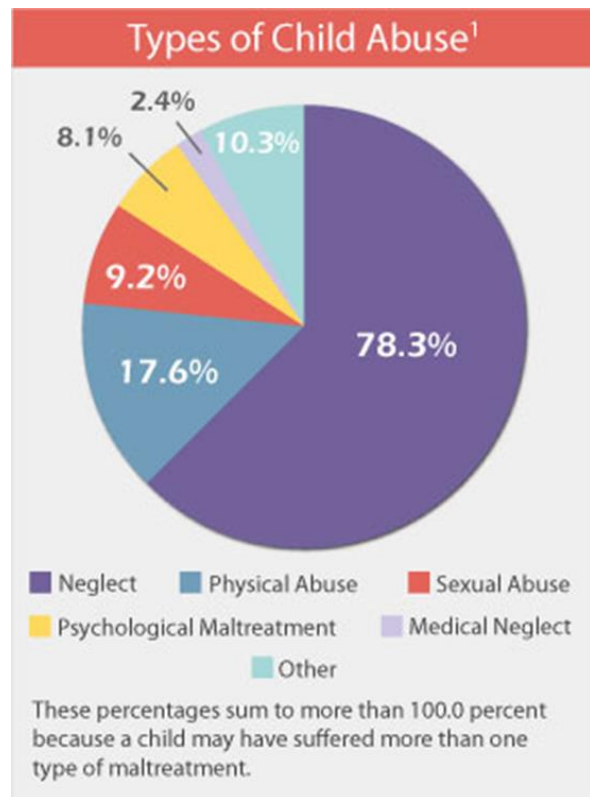
How does the BSA prevent child abuse in Scouting?

The Boy Scouts of America has adopted a number of policies aimed at eliminating opportunities for abuse within the Scouting program. These policies focus on leadership selection and on placing barriers to abuse within the program.

Leadership

The Boy Scouts of America takes great pride in the quality of our adult leadership. Being a leader in the BSA is a privilege, not a right. The quality of the program and the safety of our youth members calls for high-quality adult leaders. We work closely with our chartered organizations to help recruit the best possible leaders for their units.

The adult application requests background information that should be checked by the unit committee or the chartered organization before accepting an applicant for unit leadership. While



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no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential child molester, we can reduce the risk of accepting a child molester by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position—his or her experience with children, why he or she wants to be a Scout leader, and what discipline techniques he or she would use.

Youth Protection Reporting Procedures for Volunteers

There are two types of Youth Protection–related reporting procedures all volunteers must follow:

- When you witness or suspect any child has been abused or neglected—See "Mandatory Report of Child Abuse" below.
- When you witness a violation of the BSA's Youth Protection policies—See "Reporting Violations of BSA Youth Protection Policies" below.

Mandatory Report of Child Abuse

All persons involved in Scouting shall report, and **under California Law, the adult must report** to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. **You may not abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person.**

Steps to Reporting Child Abuse

- Ensure the child is in a safe environment.
- In cases of child abuse or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. In addition, if the suspected abuse is in the Scout's home or family, you are required to contact the local child abuse hotline.
- Notify the Scout executive or his/her designee.
- **Under California Law, the adult must also report to the local police or child protection agency.**

Reporting Violations of BSA Youth Protection Policies

If you think any of the BSA's Youth Protection policies have been violated, including those described within Scouting's Barriers to Abuse, you must notify your local council Scout executive or his/her designee so appropriate action can be taken for the safety of our Scouts.

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted the following policies to provide additional security for our members. These policies are primarily for the protection of our youth members; however, they also serve to protect our adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

- **Two-deep leadership.**

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Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all Scouting activities. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when the presence of adult leaders is not required and adult leadership may be limited to training and guidance of the patrol leadership. With the proper training, guidance, and approval by the troop leaders, the patrol can conduct day hikes and service projects. Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all overnight Scouting activities; coed overnight activities—even those including parent and child—require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, and one of whom must be a registered member of the BSA. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

- **No one-on-one contact.**

One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

- **Separate accommodations.**

When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. Likewise, youth and adults must shower at different times.

- **Privacy of youth is respected.**

Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

- **Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices is prohibited.**

While most campers and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.

- **No secret organizations.**

The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

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- **No hazing.**

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

- **No bullying.**

Verbal, physical, cyber bullying and excluding are prohibited in Scouting.

- **Youth leadership is monitored by adult leaders.**

Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

- **Discipline must be constructive and positive.**

Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive, positive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Tell them what you want them to do.

- **Appropriate attire for all activities.**

Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping or revealing bathing suits are not appropriate as part of Scouting.

- **Members are responsible to act according to the Scout Oath and Scout Law.**

All members of the Boy Scouts of America are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, theft, verbal insults, drugs, and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership.

- **There are no Asterisks in the Scout Oath or Scout Law**

The Scout Oath and Scout Law applies all the time; not just sometimes or when it is easy.

- **Units are responsible to enforce Youth Protection policies.**

The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit's adult leader. Adult leaders of Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. Parents of members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance. *Any violations of the BSA's Youth Protection policies must immediately be reported to the Scout executive.*

Digital Privacy

A key ingredient for a safe and healthy Scouting experience is the respect for privacy. Advances in technology are enabling new forms of social interaction that extend beyond the appropriate use of cameras or recording devices (see "Scouting's Barriers to Abuse"). Sending sexually

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explicit photographs or videos electronically or “sexting” by cell phones is a form of texting being practiced primarily by young adults and children as young as middle-school age. Sexting is neither safe, nor private, nor an approved form of communication and can lead to severe legal consequences for the sender and the receiver. Although most campers and leaders use digital devices responsibly, educating them about the appropriate use of cell phones and cameras would be a good safety and privacy measure.

Social Media Guidelines

It’s an exciting time to be part of the BSA for many reasons. One of those is that new communication vehicles now enable current and past Scouts and Scouters, as well those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Scouting in general, to communicate directly with each other about Scouting. Online social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it possible for virtually anyone with an Internet connection to create and be part of online communities where people can discuss Scouting and share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media.

Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, their use to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed the guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the BSA’s existing Youth Protection policies and training. http://bit.ly/bsa_smg

The “three Rs” of Youth Protection?

The “three Rs” of Youth Protection convey a simple message for the personal awareness of our youth members:

- **Recognize** situations that place him at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
- **Resist** unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
- **Report** attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse of himself and helps to protect other children. Let the Scout know he will not be blamed for what occurred.

What youth protection educational materials does the BSA have for youth members?

"How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide" is a tear-out booklet bound in with BSA youth books. It is designed for parents or guardians and young people to use together for youth protection training. The BSA also has separate age-appropriate videos for Cub Scout-age and Boy Scout-age boys to address the problems of sexual abuse. The video for Cub Scouts, "[It Happened to Me](http://bit.ly/bsa_ihtm)," (http://bit.ly/bsa_ihtm) should be used annually by packs or dens, but only for Cub Scouts accompanied by a parent or other adult family member. The video for Boy Scouts, "[A Time to Tell](http://bit.ly/bsa_attt)" (http://bit.ly/bsa_attt) introduces the "three Rs" of Youth Protection, and should be viewed by troops annually.

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The BSA recognizes that many of our leaders feel unprepared to talk to children about preventing sexual abuse. For this reason, the BSA has meeting guides for both of the videos produced to be viewed by youths. The guides address everything from scheduling the meeting, contacting the police or social services for assistance, and notifying parents (a sample letter is provided), to questions and answers for discussion after the video has been viewed.

Key Resources

[Guide to Safe Scouting](http://bit.ly/bsa_gss)

http://bit.ly/bsa_gss

The purpose of the Guide to Safe Scouting is to prepare adult leaders to conduct Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner.

[It Happened to Me: Cub Scout Meeting Guide](http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_cs)

http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_cs

Video Facilitator Guides. A sample letter to parents and guardians as well as English and Spanish meeting guides for facilitators' use when showing the age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention video. The video for Cub Scouts, "[It Happened to Me](http://bit.ly/bsa_ihtm)," (http://bit.ly/bsa_ihtm) should be used annually by packs or dens, but only for Cub Scouts accompanied by a parent or other adult family member

[A Time to Tell: Troop Meeting Guide](http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_bs)

http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_bs

Video Facilitator Guides. English and Spanish meeting guides for facilitators' use when showing the age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention video. The video for Boy Scouts, "[A Time to Tell](http://bit.ly/bsa_att)" (http://bit.ly/bsa_att) introduces the "three Rs" of Youth Protection, and should be viewed by troops annually.

[Personal Safety Awareness Meeting Guide](http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_vn) (Venturing Program)

http://bit.ly/bsa_yp_vn

Video Facilitator Guides. A sample letter to parents and guardians as well as English and Spanish meeting guides for facilitators' use when showing the age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention video.

How can parents help protect their children?

Parents participate in the protection of their children in a variety of ways. We have already mentioned the need for open lines of communication so that children are encouraged to bring any troubles to their parents for advice and counsel. In addition, parents need to be involved in their sons' Scouting activities. All parents receive important information concerning the Scouting program as part of their sons' membership applications. This information is provided so that parents can detect any deviations from the BSA's approved program. If any deviations are noted, parents should call these to the attention of the chartered organization or the unit committee. If the problems persist, parents should contact the local council for assistance.

Parents also need to review the booklet, "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse: A Parent's Guide," inserted in every Boy Scout and Cub Scout handbook. The

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information in this booklet should be the subject of discussions between Scouts and their parents prior to joining a pack or troop.

Why do most child victims of sexual abuse keep the abuse secret?

A victim of child sexual abuse is under a great deal of pressure to keep the abuse secret. In many cases of child molestation, the molester has threatened to harm the child or a member of the child's family. The molester might have told the child that he would not be believed even if the child did tell. Another common situation is that the molester will tell the child that if the child tells about the abuse, he will get into trouble. The clear message is given to the child that if another person finds out, something bad will happen to the child. This pressure to maintain silence can often be successfully overcome by establishing open communication between children and adults through a proper educational program for children.

What should I do if a child tells me that he has been sexually abused?

How an adult responds to a child when he tries to disclose abuse can influence the outcome of the child's victimization. By maintaining an apparent calm, the adult can help reassure the child that everything is going to be okay. By not criticizing the child, we counteract any statements the molester made to the victim about the child getting into trouble. Reassure the child that you are concerned about what happened to him and that you would like to get him some help. **Allegations by a Scout concerning abuse in the program must be reported to the Scout executive. Under California Law, the adult must also report to the local police or child protection agency.** Since these reports are required, the child should be told that you have to tell the proper authorities but that you will not tell anyone else. It is important that you not tell anyone other than the Scout executive and the child protective services agency about allegations of abuse—if the allegations cannot be substantiated, you could be sued for defamation of character.

How do I know what my reporting responsibilities are?

Every state, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have different reporting requirements. As part of youth protection training, you will receive reporting instructions for your area and for your council. People are often concerned about being sued for reporting child abuse. You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in "good faith." When these requirements are met, all states provide immunity from liability for child abuse reporters. **Under California Law, the adult must report to the local police or child protection agency.**

Youth Member Behavior Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America is a values-based youth development organization that helps young people learn positive attributes of character, citizenship, and personal fitness. The BSA has the expectation that all participants in the Scouting program will relate to each other in accord with the principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Law.

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One of the developmental tasks of childhood is to learn appropriate behavior. Children are not born with an innate sense of propriety and they need guidance and direction. The example set by positive adult role models is a powerful tool for shaping behavior and a tool that is stressed in Scouting.

Misbehavior by a single youth member in a Scouting unit may constitute a threat to the safety of the individual who misbehaves as well as to the safety of other unit members. Such misbehavior constitutes an unreasonable burden on a Scout unit and cannot be ignored.

Member Responsibilities

All members of the Boy Scouts of America are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Law. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and drugs and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the unit.

If confronted by threats of violence or other forms of bullying from other youth members, Scouts should seek help from their unit leaders or parents.

Unit Responsibilities

Adult leaders of Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. Parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance in dealing with it.

The BSA does not permit the use of corporal punishment by unit leaders when disciplining youth members.

The unit committee should review repetitive or serious incidents of misbehavior in consultation with the parents of the child to determine a course of corrective action including possible revocation of the youth's membership in the unit.

If problem behavior persists, units may revoke a Scout's membership in that unit. When a unit revokes a Scout's membership, it should promptly notify the council of the action.

The unit should inform the Scout executive about all incidents that result in a physical injury or involve allegations of sexual misconduct by a youth member with another youth member.

Each Cub Scout den and Webelos Scout den and each chartered Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, and Venturing crew shall have one leader, 21 years of age or older, who shall be registered and serve as the unit or den leader. A unit leader may not serve simultaneously in any other position within the same unit. The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit or den leader on the appropriate form.

Primary reference: *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*

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Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings

- **Two-deep leadership:**
Two registered adult leaders, or one registered adult and a parent of a participating Scout, one of whom must be at least 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips or outings. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when no adult leadership is required. Coed overnight activities require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, and one of whom must be a registered member of the BSA.
- **During transportation to and from planned Scout outings,**
 - Meet for departure at a designated area.
 - Prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
 - Plan a daily destination point.
 - Have mobile phone information for every vehicle

A common departure site and a daily destination point are a must. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members—*never one on one*.

- **Safety rule of four:**
No fewer than four individuals (always with the minimum of two adults) go on any backcountry expedition or campout. If an accident occurs, one person stays with the injured, and two go for help. Additional adult leadership requirements must reflect an awareness of such factors as size and skill level of the group, anticipated environmental conditions, and overall degree of challenge.
- **Male and female leaders must have separate sleeping facilities.** Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.
- **Male and female youth participants will not share the same sleeping facility.**
- **Single-room or dormitory-type accommodations for Scouting units.**
Adults and youth of the same gender may occupy dormitory or single-room accommodations, provided there is a minimum of two adults and four youth. A minimum of one of the adults is required to be youth-protection trained. Adults must establish separation barriers or privacy zones such as a temporary blanket or sheet walls in order to keep their sleeping area and dressing area separated from the youth area.
- **When staying in tents, no youth will stay in the tent of an adult other than his or her parent or guardian.**
All adults in the tent must be related to any youth in the tent.
- **If separate shower and latrine facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.** The buddy system should be used for latrines by having one person wait outside the entrance, or provide Occupied and Unoccupied signs and/or inside door latches.

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Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of youth members in situations where the youth are changing clothes or taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

- **Two-deep adult leadership is required for flying activities.** *For basic orientation flights, the adult licensed pilot in control of the aircraft is sufficient for the flight, while two-deep leadership is maintained on the ground.*



Youth Protection Mission Statement

True youth protection can be achieved only through the focused commitment of everyone in Scouting. It is the mission of Youth Protection volunteers and professionals to work within the Boy Scouts of America to maintain a culture of Youth Protection awareness and safety at the national, regional, area, council, district, and unit levels.