

Baden-Powell Service Association, US

# Code of Ethics

&

Youth Protection Guidelines



# Introduction

Scouting has held a valued place in society since its inception over a century ago. Socialization is the process whereby a person acquires a social identity, learns appropriate behavior and conforms to expectations held by members of the group to which s/he belongs or aspires to belong. The importance of our Movement in socialization has long been recognized. The role of the Movement in modern society has become increasingly more significant in the social and cultural life of many countries.

The Scouting Movement has never been of greater importance than it is today, with all of the pressures and distractions (*many less than healthy*) calling on the minds and emotions of young people from an early age. Apart from its important role in socialization, Scouting answers many needs of today's children and young people, from healthy exercise in the out-of-doors to stress reduction, from the thrill of achievement to the enhancement of self-confidence and self-esteem.

The contribution of Leaders, who voluntarily give of their time to provide such experiences for young people, is invaluable. Without them Scouting could not flourish. This unique relationship, whereby adults and young people voluntarily come together to learn and to share values, deserves all the support and protection that can be provided. This “Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines” is aimed at helping to provide such support and protection.

It is in the interest of everyone involved in Scouting that these guidelines will be a living document, used by all involved in the Association, and acted upon by all those in management and leadership positions. Time and experience will necessitate revisions and additions to this guideline, which is integral to the nature of such a document.

*This document is adapted from the Baden-Powell Service Association, BC Canada. And is adopted with the idea of modifying the document for the US association as we move forward and in keeping with the ideals and goals of providing a conscientious, safe and healthy environment for the Scouting movement in the US. The introduction above is from the B-PSA BC Training Committee in 2008 and is reprinted here, as it reflects the same intent and desire of the B-PSA US as an association as well.*

# Core values

The organization of Scouting activities for young people should be guided by a set of values which provide the foundation for all practice:

## **Importance of Childhood**

The importance of being young must be understood and valued by everyone in Scouting. The right to happiness while young must be recognized and enhanced at all levels of the Movement.

## **Needs of the child**

All Scouting experiences and contexts must be guided by what is best for young people. This means that adults must understand the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people. The stages of development of young people should guide the types of activity provided within Scouting. All adults should have the ability to respond positively to the individual needs of each young person.

All adults involved in leadership roles should have a sound understanding of the importance of enhancing self esteem for young people and should seek to develop positive and healthy relationships with and between the young people in their care.

## **Integrity in relationships**

Adults interacting with young people in Scouting should do so with integrity and respect for the young person. There is a danger that some Scouting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine young people. All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the young person and in the context of quality, open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind are unacceptable.

## **Quality atmosphere and ethos**

Membership of the Movement should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere. A child centered ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialization are kept in their appropriate place. Too often competitive demands are placed on young people too early which results in excessive levels of pressure on them and as a consequence, high levels of drop-out from the Movement.

## **Equality**

Young people should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Young people with disability should be involved in Scouting in an integrated way, thus allowing them to participate to their potential alongside other young people.

## **The important role of Adult Leaders**

The role of Leaders, will be promoted and enhanced through the provisions of this Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines. The right of Leaders to obtain a healthy sense of achievement and satisfaction through their involvement in Scouting must be recognized.

## **The necessity for education and training**

Scouting exposes young people to new challenges, some of which occur in environments with certain risks. Adults who take responsibility for young people in Scouting have a duty to ensure that they are competent to provide safe and rewarding experiences for those in their care. Appropriate training and educational opportunities need to be developed for all Leaders in the Movement.

## **Self awareness**

All Leaders should have a realistic understanding of their level of competence in relevant areas. This should include an understanding of the reasons for their own involvement in Scouting and recognition that the main goal of Scouting is to provide positive experiences for young people.

## **Relationships between Young People**

Interaction between young people should be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and fair play. Such interaction can be promoted by adults who create an environment in which quality, open relationships are modeled and valued and where the integrity of each individual is respected.

## **Benefits of Scouting for Young People**

Young people have a lot to gain from Scouting. Their natural sense of fun and spontaneity can blossom in positive Scouting environments which promote progress in a child centered way. Scouting provides an excellent medium in which young people can learn new skills, become more confident and maximize their own unique potential. These benefits will accrue through a positive and progressive approach to the involvement of young people in Scouting which places the needs of the young person first and winning and competition second. A child centered and progressive approach to young people in Scouting will return many benefits in terms of the health and well being of our future adult population.

# Adult - Youth Relationships

Adult-Youth relationships should be:

1. Entered into by choice.
2. Open, positive and encouraging.
3. Defined by a mutually agreed set of goals and commitments.
4. Respectful of the creativity and autonomy of young people.
5. Defined by an ethical code of conduct relating to interaction, touching and bullying.
6. Carried out in a context where young people are protected and where their rights are promoted.
7. Free from verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse.
8. Respectful of the needs and developmental stage of the young person.
9. Aimed at the promotion of enjoyment and individual progress.
10. Respectful of the roles and responsibilities of Leaders.
11. Governed by a “Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines” in Scouting.

# Quality Leadership

Adults have a crucial leadership role to play in the Scout Movement. Whether as parents / guardians, helpers, instructors, administrators or Leaders they hold positions which can contribute to creating a positive environment for young people. The unique nature of Scouting provides Leaders with the opportunity to develop positive and special relationships with young people. Such relationships have tremendous potential in helping young people to develop and express themselves in an open and secure way.

Because of the personal input of volunteers the view might be held that they are either beyond reproach or that the imposition of any additional conditions or training would be unacceptable. However, given the important and responsible roles which adults play at many different levels in Scouting, it is essential that their competence and ability to deal with young people in a fair, empathic and ethical way is ensured.

## Adults involved in Scouting

There are many leadership roles which contribute to the successful development and organization of the Movement. These are defined below:

### Administrator:

Administrators are those people who look after organizational matters but who are not directly involved in delivering or supervising the activity session itself. (Group Committee, District / Officers, etc.).

### Assistant:

Assistants are those people who provide back-up to any of the roles defined in this section and often such assistants are involved on an intermittent basis.

### Leader:

A Leader is a person who assists the youth member to develop his or her skills and abilities in a progressive way. Leaders should provide the young person with the opportunity to improve based on personal goals and standards. Good Leaders will recognize the need to promote fun and fulfillment for young people and to de-emphasize competition with younger people. Leaders should have sufficient knowledge and training to enable them to put together safe and worthwhile activities and to prepare young people for various situations in an ethical and balanced way, respecting the developmental and individual needs of the young person.

### Instructor:

Instructors are involved in the systematic development of specialist skills and abilities of an activity.

Note: While the definitions indicate a number of discrete roles related to Scouting there is often overlap between the different categories. For the purposes of this Code, all of the above will be referred to in a general sense as Leaders.

Adults become involved in Scouting in a number of different capacities. The guiding principle of such involvement must be: Does the activity respect the dignity of the young person and enhance his / her personal development?

Parents / Guardians have a primary responsibility for their child's involvement in Scouting. This involvement should be seen as a positive, happy exercise for the young person. Parents should know and ensure that those adults who act in leadership roles within the Association are qualified and competent to teach, supervise and look after young people in their care. Parents should check that this Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines has been adopted by Scout Units in

which their children are involved. In addition, parents should be aware of the nature of the meetings and activities in which their children participate.

### **Education and Training**

Given the wide and diverse range of involvement by adults, it is essential that suitable training programs are availed of.

The following areas are included in the training program offered to individuals dealing with young people in Scouting:

1. Issues of general competence (e.g. Scouting skills, administration)
2. Ethical responsibilities and code of practice.
3. Personal development.
4. Issues relating to young peoples needs.
5. Recognizing and responding to abuse situations.
6. Prevention and reporting of abuse.

It is recommended that a three tier approach to ethics and child protection be taken in order to ensure that appropriate attitudes and skills are fostered within the Scout Movement.

### **Implementation of the Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines**

The Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines should be available, familiar to and complied with by all those involved in B-PSA Scouting. The Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines should be adopted by all B-PSA Groups and be available in buildings or other venues where Scouting activities take place.

### **Specific Training in Child Protection**

There is a need to ensure that a core of specific training exists in the area of child protection and child abuse. It is recommended that a specific workshop entitled Child Centered Awareness be developed for delivery to Groups / Districts etc. and that such a workshop might be delivered by trained personnel drawn from a B-PSA US Training Team. The development and delivery of the workshop should be complementary to existing programs in Scouting.

### **Education as part of the Training Programs for Leaders**

Ethical issues and questions relating to the protection of young people from abuse shall be part of the educational and training programs offered to Leaders. Parent / guardian education might also be addressed as part of this overall process.

The proposed three tier strategy is summarized below:

## Woodbead Training

Much valuable work is done by Leaders within Scouting. In order to further enhance this contribution, it is essential that all Leaders attend the appropriate courses within their local Training Program. This will help the Leader to enhance his / her basic Leadership Skills, and may be a pre-requisite to being awarded a Warrant of Appointment.

## Selection and Screening

Adults volunteers taking up Leadership roles shall undergo a selection and screening process. B-PSA US requires, and each Scout Group has a responsibility to ensure, that such selection and screening occurs. This process shall take into account the following.

1. New leaders shall provide a list of 3-4 personal references. None of whom shall be family members.
2. New leaders shall undergo a formal interview process by their Group Scoutmaster and Chairman of the Group Committee (*if one exists*).
3. Screening will include specific questions and the checking of references relating to suitability to work with young people and to previous work with young people.
4. New leaders will be required to obtain a Police Record Check from their local Police Office. Only those new leaders who can provide a clean record check will be accepted as leaders in the organization.
5. New leaders will undergo a period of probation to be determined by their own association, but shall not be less than 4 months. This time period is to be used to check if the new leader is suitable to be a Scouting leader, and to give the GSM suitable time to get to know them before undergoing training and having a Warrant of Appointment is issued in their name.

# Good Practice

Leaders should strive to create a positive environment for the young people in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take steps necessary to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

Leaders should:

1. be competent and qualified;
2. be positive, enthusiastic and cheerful;
3. reinforce the principles of fair play;
4. give feedback in a constructive and encouraging manner;



5. encourage an active healthy lifestyle;
6. involve parents / guardians as much as possible; and
7. recognize that they themselves are human and will not get it right all the time!

In addition, the Leader is in a unique position of trust and this position must be maintained with integrity at all times.

#### Preparation and supervision of activities

1. The Leadership Team should be well prepared for each Scouting activity.
2. The Leadership Team should take all reasonable steps to establish a safe working environment.
3. All activities should be in recognized venues, not at personal premises.

### **Behavior of Leaders**

Leaders should:

1. Maintain the highest standard of personal conduct at all times.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being. Specifically the Leader should treat everyone equally regardless of sex, age, ability, ethnic origin, religion or political persuasion. In this regard, the Leader should ensure that all are given sufficient opportunity to participate in the activity.
3. Be responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with participants.
4. Realize that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety.
5. Encourage the participants to adhere to the Scout Law. Furthermore, the Leader must not encourage or allow participants to violate the Law and should actively seek to discourage such action.
6. In competitions treat opponents and officials with due respect both in victory and defeat and insist that participants act in a similar manner.
7. Never exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
8. Be watchful of all situations, particularly bullying, which may occur:
  - a. child to child;
  - b. group to child; and
  - c. adult to child.
9. Encourage loyalty to the Group or Section as appropriate.

10. Have enjoyment of the Scouts as a priority.
11. Encourage two-way communication with participants.
12. Prohibit swearing or other inappropriate language, singing or behavior.

### **Balanced approach to competitions**

A Leader will be concerned primarily with the well being, health and future of the young person and only secondarily with winning. The Leader should stress the importance of sincere effort and enjoying the activity rather than winning at all costs.

### **Context for the conduct of Scout activities**

1. The activity undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the participants.
2. Young people with disabilities should be involved in Scouting activities in an integrated way. However, Leaders must be aware of and informed regarding the special needs of young people with disabilities. Leaders should also be aware that young people with special needs may be more vulnerable to abuse.
3. The Leader should respond positively to the wishes and concerns of the participant regarding his / her participation in the activity.
4. When working with participants, Leaders should always work in an open and approved environment. Situations where a Leader and an individual participant cannot be observed should be avoided.
5. Adults should avoid situations where they are alone with young people. Wherever practicable, there should always be two or more adults present.
6. Adult : youth ratios should reflect the duration, nature and location of the activities, the ages and characteristics of the young people and any other responsibilities related to the activity.
7. Parents have a key role in ensuring that the context in which their child is participating is appropriate, as indicated at points 1 - 6 above.

### **Specialist qualifications**

1. The Leader should be competent to deliver the activity in which s/he is engaged as outlined in the section “Selection and Screening”. The procedures and regulations of B-PSA US Headquarters Council relating to Leaders and qualifications should be adhered to by Leaders.
2. All Leaders should have a knowledge of First Aid and ideally hold Senior First Aid qualifications.

### **Supervision of Away Trips**

1. All youth members, Leaders and accompanying adults traveling away should be carefully chosen.
2. Adults shall not share accommodation with a child. If young people are sharing accommodation it should be with those of the same gender and similar age.
3. Adequate adult : child ratios should be observed.
4. Leaders are strongly discouraged from being alone in their car with youth members.
5. Permission of parents / guardians shall be obtained for all away trips.
6. When availing of Home Hospitality special care should be taken by both host and visiting Units in the selection of homes for overnight stays and where practicable more than one child should be placed with each host family.

### **Discipline and the creation of a positive environment**

1. With proper leadership, Scouting programs can play a leading role in helping young people to accept responsibilities, to accept others and to accept themselves. Leaders should ensure that all participants feel and believe that they all have an equally important contribution to make to the activity.
2. Discipline should always be positive in focus, providing the structure and rules that allow participants to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. Young people in Scouting need to learn to become responsible for themselves and therefore more independent.
3. The main form of discipline should be through praise for:
  - a. effort; and
  - b. social skills as well as traditional Scout skills.
4. Young people must be helped to understand the responsibilities and implications of the freedom to make choices and decisions.
5. Young people should treat others in a respectful manner. Young people should not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of others.
6. There should be no place for fighting, over-aggressive or aggressive behavior.
7. Youth members should treat their Leaders with dignity and respect, recognizing the time and input which such people contribute to their development.
8. All Leaders should treat young people and fellow Leaders with respect and should behave as good role models.
9. Parents / guardians should encourage their child to play by the rules of the game. ("Be a brick and play the game" - B.P.).

### **Breaches of discipline and appeals procedures**

1. Rules and expectations should be positively stated, agreed and communicated clearly to all involved in any activity.
2. The Disputes Procedures should be made known to all young people, Leaders and parents / guardians.
3. The procedure should involve all complaints being fully investigated and the person, about whom the complaint has been made, being made aware of the complaint as soon as possible. In the case of an allegation of child sexual abuse or physical abuse, the matter should be referred immediately to the Child Welfare Authorities as outlined in the section on “Reporting Procedure for Child Abuse” of this Code.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality must be maintained throughout all stages of dealing with a complaint. Confidentiality is about managing information in a respectful, professional and purposeful manner. Only those who need to know about a complaint shall be given information. Informally revealing information to anyone else should be avoided.

### **Sanctions**

Sanctions are an important element in maintaining discipline. However, Leaders should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

1. Any sanctions which may be interpreted as being humiliating or improper should not be used.
2. Care should be taken not to expose a young person intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the young person, his / her family etc.
3. Leaders shall never use any form of corporal punishment or physical force on a youth.

### **Guidelines for the use of sanctions**

1. Sanctions should be used in a corrective way designed to help young people improve now and in the future. Sanctions should not be used to retaliate or to make the Leader feel better.
2. When violations of rules or other misbehaviors occur, sanctions should be applied in an impersonal way. Proper use of the Court of Honor, Crew Council, or Group Council will ensure that this happens.
3. Once a good rule has been agreed upon, ensure that young people who violate it experience the unpleasant consequences of their misbehavior. Sanctions should not be waved threateningly over the heads of young people. They should be implemented fairly and firmly.
4. One clear warning should be given before delivering sanctions.

5. Sanctions should be administered in a consistent way.
6. If an appropriate action cannot be devised right away, the young person should be told that the matter will be dealt with later, at a specified time.
7. Once sanctions have been imposed, it is important to make the young person feel a valued member of the group again.
8. Sanctions should not be seen by the young person as a rewarding experience for his / her inappropriate behavior.
9. Young people should not be sanctioned for making genuine errors.
10. Physical activity (*e.g. running laps or doing push-ups*) shall not be used as sanctions. To do so only causes young people to resent physical activity, something which they should learn to enjoy throughout their lives.
11. Sanctions should be used sparingly. Constant sanctioning and criticism cause young people to turn away from Scouting.
12. Sanctions should be fair and in the case of persistent offenses should be progressively applied. The following steps are suggested:
  - a. Statement and agreement of rules
  - b. Warning if a rule is broken
  - c. Sanction if the rule is broken a second time (*e.g. temporary exclusion from the activity*)
  - d. Individual interview if the rule is broken again
  - e. Longer term exclusion for continued breaking of rules and involvement of parents / guardians.

### **Substance abuse**

1. The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco shall be actively discouraged as being incompatible with a healthy approach to Scouting activity. No member shall partake of any scouting activity while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
2. A Scout Leader shall never smoke when taking part in an activity.
3. Districts and Groups should be encouraged to organize receptions and celebrations in a manner that is suitable for the age group concerned.
4. Officials should ensure that those in their charge are aware of the illegality of proscribed drugs or other abusive substances.
5. Councils and Groups shall not seek direct sponsorship from the alcohol and tobacco industries.

## Safety

All activities being undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the participants. Where protective equipment is deemed necessary it shall be used.

1. All Groups / Sections involved in organizing Scouting activities should have First Aid expertise available for all activities and events. They should have a proper First Aid Kit, including gloves, for each open wound injury.
2. All injuries, including minor ones, should be recorded, with a note of the action taken.
3. Parents / guardians should be notified of all injuries which their children incur within a Scouting activity.
4. All venues and activities should be governed by a clear and widely known emergency plan.
5. Persons organizing specialized events must ensure that the activity is conducted in accordance with the appropriate guidelines / rules. Equipment and facilities must be appropriate to the maturity of the participants.
6. Young people should be taught the rules of the activity and encouraged to abide by them. Many rules are there for safety.
7. The participants should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibility in terms of safety. It is important that before young people are taken on a trip, they have learned and acquired personal safety rules.
8. Parents / guardians have the responsibility for ensuring that their children get to and from activities safely.

## Insurance

1. At this time, B-PSA US does not provide general liability or personal injury coverage to its members or groups. B-PSA Headquarters provides a form, available online, that is required during registration of each member, to help towards this: "Liability Waiver & Medical Release Form". B-PSA US strongly encourages each Scout Group to provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage based on the group's activities.
2. Adults transporting children in their cars should be familiar with the provisions made in their automobile insurance policy in relation to acceptable numbers and liability. Leaders are advised to have at least \$2 million in personal liability coverage before transporting members in their private vehicles.

# Abuse

Parents / guardians, care givers (*i.e. persons who while not parents / guardians have actual responsibility for a child*) or others can harm children either by direct acts, or by a failure to provide proper care, or both. Such acts include physical injuries, severe neglect, and sexual or emotional abuse.

The detection and prevention of child abuse depends on the collaborative effort of everyone concerned. Central to the success of this effort are the following:

- Knowledge of the behavioral and physical indicators of various forms of abuse.
- Knowledge of the appropriate response and action to be taken where abuse is revealed or suspected.
- Vigilance, and avoidance of all situations conducive to risk.
- Open, trusting and co-operative relationships within the Group / Section, and with parents / guardians, Leaders and others concerned with young people's progress or welfare.

## 5.2. Sources of abuse

The source of abuse of a child involved in Scouting may be within or outside of the organization, and could include one or more of the following:

- Leaders
- Another child / adolescent in the Group / Association
- Person providing transport or other assistance
- Family member / caregiver
- Person outside of home / organization

## 5.3. Categories of abuse

Child abuse is generally divided into four categories:

1. **Physical abuse.** Physical injury to a child, including poisoning, where it is known or suspected that the injury was deliberately inflicted.
2. **Neglect.** The persistent or severe neglect of a child, whether willful or unintentional, which results in serious psychological impairment of the child's health, development or welfare.
3. **Emotional abuse.** The adverse effect on the behavior and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection, or exposure to ongoing domestic violence.

4. **Sexual abuse.** The use of children by others for sexual gratification. This can take many forms and includes rape and other sexual assaults, allowing children to view sexual acts or be exposed to, or involved in, pornography, exhibitionism and other perverse activities.

#### **5.4. Signs of Abuse**

There are certain signs of abuse, both in the child's behavior and appearance that should alert Leaders to the possibility of abuse. Some of these are common to all types of abuse, others are more specific to certain forms of abuse.

Knowing the indicators of abuse is essential for recognizing a potential or real problem. However, any one sign of itself can occur in the absence of abuse, and conversely, a young person who is being abused may show none of the more typical signs, or show conflicting, confusing signs. Such cases make it difficult to decide which course of action to take, but all concerns or suspicions should be acted upon according to established guidelines.

#### **5.5. Young People's Rights**

Young People have a right to be protected from abuse. The following children's rights should be upheld at all times:

1. To be safe;
2. To feel safe;
3. To protect their own bodies;
4. To refuse inappropriate touches;
5. To get help against bullies;
6. To not keep secrets;
7. To say no;
8. To tell; and
9. To be believed



# Awareness and Identification of Child Abuse

Abuse of young people within Scouting or other contexts can be combated if appropriate preventative measures and awareness exist and if identification and reporting procedures are in place. Awareness involves a number of components:

- Acceptance by all involved with young people that abuse, whether physical, psychological or sexual is wrong, severely damages young people and must be addressed.
- Acceptance of responsibility to protect young people from all forms of abuse. This involves:-
- Knowledge of what constitutes abuse
- Knowing how to identify abuse
- Implementing agreed preventative procedures
- Taking appropriate, agreed-upon steps in response to a report or observation of abuse.

## SIGNS AND TYPES OF ABUSE

### Behavioral Signs of Abuse

There are certain signs which Leaders should be aware of, which might indicate that a young person has suffered from abuse or trauma. It is important to note, however, that all of these indicators can occur in other situations where abuse has not been a factor and that the list which follows is not exhaustive.

- Acting-out, aggressive behavior
- Lack of trust
- Overly compliant behavior
- Regressive behavior
- Lack of friends
- Excessive attachment to adults
- Unusual reluctance to join in normal activities involving the removal of clothing
- Reluctance to go home or to interact with a particular individual or group
- Depressed appearance
- Change in attendance pattern / unexpected dropout
- Change in the characteristic way of behaving

- Signs of familial discord

There are a number of different types of abuse and these include physical abuse; neglect; psychological / emotional abuse; sexual abuse.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse of a young person involves the intentional non-accidental use of force on the part of the person interacting with a young person in his / her care aimed at hurting or injuring the young person, or knowingly not preventing such injury.

#### **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained bruising in soft tissue areas
- Repeated injury
- Black eye/s
- Injuries to the mouth
- Torn or bloodstained clothing
- Burns and scalds
- Bites
- Fractures
- Marks from implements
- Inconsistent stories / excuses relating to injuries
- Behavioral signs (see 6.1 Behavioral Signs of Abuse).

### **Neglect**

Passive abuse or neglect involves the persistent or severe neglect of a young person, whether willful or unintentional, which results in serious psychological impairment of the young person's health, development or welfare.

#### **Signs of neglect:**

- Nutritional deprivation
- Persistently dirty / smelly clothing or appearance
- Inadequate clothing
- Non-healing of injuries / ailments
- Signs of parental neglect
- Behavioral signs (see the section “Behavioral Signs of Abuse”)

## **Psychological / Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse occurs when an individual suffers harm as a result of being intimidated, emotionally exploited, exposed to constant denigration, ridicule, rejection or verbal attack for their supposed shortcomings. This is the least recognized form of harm done to children, yet the long-term psychological consequences may be more traumatic than in the case of simple physical injury.

### **Signs of Psychological / Emotional Abuse:**

These are largely behavioral (See the section “Behavioral Signs of Abuse”)

## **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family or carer or which are against the law. This involves the use of young people by others for sexual gratification and self power and includes many forms, from e.g. talking in a sexual way, exposure, touching etc., to full sexual intercourse.

Sexual activities are abuse if one person with greater power whether due to age, physique, status, understanding or knowledge takes advantage of the vulnerability, fears, weaknesses, lack of understanding, helplessness or need of another person.

Abuse is also present if mutual consent is absent. For consent to be present, it must be "informed" and it must be freely given. Young people cannot know the dangers and risks, whether emotional or physical, of engaging in sexual relationships where they are the vulnerable partner. In these circumstances they cannot give informed consent. Sexual abuse can involve older children abusing younger children if the above criteria exist. These cases must also be dealt with according to the Department of Social Services.

### **Signs of Sexual Abuse:**

- Hints about sexual activity / abuse
- Age-inappropriate understanding of sexual behavior (especially by young children)
- Inappropriate sexual play with other children or toys
- Preoccupation with touching sexual parts of the body
- Bloodstained underclothing
- Reluctance to remove clothing
- Excessive fear or dislike of adults / older children
- Unexpected change in the child's attitude towards Scout activities

- Other behavioral signs (see 6.1. Behavioral Signs of Abuse)

## Reporting Procedure for Child Abuse

It is important to remember that when one is reporting suspected child abuse in good faith it is not the same as making an accusation of abuse i.e. reporting does not mean accusing.

### Reporting procedure for child abuse

Responsibility for investigation of child abuse cases, suspected or otherwise, lies with the Child Welfare Services and the Police. Responsibility for monitoring and co-ordinating the management of such cases rests with the Child Welfare Services. It is not appropriate for individuals, Groups or Districts etc., to carry out internal investigations into cases where child abuse is suspected.

### Child Abuse Reporting Procedure within a Scouting context

Any person who knows or suspects that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm has a legal duty to convey his / her concern to the local Child Welfare Authorities & Police immediately.

Once the authorities have been notified, the GSM and DC should be notified and made aware of the situation.

When matters regarding the safety of other children arise in a Scouting context it will be necessary for the GSM / District Commissioner to be informed of the allegations made so that suspension of the Leader or Helper from activities which involve young people may be carried out until the conclusion of an investigation by the Legal Authorities. It is important to record carefully all concerns and allegations made.

### Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in concerns about abuse. A guarantee cannot be given to a person providing information relating to concerns about or knowledge of abuse that the information received will be kept absolutely confidential.

However, all information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who have a need to know.

### Responsibilities of Group Leaders and Commissioners

1. It is the responsibility of Commissioners and GSM's to ensure that all Leaders are aware of the contents of this Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines. Leaders should be aware of this Code and of any additions to the Code which are laid down by the organization.

2. Following any complaint made against a Leader or Helper, where there are concerns about the safety of other children, the Leader or Helper must be suspended from participation in activities involving young people pending the outcome of an investigation which can only be conducted by Legal Authorities. Confidentiality should be maintained at all stages.
3. In the case of suspension, the Leader or Helper being suspended should be formally notified by the GSM (in the case of a Section Scouter) or the District Commissioner (in the case of a District Scouter).
4. A Leader against whom an allegation of abuse has been made should be informed that this is not an accusation, and that the procedures being undertaken are in accordance with statutory guidelines. S/he should be assured that within the Group / District all information will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.
5. A Leader should be made aware generally of the nature of any allegation made against him / her and of any allegation being made known to the Legal Authorities. The timing of this discussion may be a matter to be decided upon in consultation with the Legal Authorities. The Leader should be afforded the opportunity to present a formal response to the allegation to senior personnel in the Group / District. From this point on, the matter should only be dealt with by the Legal Authorities. The quantity of information given about the specific allegation will vary depending on the precise nature of the complaint. For example, in the case of an allegation of child sexual abuse, in the interest of confidentiality and child protection, it will be necessary to withhold the name of the child and precise details of the allegation. The treatment of this information is a matter for the Legal Authorities.
6. An individual who has been convicted of a child abuse offense should never be permitted to become involved in any form of Scout activity. The name of the convicted individual should be passed on to higher HQ in order that other Scouting Associations are made aware of this individual.

### **Immediate response to a young person reporting any form of abuse**

1. It is important to deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the young person to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the young person about details of what has happened.
2. It is important to stay calm and not to show any extreme reaction to what the young person is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the young person is saying seriously.
3. It should be understood that the young person has decided to tell about something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the young person will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation.
4. No judgmental statement should be made about the person against whom the allegation is made.
5. The youth should be reassured that she / he was right to tell, and that she / he will be helped. However, false promises should not be made, such as saying that no-one else will be told.

6. The young person should not be questioned unless the nature of what she / he is saying is unclear. Leading questions should be avoided. Open, non- specific questions should be used such as "Can you explain to me what you meant by that?"
7. The youth should be given an indication of what should happen next, such as informing parents, reporting to Legal Authority, etc. It should be kept in mind that the child may have been threatened and may feel very vulnerable at this stage.
8. It may be appropriate for the person who has received the information to consult with another adult, and in particular the Youth Affairs Scouter. Such consultation should be entirely confidential and should not involve investigative procedures. Groups / Districts have no role in investigating such allegations.
9. A detailed account of any discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse should be written as soon as possible after it has taken place.

## Conclusion

This Code of Ethics and Youth Protection Guidelines outlines the major issues which need to be addressed if the Scouting Movement is to develop to the highest standards of quality and respect for the needs and dignity of young people. Responsibility lies with all individuals to act on the recommendations which have been included and to work co-operatively in helping to make membership of the Movement a happy, safe and rewarding experience for all.