SCOUTS CANADA
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SECTION 7000 – DUTY OF CARE

7000 - CODE OF CONDUCT:

The mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.

This Code of Conduct is expected of all adults who volunteer within Scouts Canada, recognizing that at all times they are expected to act responsibly and exercise a "Duty of Care" to the youth members.

Adults in Scouting:

- respect the rights and dignity of themselves and others;
- demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility, recognizing that at all times their words and actions are an example to other members of the Movement;
- act at all times in accordance with Scouting principles, thereby setting a suitable example for all;
- do not use the Movement to promote their own beliefs, behaviors or practices where these are not compatible with Scouting principles;
- act with consideration and good judgment in all interpersonal relationships, both inside and outside Scouting;
- respect everyone's right to personal privacy at all times;
- take special care when sleeping, changing clothes, and bathing are associated with any Scouting activity;
- avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with youth members wherever possible - remember, "in earshot and in vision";
- avoid potentially compromising situations by ensuring, where reasonably possible, that at least two adults are in attendance while supervising and/or accompanying youth members; and
- realize that bullying, physical, verbal or cultural abuse, sexual harassment, neglect or any other type of abuse, is unacceptable conduct by any member of the Movement.

7001 – DUTY OF CARE

7001.1 – Position Statement:

The primary responsibility of adults in the Scout Movement is the welfare and development of youth members. The single most important function of the Volunteer Recruitment and Development (VRAD) process of Scouts Canada is to ensure that only suitable adults are recruited.

Our section programs and our ethic requires us to provide an environment in which children and young people feel valued and secure; and can grow as individuals while developing a sense of self worth, personal integrity and increasing competence through the acquisition of skills and achievements. Any adult behaviour which is not supportive of this developmental process is inappropriate and requires appropriate intervention/action.

We have a duty of care to keep youth members safe and protect them from physical and emotional harm. In adventurous activities, this duty is exercised through sensible risk management. In our general program activities, this duty is exercised through a respectful, caring, empathetic and friendly relationship with young people. In the recruitment and selection of adult leaders, their personal standards, character and ability to develop this relationship is much more important than any technical skills or experience.

7001.2 – Encouraging Positive Behaviour (Discipline):

Occasionally, there may be a necessity for appropriate disciplinary action. Scouts Canada encourages positive reinforcement to correct inappropriate behaviour.

The following examples are **inappropriate** discipline methods:

- physical blows or force
- confinement
- emotional/humiliation/name-calling
- any other form of abuse

Alternatives to punishment:
If we allow someone to experience the consequences of their actions, there is potential for an honest and real learning situation to occur. Discipline can be maintained through both natural and logical consequences.

Natural consequences represent the pressure of reality without interference. Disrespecting others, for example, will ordinarily invite similar treatment. But it isn't always appropriate to let natural consequences take their course.

Logical consequences involve an intervention by someone else. So, disrespecting someone carries a consequence like removal from a program activity. The disadvantage, of course, is that this can deteriorate into another form of punishment

imposed externally. Logical consequences should be negotiated as much as possible beforehand by everyone involved. Thus, an agreement is reached as to the consequences of foul language or put-downs (Code of Conduct). Because everyone is part of the agreement, everyone is also responsible for seeing that it works. By adults and youth taking responsibility together, logical consequences become an alternative to punishment.

7001.3 – Physical Contact:

When dealing with youth, there is acceptable touching and unacceptable touching. A handshake is generally acceptable; a hug is sometimes acceptable; and an embrace is usually unacceptable. Touching which gives offence or causes any unease is not acceptable.

7001.4 – Relationships:

Scouts Canada affirms a duty to its youth members for their welfare and development. Adults accept a responsibility to Scouts Canada to care for youth members and deliver the program. Adults enjoy Scouting and benefit from the training and experience it brings. However, adults are deliverers of the program. It is the youth members who are entitled to the benefits and protection of a safe, quality Scouting program. The correct relationship between an adult and a youth member is that of the adult being an instructor, guide, dispassionate friend and protector. It is a position of integrity, trust and maturity.

7001.5 – Language:

Scouting ethic requires that we do not use vulgar or inappropriate language when working with youth members. Language should be acceptable to the reasonable onlooker and appropriate to the development of good citizenship.

7001.6 – Discrimination:

Scouting is a worldwide, multicultural movement. We welcome people to membership regardless of gender, race, culture, religious belief, sexual orientation or economic circumstances. Youth members are strongly influenced by the behaviour of adults. We need to be sensitive to the traditions and beliefs of all people and to avoid words or actions which “put down” anybody.

7001.7 – Harassment:

Harassment breaks down the positive and protective environment we seek to develop, and, at its worst, is emotionally harmful. It is contrary to our objective of individual growth and development. Some examples are ongoing teasing, disparagement, belittling or excluding individuals.

Sexual harassment is any verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature which is unwelcome and offensive.

7001.8 – Privacy:

The individual's right to privacy must be recognized and taken into consideration in such matters as sleeping places and sanitary facilities.

Adult members should, where possible, have sleeping accommodations separate from youth members, unless discipline, safety or available facilities dictate otherwise. (If sleeping accommodations are shared with youth for any of the above reasons, at least two adults must be present at all times.)

7001.9 – Alcohol Use:

(i) There shall be no alcohol at any Youth Program Activity. "Youth Program activities" include Beaver Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venturer Scouts, Rover Scouts, Scoutsabout, Extreme Adventure, camps, hikes, Volunteer training programs (Wood Badge, workshops, etc.), Jamborees or similar event, "Scout Night" with sports teams and similar functions.
(ii) There shall be no alcohol where minors are present.
(iii) To accommodate specific events, CEO or the Chief Commissioner may permit temporary alterations to this policy as needed. Any approval must be in writing prior to the event(s).
(iv) Where permitted by and consistent with law, alcohol licenses may be sought for Scouts' sites and properties as required for adult events and 3rd party rentals.
(v) Scouts Canada reserves the right to apply appropriate disciplinary measures if members are found to be in violation of these policies.

7001.10 – Smoking:

It is inappropriate for any member to smoke in front of youth at any Scouting activity.

7001.11 – General Conduct:

Adult Leaders **should**:

- Help to establish safe and open communication in each Section of the Group.
- Have an "open door" policy. Declare all meetings open to parents or Leaders.
- Treat all children, and others, with respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Be conscious of other's "personal space".
- Encourage participation by all, while being sensitive to each child's individual capacity.
- Be a role model for children. Be friendly, courteous and kind.

Adult Leaders **should not**:

- Show favoritism for particular youth members.
- Invite youth member(s) alone to your home or other private accommodation.
- Have private talks with individual youth members away from the presence of other Scouts or adults.
- Carry one youth member alone in your vehicle.
- Go on a hike or other activity with one youth member alone.
- Demonstrate first aid on a youth member.
- Assist youth members with personal hygiene or dressing except where health or disability requires it and then only in the presence of another adult.
- Take part inappropriately in body contact games.
- Let children involve you in excessive attention-seeking behaviour that is overtly physical or sexual in nature. Be particularly careful with the very needy child. Re-direct the behaviour to "healthy" activities and provide caring attention before it is asked for.

7001.12 – General Duty

Every adult's responsibility goes beyond the confines of his or her specific appointment to their own youth. Adults are expected to intervene when they identify breaches of any part of this Duty of Care document.

There are three primary areas of responsibility: **to the parents, to youth and to yourself.**

(i) - Responsibility to Parents:

At the simplest level, parents have a right to know everything that their daughter or son is going to be involved in. Of course, they have the right to say no if they feel any activity is inappropriate. Parents are also your greatest ally, and you should keep them as well informed as possible. Parents will sometimes defer to you, but only if you have convinced them that you merit their confidence, and have earned their trust and respect.

The best way to start achieving this trust is to talk with each parent. The initial visit with parents when a youth first joins your section is critical for future relationships. This visit takes time, effort and commitment, but it is well worth it. Discuss with the parents what Scouting is about, its Mission and Principles, program, weekly meetings and special events. Allow them to question you. It is better to deal with issues and concerns that the parents may have in a relaxed setting, rather than later in a "crisis" situation.

Where unsupervised activities take place, these are done so with parent/guardian's written approval (e.g. Scouts or Venturers camping alone).

Take a personal interest in their child and communicate regularly, simply and clearly with parents. Knowing parents personally is a great asset.

(ii) - Responsibility to Youth:

By knowing each individual young person, you'll be in a better position to anticipate how the youth may react in various situations. In physical activities, you may get fears and concerns being expressed which are easy to understand, but you may also get displays of bravado covering up real fears. In intellectual activities, you may get questions if a person does not understand, but you may also get disruptive behaviour as a way of saying the same thing.

(iii) - Responsibility to Yourself:

It is important to know your own limits and abilities. If you are leading an activity with any potential risks, always make sure that you are working well within your own capabilities. If you are working on the edge of your own skills, you are endangering the young people in your charge. Seek out and obtain skills and knowledge to enable you to perform your designated role.

7001.13 –

If at any time a leader observes or has reason to believe that a youth, through his/her actions, has placed other youth or adults at risk, the offending youth should be removed and/or not accepted for membership in Scouts Canada. The decision to remove or not accept an individual should be made following a discussion between the leader and the Group Commissioner.

7002 – CHILD ABUSE:

Scouts Canada, like all youth organizations, can face situations where Scouters/adult members are accused of abusing youth members. Even with our current risk management initiatives and the policy regarding the screening of all adult volunteers, the possibility of a youth member being abused is still a reality.

Scouts Canada has an excellent process in place for suspending, investigating and, if necessary, terminating Scouters/adult members accused of abusing youth members. We also have a procedure in place to handle media inquiries regarding abuse cases.

In addition, this procedure provides a process to communicate with other Scouters/adult members, parents and youth in a group where a current leader has been accused or charged with child abuse. The procedure will involve the Child Protection Authority (Children's Aid), the Police or other investigating agencies. When necessary, the provision of counseling for affected youth members and others involved will be arranged.

In most Canadian jurisdictions, there is a legal duty to report if a child has been or is at risk of being physically or emotionally harmed (including sexually molested) by a person having charge of the child. There is also a duty to report if a child less than 12 years of age has seriously injured another person or caused serious damage to another person's property and is either not appropriately supervised or is not getting the treatment that the child requires. *(Taken from Scouts Canada's booklet, "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: a Parent's Guide")*

7002. 1 – Procedure For Handling Allegations Of Harassment Or Abuse Of Youth Members:

When a youth member or parent contacts a member of Scouts Canada with a complaint of abuse against a youth member, or if the police contact Scouts Canada to inform us of charges against a current Scouter/adult member, the following steps should be taken immediately. **Please note that in all cases the needs and interests of our youth members must take precedence.**

(i) When a youth or parent advises that an abuse has taken place:

1. Listen, believe and reassure. Stay calm. Don't panic or overact to the information. Listen compassionately and take what the person is saying seriously. Don't criticize or tell the person they misunderstood what happened.
2. Advise the person that you are required to and will report the occurrence to the appropriate Child Protection Authority as well as the Scouts Canada Council Executive Director. No judgment statement should be made about the alleged abuser, nor should you show alarm or anger.
3. Ensure the child is not in any further danger.
4. Advise the person they will hear further directly from the Child Protection Authority.
5. Advise the child or parent that all information will be kept confidential and only the Council Executive Director, the Scouts Canada Risk Manager and Child Protection Authority will be provided with the information.
6. Contact your Council Executive Director and the Child Protection Authority immediately following the discussion.
7. As soon as possible, write a detailed report of your discussion regarding alleged or suspected abuse, including who, what, when, where, how, but not why. Give your written statement to your Council Executive Director as soon as possible following such a discussion.

(ii) Council Executive Directors are to immediately:

1. Contact Child Protection Authority at once.
2. Contact the Scouts Canada Risk Manager and Director of Communications.
3. Take action to suspend accused as quickly as possible.
4. Refer **ALL** media calls to the Director of Communications.

(iii) If abuse charges are filed against a current member, on the advice and with the cooperation of the police or Child Protection Authority, the Council Executive Director (in consultation with the Scouts Canada Risk Manager and the Director of Communications) will:
   1. Meet with the Scouters and Group Committee of the Group involved.
   2. Meet with the parents of the affected Group.
   3. Arrange for a youth-oriented abuse education/awareness session for youth members of the Group.
   4. Offer and arrange for the provision of individual counseling for youth, parents and other adults.

(iv) This process should also be used for "historical" cases where there are affected youth and adults active as current members.

(vi) In any abuse case, the Council Executive Director **MUST** inform and consult with the Scouts Canada Risk Manager and the Director of Communications. The Council Executive Director **MUST** also seek the advice of Police and Child Protection Authority.

Note: Requests from police or any other investigating agencies, including lawyers for information or records, must be directed to the Scouts Canada Risk Manager.

7003 – GUIDELINES:

- Do not rely on your good name to protect you.
- Do not, for one moment, believe "it can never happen to me".
- While respecting the need for privacy and confidentiality, every effort should be made to try not to be completely alone with a young person. When it is appropriate to work one on one, make sure that others are within earshot and within vision.
- Never touch a young person in a way that could be misconstrued.
- Never make suggestive or inappropriate remarks.
- If you suspect a young person is developing a "crush" on you, discuss it with other Leaders and, if appropriate, the parents.
- If you notice any of your colleagues are at risk from their behaviour or a young person's crush, discuss it with them.
- Co-ed leadership in co-ed Scouting situations is highly desirable.
- The presence of an Adult Leader is a requirement for any activity that involves Beaver and Cub sections.

7004 – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Scouts Canada's *Bylaw, Policies & Procedures*
- Scouts Canada's Help Line – helpcentre@scouts.ca
- Scouts Canada's web site - www.scouts.ca
- Scouts Canada's *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*
- Any Scout Office
- Provincial and local laws