



MEMBERSHIP STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION

Frequently Asked Questions



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

August 2013

Upon approval of the membership standards resolution in May of 2013, the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America began reviewing its policies and guidelines to help ensure a smooth transition to the new policy.

With the combined leadership of volunteers and professionals, seven task forces have reviewed every aspect of the Scouting movement, including unit operations, finance and fundraising, camping and outdoor, youth and adult audiences, chartered and community organizations, and human resources. The good news from this process is that after a thorough review, it has been determined that no major changes are required.

Scouting's greatest strength is its volunteers. Their strong, committed leadership and good judgment in working with youth is the key to our current and future success, as it has been for more than 100 years. With their experience and wisdom, Scouting will continue to be the iconic symbol of strength, character, leadership, and faith.

At Top Hands, we will share the findings of the Implementation Task Force, release training materials, and share a schedule of webinars designed to assist councils in communicating policies and guidelines related to the new membership standards.

In this communication you will find key points about the implementation of the new membership standards policy as well as answers to a broad range of frequently asked questions related to:

- Region, area, and council operations
- District and unit operations
- Camping and programs
- Human resources
- Finance and fundraising

Of course, there is no way the BSA can answer every possible question that may arise. Ultimately, people in leadership positions must exercise good judgment, all the time asking the key question they have always asked: "What is in the best interest of the youth we serve?"

Thank you for all you do for Scouting.

Sincerely,



Gary Butler
Assistant Chief Scout Executive - Operations

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Membership Standards Resolution

Passed by Voting Delegates of the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, May 2013

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law:

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
And to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
Mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is:

Trustworthy	Obedient
Loyal	Cheerful
Helpful	Thrifty
Friendly	Brave
Courteous	Clean
Kind	Reverent

AND WHEREAS, duty to God, duty to country, duty to others, and duty to oneself are each a core value and immutable tenet of the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, the Scout Oath begins with duty to God and the Scout Law ends with a Scout's obligation to be reverent, and that will always remain a core value of the Boy Scouts of America, and the values set forth in the Scout Oath and Law are fundamental to the BSA and central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, the vision of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law; and

WHEREAS, for more than 103 years, programs of the Boy Scouts of America have been delivered to youth members through cooperation with chartered organizations that select adult leaders who meet the organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the Boy Scouts of America; and

WHEREAS, numerous independent experts have recognized that the programs protecting Scouts today, which include effective screening, education and training, and clear policies to protect youth and provide for their privacy, are among the best in the youth-serving community; and

WHEREAS, the current adult leadership standard of the Boy Scouts of America states:

The applicant must possess the moral, educational, and emotional qualities that the Boy Scouts of America deems necessary to afford positive leadership to youth. The applicant must also be the correct age, subscribe to the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and abide by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

While the BSA does not proactively inquire about sexual orientation of employees, volunteers, or members, we do not grant membership to individuals who are open or avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the BSA.

AND WHEREAS, Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting; and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America does not have an agenda on the matter of sexual orientation, and resolving this complex issue is not the role of the organization, nor may any member use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political position or agenda; and

WHEREAS, youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to live a moral life; and

WHEREAS, America needs Scouting, and the organization's policies must be based on what is in the best interest of its young people, and the organization will work to stay focused on that which unites us, and

WHEREAS, the Boy Scouts of America will maintain the current membership policy for all adult leaders of the Boy Scouts of America, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The following membership standard for youth members of the Boy Scouts of America is hereby adopted and approved, effective Jan. 1, 2014:

Youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America is open to all youth who meet the specific membership requirements to join the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Sea Scout, and Venturing programs. Membership in any program of the Boy Scouts of America requires the youth member to (a) subscribe to and abide by the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, (b) subscribe to and abide by the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and (c) demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and is consistent at all times with the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

Key Points About the Membership Standards Resolution

With the combined leadership of volunteers and professionals, the BSA has conducted a thorough review of the Scouting movement and has determined that the BSA is equipped to address this issue and the change in membership standards for youth. The following points are important as we move ahead:

- On May 23, 2013, a total of 1,232 voting members of the Boy Scouts of America voted on a resolution that maintains its current membership policy for all adult leaders and states that youth may not be denied membership in the BSA on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone. The resolution passed with 757 votes, a 61 percent majority. Through the process, the BSA conducted the most comprehensive listening exercise in its history, gathering perspectives from inside and outside of the Scouting family. There are no plans for further review of this matter.
- Upon approval of the membership standards resolution in May 2013, the National Council began an in-depth review of its policies and guidelines to help ensure a smooth transition to the new policy.
- The resolution reinforces that Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether heterosexual or homosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting. Also, it states that no member may use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political position or agenda, including on the matter of sexual orientation.
- Scouting's greatest strength is its volunteers whose strong, committed leadership and good judgment in making decisions that are in the best interest of youth are key for implementation of this policy.
- This policy allows kids who sincerely want to be a part of Scouting to experience this life-changing program while remaining true to the long-standing virtues of Scouting. While people have different opinions about this policy, kids are better off when they are in Scouting.
- Our Scouting family will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth in order to help them grow into good, strong citizens. America's youth need Scouting, and by focusing on the goals that unite us, we can continue to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.
- The Scout Oath begins with duty to God, and the Scout Law ends with a Scout's obligation to be reverent, and that will always remain a core value of the Boy Scouts of America. The values set forth in the Scout Oath and Law are fundamental to the BSA and central to teaching young people to make better choices over their lifetimes.

Youth Privacy and Accommodations

The BSA has stringent policies that protect the safety and privacy of youth and adult members. Scouting has always worked to ensure that it is a supportive and safe environment for all young people, both physically and emotionally. The following points are important as we move forward:

- This change in membership standards is not a youth protection issue. To consider it a youth protection issue would lead one to believe that sexual abuse and victimization is considered inherent to sexual orientation. This is not the case.
- The change in policy concerns healthy child and adolescent development and should be addressed as such. As always, our leaders are key to ensuring that the BSA always acts in the best interest of our youth members.
- No youth should be singled out as a result of this change. If that were to happen, it would likely set up those youth to be bullied or ostracized.

Additional information on the BSA's Youth Protection programs can be found at www.scouting.org/BSAYouthProtection.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the BSA's new membership standards policy?

The membership standard for youth members of the Boy Scouts of America is as follows, effective January 1, 2014:

Youth membership in the Boy Scouts of America is open to all youth who meet the specific membership requirements to join the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Sea Scout, and Venturing programs. Membership in any program of the Boy Scouts of America requires the youth member to (a) subscribe to and abide by the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, (b) subscribe to and abide by the precepts of the Declaration of Religious Principle (duty to God), and (c) demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and is consistent at all times with the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

What will happen to councils that ignore this resolution?

Scouting represents millions of youth and adult members in diverse communities across the nation, each with a variety of beliefs on this topic. All local councils and chartered organizations agree to follow BSA national policies. Any time we are aware of any inconsistency in the administration of a Scouting policy, we work with the local council to reiterate the policy and ensure compliance.

If a chartered organization does not agree with allowing homosexual youth members, can it deny them membership or defer them to another unit?

No. Effective January 1, 2014, no youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone. However, any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting. As they always have, chartered organizations can require members to demonstrate behavior that exemplifies the highest level of good conduct and respect for others and is consistent at all times with the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Will local units be able to deny membership to youth based on sexual orientation?

No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

Will there be any change to the youth application in which a checkbox or similar device will be used for prospective members to indicate sexual preference?

No, there will not be any change to the youth application that indicates sexual preference.

Does the BSA plan to implement any sort of sexual preference tolerance training for unit leaders?

There is no plan to implement sexual preference tolerance training. The BSA feels that the Scout Oath and Law and its anti-bullying training adequately cover this area.

How does the BSA define “morally straight”?

The *Boy Scout Handbook* continues to define “morally straight” as “Your relationships with others should be honest and open. Respect and defend the rights of all people. Be clean in your speech and actions and faithful in your religious beliefs. Values you practice as a Scout will help you shape a life of virtue and self-reliance.”

How does the BSA define sexual conduct?

Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting. Leaders have the responsibility and authority to set boundaries and address them with youth members. The *Boy Scout Handbook* tells boys that “Your religious leaders can give you guidance for making ethical choices. Your parents, guardian, or a sex-education teacher can provide the basic facts about sex.”

What happens when a youth member with same-sex attraction becomes an adult and wants to serve as a leader?

As is the case with every member, when individuals are no longer youth participants, they must reapply as, and meet the requirements of, adult leaders.

What will happen if a youth member openly criticizes, teases, or bullies another person for any of their beliefs or actions?

As always, Scouting teaches respect and courtesy for all people. Unit leaders must address any mistreatment of others that may occur. The leader’s responsibility is to address the issue with concern and sensitivity, while ensuring the member understands the boundaries and potential consequences.

Can a Scout participate in a social or political cause that calls attention to his sexual orientation or preference?

Under the BSA's rules and regulations, a Scout may appear in uniform at a nonpartisan and nonpolitical gathering in a way that gives him the opportunity to render service in harmony with his training in the Scouting program. However, the BSA is required to avoid involving the Scouting movement in any question of a political character. Each youth member is free as an individual to express his thoughts or take action on political or social questions, but he must not use Scouting's official uniforms and insignia when doing so.

What should a Scout or Scout leader do if a youth with same-sex attraction asks whether they can join Scouting?

Invite them to join and explain the joining requirements. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

What should a Scout or leader do if a youth member lets them know that he or she is gay?

It is an individual's choice how public they wish to be about their sexual orientation. As always, Scouting teaches respect and courtesy for all people. It is the Scout leader's responsibility to address the issue with concern and sensitivity, while ensuring the member understands the boundaries. The leader should emphasize that there is no place in Scouting for any sexual conduct by youth of Scouting age.

Frequently Asked Questions: Camping and Programs

Should there be special arrangements made for showering, swimming, lifeguarding, and changing areas?

Personal activity involving bathrooms, showers, hygiene, and dressing are respected as private. A general move toward individual toilet and shower facilities is already underway and individuals needing additional privacy can take appropriate actions on their own or request others to be respectful of their needs. As always, the adult leaders have the discretion to arrange private showering times and locations, as needed. The privacy and security of our youth members is among our top priorities.

Should special arrangements be made to accommodate youth in camp, on trips, or during events based on sexual orientation?

Requests by units for special accommodation to camp/participate with others, or to be exclusive from others, is discouraged. We are all Scouts and are accepting of all members of the Scouting family.

Will there be any changes to current policies regarding sleeping arrangements on Scout activities? We know that separate accommodations must be provided for members of the opposite sex in the Venturing program.

Each unit's leadership along with their committee will be responsible for working with their parents to determine appropriate sleeping arrangements. This is consistent with current practices that allow for unit leaders, in consultation with parents, to use their discretion to ensure the safety and comfort of the youth members in their charge. In the past, there have been a variety of issues that required these conversations and this will follow that process. The training materials will reflect this direction.

What should the age difference be between youth tenting together?

It is recommended that there be no more than a three-year age separation between Scouts tenting together. If a Scout or parent of a Scout makes a request to not tent with another Scout, their wishes should be honored.

Frequently Asked Questions: Human Resources

For Local and National Staff

What is the policy of the BSA for employees regarding sexual orientation?

The BSA does not inquire about the sexual orientation of employees, volunteers, or members. The BSA does not grant leadership, including professional commissioning, to adults who are known or avowed homosexuals. Neither the BSA nor local councils may fire or refuse to hire an employee based on sexual orientation or preference if the employment position is not limited to commissioned professional Scouters or does not require being a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America. Should any issues or questions arise regarding this, immediately contact the BSA's general counsel.

What if I as an employee disagree with this policy change? Do I have to leave the BSA?

Staying or leaving is an individual choice. There is no requirement to leave if you disagree, but you are required to respect, follow, and (when the situation arises) enforce the new youth membership policy. If you want to talk through this with someone, contact your supervisor or call the HR Hotline at 972-580-2031.

What do I do if I think a fellow employee is gay?

Nothing. The BSA does not seek out or report gay employees.

After the policy goes into effect, will it be permissible to have a youth member with a same-sex attraction serve on camp staff as an employee?

Yes, provided that he or she is registered as a youth member and does not engage in any behavior that is contrary to the values and virtues of Scouting or that disrupts the operations of the camp.

What does this change mean to me and my family?

If there is any change for you or your family it might only be in how you process the policy change for yourselves. There is no change in pay or benefits or terms of your employment or benefits for your family.

If I need help recruiting staff members, who should I contact?

Contact Carolyn Altemus at 972-580-2118 or carolyn.altemus@scouting.org for assistance in all phases of recruiting and hiring.

Frequently Asked Questions: Finance and Fundraising

Will this change in membership policy be good for the BSA? How?

This change to the membership standards policy acknowledges changes in society while remaining true to Scouting's mission and is reflective of how our major religious chartered organizations operate. Our vision is to serve every eligible youth in America, and this policy would allow us to serve more kids and focus on their development. America needs Scouting, and our policies must be based on what is in the best interest of our kids.

Was this decision made for financial reasons?

No. We fully expect that donors will have mixed feelings about this change. What is important is that the reasons our communities have supported Scouting for 103 years – our ability to help children develop self-confidence and leadership skills, and to learn and grow into productive adults in a safe environment – have not changed and will never change.

Will local councils begin to receive United Way funding now that the membership standards have changed?

There are more than 1,200 local United Way chapters in the United States, each governed by a local volunteer board. United Way funding is determined at the local level and not as part of any national directive. As always, we hope that local United Way committees will look at the quality of the programs that the BSA provides to local youth and will see that the BSA is a vital partner in delivering the desired outcomes in achieving community goals.

Finance Tools and Resources

The following items were sent to Scout executives on May 28.

[[letter]]

Dear Scout Executives:

It has been a tumultuous few months for the Boy Scouts of America. Through all of the important deliberations Scouting has continued to help millions of young people to develop their full potential. Simply put, it is time we refocus on the mission.

The reasons our communities have supported Scouting for 103 years – our ability to help children develop self-confidence, leadership skills, and to learn and grow into productive adults in a safe environment – have not changed and will never change. I am optimistic we can say the same about their support; but we'll have to ask them to find out.

There are several tools for your use attached and I will also be participating in the upcoming operations live cast on Wednesday, June 12th to address specific concerns related to fundraising in our current environment. But most importantly you need to right now be personally speaking and visiting with your key donors and fundraising volunteers. These stakeholders are as important as your Scouters, board members, and chartered partners and will want to personally know what is happening. Whether it be the longtime Scouter with the 6-figure gift in his will or your local United Way director, they need to be communicated with if you have not already. This year has been a test of the overall success of your donor cultivation and communication efforts. This time provides us a great excuse to speak with donors, but let's hope it is not the first contact they have had with you since their last gift.

Attached you will find the following items:

- A draft appeal letter to be sent with a response piece and return envelope to lapsed donors. This should not be the first communication since the resolution passed. They should be included or added to the communications I trust you are already sending to your Scouters provided by Marketing and Communications.
- A draft email appeal to be sent to your online givers and email lists, which includes directions on where to find templates and assistance in inserting links. Likewise, this should not be the first communication since the news hit. They should be included or added to the communication I trust you are already sending to your Scouters using the talking points provided by Marketing and Communications.
- Language for use in FOS Presentations, Special Event scripts, Ask Event scripts, donor conversations, etc.

We look forward to continuing to support your fundraising efforts during this time. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email or at the number below or to contact Mark Moshier, our Team Leader for Council Fund Development, at Mark.Moshier@Scouting.org or (972) 580-2208.

Thank you,
Craig H. Shelley
Director, Development and Corporate Alliances
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
972-580-2107
craig.shelley@scouting.org

LANGUAGE FOR USE IN FOS PRESENTATIONS, SPECIAL EVENT SCRIPTS, ASK EVENT SCRIPTS, DONOR CONVERSATIONS, ETC.

There has been much discussion of our volunteer leadership's deliberations and subsequent decisions about our policies on membership; we are first and foremost steadfastly committed to ensuring that Scouting delivers quality programs to children. The reasons our communities have supported Scouting for 103 years – our ability to help children develop self-confidence, leadership skills, and to learn and grow into productive adults in a safe environment – have not changed and will never change. I am optimistic we can say the same about your support.

DRAFT APPEAL LETTER TO BE SENT TO UNRENEWED GIFTS

Dear [[Salutation]]:

For over a century, Scouting has encouraged and cultivated young people to reach their full potential while teaching them to actively improve their communities and our nation for both today and tomorrow. Because of the commitment you have made, every day our youth turn to the values found in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law as they make decisions and lead their lives, even into adulthood. Thank you. Please continue your support of Scouting by making a financial contribution that will ensure our community's youth will continue to be taught the strong foundation of values that the Scout Oath and Scout Law represent.

Thanks to your generosity, together we are making a difference in the lives of over 2.6 million youth nationally and more than XXX youth locally who participate in the Scouting program. Today our young people are faced with many unique challenges, and because of your help, Scouting has been able to provide youth with the tools to overcome these challenges and become confident leaders throughout the country.

Even in times of difficult decisions as an organization, we remain focused on the future of Scouting and the success of the next generation. We continue to be committed to enhancing our programs, reaching additional youth, and being a shining light in our communities and nation. By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to provide incredible opportunities for young people. We appreciate your continued support and dedication to our young people.

Please make a gift to the BLANK COUNCIL of the Boy Scouts of America. Enclosed please find a response piece and return envelope for your convenience.

Thank you,

SIGN SE, COUNCIL PRESIDENT, OR OTHER PROMINENT VOLUNTEER

DRAFT APPEAL EMAIL TO BE SENT TO PAST ONLINE GIVERS

For over a century, Scouting has encouraged and cultivated young people to reach their full potential while teaching them to actively improve their communities and our nation for both today and tomorrow. Because of the commitment you have made, every day our youth turn to the values found in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law as they make decisions and lead their lives, even into adulthood. Thank you. Please continue your support of Scouting by making a financial contribution that will ensure our community's youth will continue to be taught the strong foundation of values that the Scout Oath and Scout Law represent.

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Thank you,

SIGN SE, COUNCIL PRESIDENT, OR OTHER PROMINENT VOLUNTEER

E-Funding Tips – DO NOT INCLUDE IN EMAIL

If you use the E-Funding template in an outgoing email, be sure to embed the correct hyperlink into your email to drive donors to the correct donation page. This could be your "APlaceToGive" donation page or your "Donate Now" page through Blackbaud Sphere.

Details on E-Funding can be found at www.scouting.org/financeimpact. Click on the Council Fund Development tab at the top and then click the E-Funding Tools link on the left. Hyperlinks can be inserted under pictures or words to drive donors to the correct giving pages. If you are uncertain on how to use the tools for "APlaceToGive" or "Donate Now," call John Kuehn at 972-580-2033.