

GUIDELINES ON **SCOUTING** FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



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Youth Programme



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GUIDELINES ON **SCOUTING** FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



"THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT SUCH BOYS IS THEIR CHEERINESS AND THEIR EAGERNESS TO DO AS MUCH IN SCOUTING AS THEY POSSIBLY CAN. THEY DO NOT WANT MORE SPECIAL TESTS AND TREATMENT THAN IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY".

BADEN POWELL

CONTENTS

1. Who are those with disabilities?	5
2. Scouting's Contribution	7
3. Ways in which Scouting can assist	8
4. Attracting Young People	10
5. Modifications and Adaptations	11
6. Child Protection	13
7. Resilience	14
8. Volunteers	15
9. Partners & Resources	17
10. References & Website	18

AT THE QUEENSLAND AGOONOREE
IN AUSTRALIA, SCOUTS TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS IN THEIR PATROL AND
HELP THEM DURING ACTIVITIES.



Who are those with disabilities?

In Scouting, a disability is any health condition, impairment or functional problem that could make it difficult for a young person or adult to access or participate in its activities. The exact cultural, social and/or economic consequences of these factors will vary due to historical perspectives, country and location. Without assistance and attention people with disabilities may be marginalized, and excluded from the Scout activities.

Children and youth with special needs

These Guidelines focus specifically on those children and young people who have special needs which arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty. Resources will be produced by WOSM that address other specific groups, including those for Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances - CEDC (socially marginalized).

This resource focuses upon those who require additional assistance to access, participate and achieve in Scouting for those activities that others take for granted. It includes children and young people who may have a disabling condition such as a sensory, physical, learning or intellectual impairment. Such conditions may have been present at birth, or develop later or be the result of an injury or illness.

Specifically, this resource focuses on children and young people with:

- *autistic spectrum disorder*
- *intellectual impairment*
- *learning difficulties such as dyslexia*
- *medical conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy*
- *mental health problems*
- *mobility impairments*
- *speech-language impairment*
- *vision or hearing impairment.*

Some young people with disabilities are easily identified, such as those who are blind or in a wheelchair, while others may have what are referred to as “hidden disabilities” such as intellectual impairment, behavioural problems (like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - ADHD) or learning difficulties.

The special needs of each person are likely to change as the person gets older; some may gain independence while others perhaps require increased levels of support.

To ensure that we, in Scouting, are able to provide maximum assistance, it is important that terms associated with disabilities are correctly understood. The World Health Organisation offers the following definitions for terms that are commonly used:

Body functions are the physiological functions of body systems (including psychological functions).

Body structures are anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs and their components.

Impairments are problems in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss.

Activity is the execution of a task or action by an individual.

Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities.

Participation is involvement in a life situation.

Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations.

Disability is a general or umbrella term used to designate any impairment of body function or structure, any activity limitation or participation restriction.

Impairments become problems for a person’s participation in life situations, such as education, employment, or participation in group social activities, because of barriers in the person’s environment, including not just the physical environment, but the human built environment and the social and political environment, including people’s attitudes and the way they react to people with impairments. The impairment of total lack of visual acuity -- that is, blindness -- will generally result in the incapacity to use vision for reading and other activities, but will only become a participation restriction (a true problem in the person’s life) if, for example, the person can not use the library because it has no braille, cassette books or other technology to enable the person to access library materials.

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Andrew Dufficy, AUSTRALIA

Andrew has a visual impairment and hydrocephalus (water on the brain). At 8 he was adopted by a family who attempted to give him many opportunities including joining Cub Scouts.

In 1979 he attended the Nippon (Japan) Agoonoree as a Cub Scout and introduced the principle of Agoonorees to Australia on his return. Andrew continued as a Scout, Venturer and Rover, participating fully in all activities while his medical conditions were closely monitored. He worked very hard at school and in university, motivated and encouraged by his family and friends. And it was no surprise that he graduated with a Diploma in Business.

He met his wife, a Rover Scout, through Scouting and now they have children who are also Scouts. Today, he is the Group leader at a local Scout group. Andrew enjoys watching his children experience the fun and joys he experienced as a youth in Scouting.

SCOUTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT
CLAP BY TWISTING THEIR PALMS,
CREATING SWISHING SOUNDS WITH
THEIR FINGERS AND CREATE A GREAT
ATMOSPHERE THAT GIVES THEM ALL
GOOSEBUMPS.



Scouting's Contribution

Baden Powell was strong in his support for members with disabilities.

As early as 1919 in "Aids to Scoutmastership", he wrote of "the numbers of crippled, deaf and dumb, and blind boys who were gaining greater health, happiness and hope than they ever had before". He recognised that some adaptations were needed and encouraged the use of special, or alternative tests, while at the same time believing that over-protection and paternalism should be avoided: "The wonderful thing about such boys is their cheeriness and their eagerness to do as much in Scouting as they possibly can. They do not want more special tests and treatment than is absolutely necessary".

Attitudes

It is important to recognize that inclusion within Scouting plays an important role in modifying community attitudes and behaviour towards youth with disabilities; thereby creating new partnerships and enlisting community co-operation in the integration and development of such people. Culturally, Scouting contributes to building communities which recognise and value diversity where there is a place for everyone.

SCOUTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CAN PARTICIPATE IN MOST ACTIVITIES, WITH A LITTLE EXTRA CARE AND SUPPORT. HERE IS AN EXAMPLE FROM THE CENTENNIAL WORLD SCOUT JAMBOREE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.



Ways in which Scouting can assist

The best practice in the majority of situations is for those with disabilities to be included in regular Scouting activities, as much as possible.

Information first

A Section's leadership team needs to obtain basic information about all young people before they join Scouting. It is good practice to ask the parents or carers of a potential member to complete a membership form before the young person joins the Section. In addition to the more traditional details of: date of birth, parents'/carers' address, phone number and school attended, the team needs to know about any disabilities which will have to be met. While the form should request details of any disabilities, Leaders need to be mindful that some parents may not wish to disclose that their child has any disability for fear that this may further disadvantage them.

Where a child will require particular support, a meeting with parents or carers becomes a vital step. The information required may range from a general appreciation of what the young person can or can't do, to far more detailed information if there is a serious medical condition. This will include details about medication, eating, toileting, communicating, mobility, lifting and handling and knowledge of the procedures that are familiar to the young person.

What next?

Having discussed the young person's needs, and having thought about the steps required, it is time to make a decision. Is your Section able to provide a flexible and creative programme for the young person that can be balanced with the needs of the other Scouts in the Section? This is not a decision that you should take alone. You will need to discuss it with those around you in Scouting who will be or may become involved with the young person.

Consider the following:

- *If your meeting venue is not suitable, you may be able to make necessary modifications or borrow equipment to help.*
- *If you feel your leadership team is under-strength, there may well be parents or carers willing to come and support the young person.*
- *If you feel you really cannot provide what you believe a young person needs, there may be another Group in your area that is better equipped to cope.*
- *If you are able to welcome the Scout into your Section, it is important to start planning activities appropriate to their age and capabilities from the beginning. You will need to take into account the appropriate communication methods, attention span, and physical and personal needs of the Member.*

There may be little impact on your activities once you are underway as you and your Leaders will quickly learn how to equip and modify an activity and, if appropriate to rephrase instructions. The Scout Method, where young people work together in teams and where everyone has a role to play, is the ideal setting for supporting those with or without disabilities. The Scouting spirit could also play an important role in creating a trustworthy atmosphere within the Group thereby facilitating the inclusion and involvement of youth with disabilities.

Practical issues are usually relatively easy to solve; it is more often attitudes which pose the greatest challenge. You may need to explore this, and try some practical activities which provide the opportunity for your other Scouts to experience life as a person with a disability.

Sometimes the severity of a young person's disability or their geographical situation will mean that they will experience most of their Scouting in a Group whose participants all share the same needs. It is important that these Groups are full participants in the life of Scouting locally and do not become isolated. They must be offering equal challenges and activities as other Groups, and need to be seen as 'just another Group' when planning for events and opportunities, especially locally.

As a young person moves from one Section to the next, it is essential to pass on their details, including information about any disabilities. Be aware, however, that while a disability may go almost unnoticed in a short meeting for younger members, it may start to present more of a challenge as the young person gets older and the activities in the programme increase in level of difficulty. By the same token, as a young person becomes more familiar with his or her disability, they may well begin to cope better and be able to recognise what they can and can't do.

Family support

As you build up and maintain regular contact with the parent or carer, you will become aware of what support is available from the young person's family. While many parents and carers will recognise the value of the Scouting experience that you are offering, and be ready to help in any way possible, please remember not to make too many demands on them. The Scouting activities you offer may represent a rare opportunity of respite from their daily caring duties.

Across the Scouting world young people with disabilities are regularly included in Scouting activities and events without it being seen as anything unusual. However there are times when, in order to draw more individuals and Groups into this inclusive way of working, such an approach needs a higher profile and due celebration. This helps to generate more inclusion within the Association and to publicly acknowledge, to a wider audience just what Scouting can and is achieving.



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SCOUTING HELPS IMPROVE THE
SELF-CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM
OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES.



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Attracting Young People

Many children or youth with disabilities don't have enough opportunities to discover, prove and improve themselves in the society because of:

- the lack of opportunities to prove themselves
- the way their parents and acquaintances behave toward their disabilities
- their disabilities.

Here, Scouting can play an active role by:

- including and involving such young people in a range of Scouting programmes which will offer them considerable opportunities to discover their abilities; to prove themselves both to themselves and to other members of the group, and to improve their abilities.
- involving the parents of these young people in Scouting programmes.
- involving other young people in accepting and helping youth with disabilities in the Group when conducting Scouting programmes. This will increase the self-esteem of those with disabilities and also create an atmosphere of understanding, tolerance and solidarity within the Group.
- ensuring the child or youth with disabilities plays an active role in the Group, which will improve their self-confidence and self-esteem.

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© WSB Inc. / Hannah Sjöstedt

Hannah Sjöstedt, SWEDEN

Hannah joined Scouting as a Cub Scout aged 8 and is now a leader in Scouting. Many times European wheelchair racing Champion, the very enterprising and ever smiling Hannah is currently studying to be a Medical Doctor in Stockholm.

As a career woman she wants to specialise in surgery or children's care or orthopaedics. Hannah wishes to travel with the 'Doctors Without Borders' (Medecins Sans Frontieres – MSF) organisation and help the less fortunate people of the world.

Hannah's message to Scouts: 'If I can paddle a canoe down a violent stream with rocks everywhere and climb a mountain when I have two, more or less useless legs – you can do anything! Just apply yourself and work hard'

ABSEILING IS FUN AND ADVENTUROUS,
WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO
EQUIPMENT IT CAN EASILY BE MADE
ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE.



Modifications and Adaptations

Changes in values over the past fifty years have promoted the principle that people with disabilities should be treated as normally as possible. It is under this guiding principle that Scouting puts the child or youth in a situation as near as possible to a "normal" situation.

Guiding principles

- *Curriculum and activities must be in line with the objectives of Scouting through a system of progressive self-education ie "The Scout Method".*
- *The prescriptive package of "training syllabus", "membership", "advancement", "Award Scheme" etc should be open to all Scouts. In addition delivery of the youth programme should be conducted with appropriate adaptation and flexibility thereby providing all youth with a variety of options for some degree of specialization to cater for different aptitudes, learning needs and capabilities.*
- *A learner-focused approach should be used to make decisions in the best interest of the individual child or youth.*
- *Assistive technologies such as computers, electronic devices and peripheral devices play an important part for people with disabilities in determining what they can accomplish, learn and enjoy. Improved and more readily available assistive technologies should, where possible, be provided to help in solving problems of mobility, muscular control, hearing, speech, and limited intelligence.*
- *The implementation of the youth programme and support mechanisms should involve the participation and collaboration of Scout Leaders, parents and carers. Where possible, professionals such as teachers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, nurses and doctors should also be involved.*

Practical hints

- *The Leader should get to know the child or youth beforehand in order to assist with his/her enrolment.*
- *Leaders should explain to the Cub Pack, Troop or Unit the degree of disability or type of disabilities of the new member. They should emphasise that they must treat the child or youth as one of themselves, to show no curiosity or pity and not to do everything for them but to give assistance when the child or youth genuinely needs help.*
- *While most young people will be able to complete the requirements for the Scout test work and badges of their choice, there will be a number of young people with disabilities who will require further flexibility to gain their Activity Badges. Adaptation by Leaders may be required with specific variation to meet the needs of the young person concerned. The aim in each case should be to challenge the young person to do ones best and learn new things.*
- *Include the child or youth in every activity by some means or other, even if it means inventing a way.*
- *The child or youth should have opportunities to pass the tests for badges as often as possible. This is just as vital to them as to the non-disabled Scout - perhaps more so.*
- *Make and use support materials and aids for personal care, mobility, communication, information and signaling.*

Strategies to support Scout Groups

- *Develop training programmes for the Leaders of sponsoring Groups, Scout Leaders. These would include courses or workshops on understanding specific needs of children and youth with disabilities; teaching skills catering for individual differences; sharing sessions on exemplary teaching/learning etc.*
- *Provide on-site support to help Scout Groups develop adaptations and make flexible arrangements.*
- *Develop a network of institutions that are involved in helping children and youth, which can serve as resources for Leader's training.*
- *Print booklets or provide web-links about life, needs and skills of people with disabilities.*
- *Set up a Committee to provide expert advice on the development of Scouting for those with disabilities.*
- *Appoint a co-coordinator or Commissioner to take on the responsibility of developing a holistic strategy to support Scouting for children or youth with disabilities.*

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Agoonoree – various National Scout Organizations (NSOs)

Many Scout Organizations run Agoonoree Camps where Scouts invite young people (and/or Scouts) with disabilities to join them in a camping experience. Using the Scout Method, young people with disabilities participate in Patrols with Scouts and eat, sleep and undertake fun activities.

SCOUTING 'REACHES OUT' TO
THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST
ALLOWING THESE YOUNG PEOPLE
TO SHOW WHAT THEY CAN DO.



© WSB Inc. / 191st Dublin Deer Scout Group, IRELAND

Child Protection

It is essential to safeguard the welfare of all Members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm by ensuring that all Adults in Scouting are aware of Child Protection issues and the rights of all individuals - whether child or adult - to privacy and dignity.

Some Scouts with particular physical or learning disabilities may at times require support of a personal nature. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents or carers. Those providing such support will need training from an appropriate individual or organisation. In an emergency, where this type of help is required, the parents or carers should be fully informed as soon as possible.

It is important to ensure that those undertaking personal care are sensitive to the individual and carry out tasks with the utmost discretion. Leaders should ensure that the Scout is given privacy and treated with dignity when tasks of a personal or intimate nature are being carried out. Someone who is inexperienced must not undertake this kind of assistance. A record must be kept of any personal care tasks that are undertaken.

Parents or carers are responsible for keeping Leaders updated with this information. They can also best advise on how to appropriately undertake the personal care. Leaders should be aware of these guidelines and obtain the prior written approval regarding the level of personal care needed and the circumstances in which it can be given.

The Leader in charge should only administer medication under the strict written instructions from the parents or carers. This responsibility may however be delegated to another Leader or Assistant who has the appropriate expertise. All medication should be stored safely and correctly and a record kept of anything administered.

Leaders can do much to minimise any accusations of inappropriate behaviour. They will need to plan for appropriate numbers of helpers/carers and put routines in place that leave neither Leaders nor young people exposed to risk.

IN SCOUTING, THOSE WITH
DISABILITIES MERGE WITH OTHER
SCOUTS.



Resilience

Resilience is an important attribute to be developed in young people with disabilities and the Scout Method offers many ways to develop this. Resilience is the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity, to overcome negative influences that often block achievement. Resilience research focuses on traits, coping skills and support that help kids survive, or even thrive, in a challenging environment.

Researchers in this field have identified characteristics common to children who have succeeded "against the odds." These have been termed "protective factors." And exist within the individual, home and community, including schools.

Protective factors outside the home which may be also relevant in the Scout Group include experiences which provide:

- *exposure to mainstream society*
- *access to resources for meeting basic needs*
- *access to leadership positions*
- *opportunities for decision-making*
- *meaningful participation in the community*
- *lack of frequency and duration of stressful incidents*

Support mechanisms include providing:

- *effective feedback and praise*
- *quality attention from a caring adult*
- *a multigenerational support network*
- *personally supportive role models*
- *unconditional acceptance by at least one other person*
- *clear and enforced boundaries*
- *encouragement of pro-social values*
- *appreciation of an individual's unique talents*

DURING A SCOUT EVENT LEADERS CAN INVOLVE OLDER SCOUTS AND PARENTS TO SUPPORT THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.



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Volunteers

Role of adult volunteers (Scout Leaders)

Volunteers play an important role in assisting Scouting activities for people with disabilities. In addition to being a Leader, adult volunteers can provide assistance and expertise at special activities or events. An extra pair of hands is always useful however it is important for any adult to remember wherever possible the young people with or without disabilities should be encouraged to complete the tasks and activities themselves.

Volunteers can also play an important role as consultants, offering specialised services. Their role may be to assist in planning and preparing activities rather than arranging or delivering these. An example of such is assisting an organising committee to adapt activities so they can involve all young people rather than turning up and assisting young people at the activity. Teachers and specialist workers can provide assistance by maintaining regular contact with the Scout group to ensure that the young person is being involved as much as possible. Often resources used as part of the educational program can be useful for Scouts, particularly if these are communication, optical or mobility aids. It can be very beneficial to maintain regular contact and encourage the professional input with such specialists who may know the young people individually.

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191st Dublin Deaf Scout Group, IRELAND

The 191st Dublin Deaf Scout Group is run for deaf children and young people by deaf adults. In August 2006, the 191st Dublin organised an International Deaf Scout Camp at Scouting Ireland's National Campsite, Larch Hill, Dublin.

For more information please see:

www.dublindeafscout.ie



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ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES ALSO
HAVE THE CAPACITY
TO VOLUNTEER.

Volunteering opportunities in Scouting for adults with disabilities

There are many opportunities for adults with disabilities to be involved in Scouting. As with all adults, it is essential to remember the safety of everyone is essential. It is important that the strengths and weaknesses of all potential leaders are considered when interviewing them for their respective leadership positions. While some people with disabilities will make effective Unit Leaders, others especially those with intellectual impairments, who may not be able to anticipate risks and exercise a suitable duty of care with young people, may be better placed in working beside other leaders and assisting them or working in a support role such as an activity or resource adviser. The issue of selecting suitable jobs for volunteers must be tackled in a sensitive manner. This is especially the case when an adult volunteer has a special need.

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Dominic N Munyi, KENYA

Dominic N. Munyi has been visually impaired since birth. A teacher by profession, he is currently the National Programme Commissioner of Kenya Scouts Association.

He joined Scouting in 1964 as a Junior Scout, was a Senior and Rover Scout in secondary school and College respectively.

He has undertaken most of the Adult Training in Scouting and is a Leader Trainer in the National Training Team of Kenya Scouts.

Dominic says " Scouting has made a difference in my life; as a blind man, there are many challenges that I would have otherwise not overcome. The ideals of Scouting helped me to come back to education even when I had gone away from it. Scouting encouraged me to work for people in the union for the blind at National level. My call to the youth would be that they should join Scouting and they will never regret. Disability is not inability."

Dominique has been awarded by Kenya's Head of State, The Order of The Grand Warrior (OGW), especially for his achievements in Scouting.

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS THE BEST
RESOURCE FOR INVOLVING PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES IN SCOUTING.



Partners & Resources

Working with partners

Partnership in Scouting can be defined as: "The establishment of a voluntary and collaborative relationship to achieve mutual goals and experiences between two or more entities by exchanging and sharing what they have in an educational process or project. They have a common intention which they want to reach within a defined time frame". Partners could include bodies like UNICEF, other NGO's working on disabilities, schools/institutions for young people with disabilities, NSOs already working in this area, sponsors etc.

Resources

As resources and ideas are created within the Scouting community it is important that they are shared and given a wider audience so that those who want to develop and extend opportunities as widely as possible can build on previous experience rather than forever starting from 'scratch'. Over recent years there has been a growing availability of material and innovations from a variety of Associations far too numerous to mention here. Such resources range from the Belgian booklet 'Il suffit de passer le pont' to the Australian handbooks 'Healthy Ideas for Youth Members', the Spanish 'Integrar: Una Nueva Aventura' to the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland's 'Integrated Scouting'.

Some Associations support disabilities through their professional and volunteer structures with clearly defined roles for staff or commissioners, either local or national, who are responsible for the development of diversity in Scouting, while others have regular slots in their magazines such as the UK's Scouting magazine devoted to diversity and disabilities issues. The internet has made access to these and other resources from external organisations much easier and quicker, allowing the free flow of information and ideas throughout all areas of Scouting.

A range of resources are available to assist Leaders provide Scouting to young people with disabilities, these include:

- *factsheets on disabilities*
- *responses to specific queries*
- *a range of advice and information on the disabilities pages of the web site.*

The Scout Association in the UK has a variety of materials available for all Leaders. The information gives general advice about supporting those with disabilities as well as providing a range of Factsheets on a number of disabilities and conditions. These cover everything from asthma to mobility problems, bereavement to behaviour and can be accessed through the disabilities pages on the website at: www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/sneeds

References & Website

References

The definitions used in Chapter 1 are consistent with World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), 2001.

The definition of Partnership in Scouting is taken from 'Partnership in Scouting – Marrakech Charter Bangalore edition' a World Scout Bureau publication, 2006.

Websites

www.scout.org/sp4

This link leads you to the World Organization of the Scout Movement's (WOSM's) web page on 'Reaching Out' part of Strategic Priority No. 4 in The Strategy for Scouting. Here you will find News, Resources, a Photo Gallery and Useful Links on extending Scouting to People with Disabilities.



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