

100 Years of Enhancing Efforts to Protect Youth

Recognizing that youth protection requires sustained vigilance, the BSA continues to strengthen and enhance its Youth Protection program through clear policies, training of youth and adults and effective volunteer screening. Following are key steps the BSA has taken throughout the past 100 years to ensure Scouting remains a safe environment for youth to learn and grow.

1910

- By congressional charter, the Boy Scouts of America incorporates on February 8.

1911

- The BSA institutes character reference checks for Scoutmasters.

1913

- The BSA begins a long-standing collaboration with parents and chartered organizations to select qualified Scout leaders.
- The BSA requires Scoutmasters and Scouts to register in order to participate in Scouting programs.

Mid-1920s

- The BSA begins cross-referencing all adult volunteers against a list of “ineligible volunteers” maintained at its national headquarters. This practice of identifying individuals deemed by the BSA as not having the moral, emotional, or character values for membership is later discussed in William D. Murray’s 1937 book titled *The History of the Boy Scouts of America*.

1929

- The BSA expands adult registration to include every male adult involved in Scouting.

1935

- Theodore Roosevelt states that leadership is a sacred trust and discusses the existence and use of the confidential list of ineligible volunteers to protect youth.

1972

- The BSA begins developing standards for leadership as a guideline for screening adult leaders.

1981

- *The Official Scoutmaster Handbook* directs that no troop engage in any activity without a minimum of two adult leaders.
- *Scouting* magazine runs an advertisement from the National Committee on the Prevention of Child Abuse. (Additional advertisements appear in 1983 and 1984.)

1985

- *Scouting* magazine presents the BSA’s position on “Child Abuse and Scouting.”
- *Scouting* magazine provides information regarding a governmental publication entitled “Child Sexual Abuse Prevention—Tips to Parents.”

1986

- *Boys' Life* magazine, with a circulation of 1.2 million youth and unit leaders, publishes "Wrong Kind of Touching."
- *Scouting* magazine publishes "Child Abuse—Let's Talk About It" and an article about child abuse by Dr. Walter Menninger of the Menninger Clinic.
- *Scouting* magazine publishes an extensive article entitled "Child Abuse: Let's Talk About It—A Statement by the Boy Scouts of America on Child Abuse," which includes "the 12 points of the Child Bill of Rights."

1987

- *Scouting* magazine publishes "Child Sexual Abuse—How to Deal With It" and a letter from the Chief Scout Executive on "Grooming by a Child Abuser."
- The BSA develops a camp staff training program and formally adopts the two-deep leadership policy requiring two adult leaders at all Scouting activities.

1988

- *Scouting* magazine includes an article titled "Barriers Against Child Sexual Abuse."

1989

- The BSA produces *A Time to Tell*, a video that teaches 11- to 16-year-olds the three R's of Youth Protection—how to recognize, resist, and report child abuse. More than 3,500 copies of the video are distributed in the first year.

1990

- The BSA launches a new version of "Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Volunteer Leaders and Parents."
- *The Boy Scout Handbook* features an insert titled "How to Protect Your Children," which includes exercises each new Scout is to complete with his parents when he joins Scouting.
- The insert titled "How to Protect Your Children" is also added to *The Scoutmaster Handbook*

1991

- The BSA prohibits one-on-one adult and youth activities.
- The BSA produces *It Happened to Me*, a video aimed at 7- to 10-year-old Scouts, which is featured in *Scouting* magazine in an article entitled "A Must Film to See."

1992

- Representatives from Scouting serve as advisers to the U.S. government through participation on the U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect (from 1992-1995).

1993

- The BSA hosts the first National Child Abuse Prevention Symposium for educational, religious, and other youth-serving organizations.
- The BSA's director of administration testifies before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee about Scouting's views on the national Child Protection Act of 1993, providing background information on the BSA and its Youth Protection program.

1994

- The BSA requires criminal background checks for all professionals and staff who work with youth.
- The BSA updates its *Youth Protection Guidelines for Volunteer Leaders and Parents* video, addressing how to identify whether a child has been or is being abused and what the adult should do to protect the child.

1997

- The BSA is an active member of the National Collaboration for Youth in its publication of *Screening Volunteers to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse: A Community Guide for Youth Organizations*.
- The BSA's director of administration is selected as the chair of the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations' Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse.

2001

- The BSA's Youth Protection comic book series for Cub Scouts is introduced, with the first issue focusing on bullying.

2002

- *Scouting* magazine features an article highlighting the risk of child sexual abuse and proclaims every April "Youth Protection Month."

2003

- The BSA begins conducting third-party, computerized criminal background checks on all new adult volunteers.
- The BSA introduces online training: "Youth Protection Guidelines: Training for Adult Leaders and Parents."

2005

- The BSA revises the parental training insert, "How to Protect Your Children," in *The Boy Scout Handbook* and *The Cub Scout Handbook* and publishes additional age-appropriate training materials.
- A new Adult Leader Application encourages immediate online training for Youth Protection.

2007

- The BSA updates *It Happened to Me* and includes pornography and suicide in "Personal Safety Awareness" training materials aimed at teenagers.

2008

- The BSA requires all volunteers to go through a full criminal background check.
- Scouting implements Youth Protection requirements for youth to advance in rank and addresses bullying and cybersafety.
- The BSA produces a video entitled *Cub Scout and Boy Scout Youth Protection*.

2009

- The BSA addresses the use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices by youth and adults, and updates Youth Protection materials and guidelines.
- The BSA updates “*How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide.*”
- *The Scoutmaster Handbook* includes a section on Youth Protection Guidelines, referencing the BSA Youth Protection materials, the three R's of youth protection, and the BSA's Youth Protection policies.

2010

- The BSA creates a new full-time position of Youth Protection Director. Michael Johnson, an internationally recognized expert on child abuse detection and prevention, joins the BSA as its first Youth Protection Director.
- The BSA makes Youth Protection training mandatory for all registered adult members and requires it to be repeated every two years.
- Parents are advised on the BSA youth membership application that abuse can occur “even in Scouting.” The application also advises them of the BSA's Youth Protection training and the two-deep leadership policy.

2011

- Scouting launches a new campaign called “Youth protection begins with you”™, which underscores the fundamental belief that the protection of youth—in Scouting and in local communities—can be best achieved through the shared involvement of parents, volunteers, leaders, and council staff.

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