

# The no-nonsense parents' guide to Scouting



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[scouts.org.uk/parents](http://scouts.org.uk/parents)

# Welcome to Scouting!

Your child is now one of a family of 28 million young people in 216 countries and territories who join in the fun of Scouting every week. The experiences your son or daughter has as a Scout are likely to stay with them for the rest of their lives. This guide aims to give you a better understanding of The Scout Association, how Scouting is likely to benefit your child and how any help you can give will really make a difference.

## The Sections

Scouting is open to all young people aged 6 to 25 of every faith, ability and background. There are five Sections:



6-8 YEARS

cubs

8-10 years

[SCOUTS]

10-14 YEARS

A Scout Group is normally made up of a Beaver Colony, Cub Pack and Scout Troop.



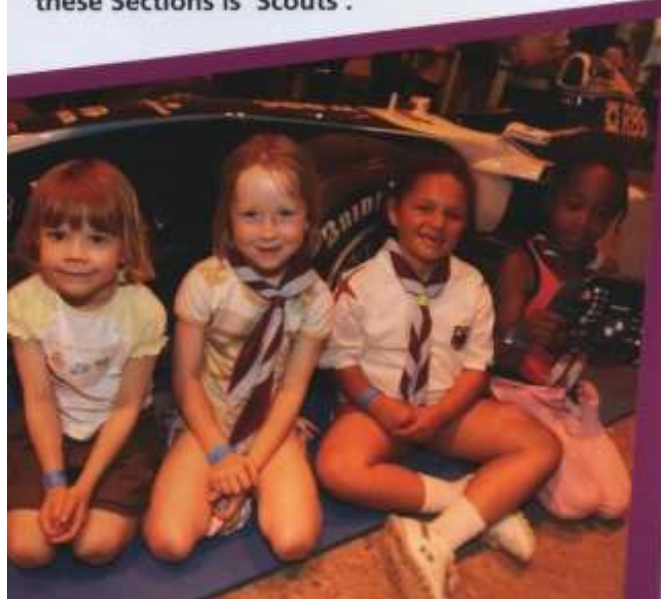
14-18 YEARS

NETWORK

18-25 YEARS

The Explorer Unit and Scout Network are based in the District or County.

The generic term for Members from all of these Sections is 'Scouts'.



## How it all began

The Scout Movement was founded by Lord Robert Baden-Powell. In 1907 he held an experimental camp on Brownsea Island, Dorset where he took 20 boys, from both public schools and working class homes, camping under his leadership.

The following year, *Scouting for Boys* was published and boys, inspired by Baden-Powell's ideas, soon formed themselves into Scout Patrols. In September 1908, Baden-Powell set up an office to deal with the enquiries pouring in about the Movement.

Today, Scouting is a global, educational youth Movement. In the UK, The Scout Association provides adventurous activities and personal development opportunities for 400,000 young people. Over the decades The Scout Association has evolved to keep up with the times, welcoming girls in all Sections and introducing new badges such as IT, Public Relations and even Street Sports!



## The Programme

Whilst the activities they take part in will depend on their age, each Section gives young people the opportunity to learn by doing. The main programme areas are: Outdoor and Adventure, Global, Community, Fit for Life, Creative and Beliefs and Attitudes. Adult Leaders are trained to deliver this programme, ensuring our young people stay safe while they enjoy themselves and learn.

## The adventure of a lifetime

Scouting is all about adventure - at all levels and in many forms. Rather than just extreme sports, it encompasses the many ways that Scouting challenges and stretches the lives of young people. To a Beaver Scout, waking up the morning after his or her first night away from home is as much an adventure as a member of the Scout Network hang-gliding or scuba diving. It's all possible in Scouting.

# Getting more involved

Lots of parents choose to get involved with their child's Scout Group. Parents tell us that they mostly have a positive experience and feel they are contributing to young people's development.

*'Working with and for young people is great. Watching them grow in confidence, learning new and valuable life skills which hold them in good stead in adult life, and knowing that the little you have done in helping this process work, gives you satisfaction which money can't buy.'*

*'Scouting is FUN! I love camping, outdoor activities and doing silly stuff other adults never get a chance to do.'*

## Why help out?

There are many reasons why you might choose to volunteer for Scouting.

- **To give something back to the community:** *'I believe the kids get such a lot out of it; I just put a bit back for what the kids take out.'*
- **To support the Leaders:** *'They give so much, you've got to give some of that back.'*
- **Because volunteering is a 'good thing':** *'I just personally believe that you should always do some kind of voluntary work...otherwise nothing would get done in this world.'*
- **As an enabler, so the Leader can do more:** *'If I can help Sam, our Leader, out by doing the little things, then it means she has got more time to give the kids and then they get more out of it.'*
- **To spend more quality time with your child:** *'David used to go on his PlayStation2 while I read the paper after school and work – now we get a chance to do activities together.'*
- **To develop your own skills:** *'I hadn't used a compass since I was a Scout. After I learned how to use one again, I take one out on family walks. We get lost less than we used to!'*
- **To enjoy and rediscover adventure for yourself:** *'We had a water fight at Beavers the other week, it was great!'*



*'I enjoy Scouting as a complete break from my demanding job; being a Cub Leader forces me to balance my life in ways which would probably otherwise get squeezed out by work.'*

**Now that you know more about Scouting, do you think you may be able to help more young people realise their potential?**

## Everyone has something to give

You may feel that you have no skills to help with Scouting - but everyone has something to give. Do you have any hobbies and interests that you could share? For example, do you enjoy cooking, are you a qualified First Aider who could run an interactive session or do you have an interest in nature and could take your child's Group on a fun walk through the local woods? If you don't have time in the evenings when Groups meet could you use your work skills to help out at a time to suit you? Are you a gardener, an accountant or in Public Relations for example? Perhaps you could take a Group to your place of work such as a police station or garden centre.

Many Leaders already involve parents of their youth Members. One Leader said:  
*'A parent who runs a golf club came along and did a golf evening. Another parent who has musical talent taught the Beavers some new songs and played the guitar. Everyone had a great time.'*

## You'll get out more than you put in

Volunteering in Scouting is fun and rewarding. You will have the chance to learn new skills, rediscover adventure, make new friends, spend more time with your child and give something back to your community.

# Scouting - great for all the family

Parents value what Scouting does for their children. In an independent survey of over 2,000 parents of Scouts, 9 out of 10 said Scouting is worthwhile (7 in 10 very worthwhile) and 9 in 10 said their children find Scouting enjoyable (6 in 10 very enjoyable). Parents say Scouting gives their children more confidence, responsibility, a broader set of friends, a chance to pursue things they might not get to do otherwise, adventure and an extended family.



As your child progresses through Scouting, you should hopefully be able to recognise the positive impact Scouting has on them and be able to relate to the following quotes from parents:

*'Scouting helps parents prepare their kids for life, it helps parents let go of their children.'*

*'It's not just factual; they learn social skills and about interacting. They have to remember things to bring the following week so they have to take a bit of responsibility for their own stuff!'*

Most parents agree that Scouting makes family life easier - and that they had 'nicer children to live with!'

Many parents feel that their child attending Scouts gives them another reason to be proud of their achievements. One parent said: 'I don't normally let Thomas carry dinner plates through - he can be clumsy! But when he cooked me a meal from scratch after going to Scout camp, I was so proud.'

*'I think I probably wouldn't let Ella do as much as she does, but when I see her at Cubs, doing things for herself and her friends, I'm so impressed. It helps you step back and let them get on with it.'*

# Adult leaders

## - the myth-busting truth!

The many benefits that Scouting offers your child are mostly down to the time and commitment given by our adult Leaders. How much do you know about the people who look after your child every week? You may not be aware of the following facts:

- None of our Leaders are paid – they are all volunteers.
- The majority of our Leaders have full time jobs and a family.
- 44% of our Leaders are female.
- Leaders get involved because they want to have fun and make new friends themselves.
- Leaders don't have to be 'superheroes' who know everything. They are given training on the job and learn new skills as they go along. The one thing that unites our Leaders is the energy and enthusiasm they have for giving young people the adventure of Scouting.
- Whilst all our volunteers are passionate about what they do, many help out on a flexible basis due to other commitments. Some may help out once a week or fortnight whereas others help once a term or at summer camp.
- 27% of volunteers help out in Scouting as they are a parent of a current Member. Many were not Scouts when they were young but have learnt new skills and made new friends through Scouting.
- Not all volunteers have to wear uniform.
- Many of our adult volunteers say they are more confident in their everyday lives as a result of their involvement with Scouting.
- Not all adults who volunteer for Scouting work directly with young people. There are a variety of other jobs that need to be done such as gardening and general DIY, organising events, doing the accounts and writing press releases. This means that adult Leaders who do work directly with young people do not have to spend all their time doing paperwork.
- All our Leaders are covered by a comprehensive insurance policy while taking part in Scouting.
- New Leaders in Scouting go through a criminal records check to ensure they are fit to work with young people.



One of the biggest myths about Scouting is that Groups are closing down due to a lack of young people wanting to become Members. Nothing could be further from the truth; Scouting in the UK is growing. We currently have 30,000 young people on our waiting lists simply because we do not have enough adults to help out.

# Find out more...

We hope you have found this guide useful and informative. You will find a family information form in the guide asking for important information about your child, your contact details and information about your job, skills and hobbies. (If you don't have a form, then you can download one from [www.scouts.org.uk/parents](http://www.scouts.org.uk/parents)). Please fill this in and hand back to your child's Leader as soon as possible.

*If you would like to find out more about helping out at your child's Scout Group, or another Group in your area, then please speak to the Leader or call the Scout Information Centre on 0845 300 1818.*



*'As an actor and a father of four I lead a busy life but volunteering my time as Chief Scout has been very rewarding.*

*I have met so many interesting people, learnt many new skills and had lots of fun at the same time.'*

*Peter Duncan, Chief Scout*

#### *A place for parents online*

Please take a look at [www.scouts.org.uk/parents](http://www.scouts.org.uk/parents). The webpages will give you more information about Scouting in general such as the A-Z of Scouting terms. Here you will learn what an Akela is, where the badges go, what woggles are for and why Scouts shake hands with their left rather than their right hand!

As well as this you can read our FAQs on becoming a volunteer, inspiring case studies from Leaders, browse the Scout Shops website where you can buy uniform and other Scouting products and subscribe to a monthly e-news letter for parents. This will give you updates on events and our affinity products as well as special offers from our corporate partners.

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