

Chapter 2 Key Policies

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The Religious Policy

The Scout Movement includes Members of many different religions.

All Members of the Movement are encouraged to:

- Make every effort to progress in the understanding and observance of the Promise to do their best to do their duty to God;
- Belong to some religious body;
- Carry into daily practice what they profess.

Attendance at Services

If a Scout Group is composed of members of several faiths or religions, the members should be encouraged to attend services of their own faith or religion.

Chaplains

- Chaplains may be appointed as Advisers in Scout Groups, Districts and on a National basis.
- National Chaplains may be appointed for religious bodies represented in Scouting.

Note: With reference to religious belief, the avowed absence of religious belief is a bar to appointment to a Leadership position.

Rule 2.1 Responsibilities within the Religious Policy

- a. The District Commissioner or the Chief Commissioner (as appropriate), must be satisfied that all applicants for Leader or Commissioner Appointments, are fully aware that they will be required to implement the Association's *Religious Policy* by their personal example.
- b. If a Sponsored Group has a policy of recruitment that is restricted to members of one particular religion or faith, it is the Sponsoring Authority that is responsible for the religious training of all young people in the Group. In such cases, it is the duty of the Group Scout Leader to encourage attendance for religious instruction and observances as may be deemed desirable by the Sponsoring Authority.
- c. Scouts' Own services may be held to worship God and to promote a fuller understanding of the significance of the Scout Promise and Law. Such services must be regarded as supplementary to, rather than a substitute for formal attendance at the services of the individual's own faith or religion.
- d. If a Beaver Scout, Cub Scout, Scout, Venture Scout or Rover Scout is not permitted to attend acts of worship other than those of the individual's own faith because of religious obligations, the Leader must make certain that those obligations are not compromised.

The Equal Opportunities Policy

Young People

The Scout Association of Malta is part of a worldwide educational youth movement. The values, that underpin and inspire its work, are embodied in the Scout Promise and Law and in the Purpose of the Association.

Within this framework, the Association is committed to equal opportunity for all young people.

Accordingly:

- a. The Scout Association of Malta is committed to extending Scouting, its Purpose and Method to young people in all parts of society.
- b. No young person should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:
 - class;
 - ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;
 - gender;
 - marital or sexual status;
 - mental or physical ability;
 - political or religious belief.

All Members of the Movement should seek to practice that equality, especially in promoting access to Scouting for young people in all parts of society. The Scout Association opposes all forms of racism.

Note: With reference to gender, membership of the youth Sections of the Association is open to girls and young women of the appropriate ages subject to the rules set out in 3.6, 4.6 and 5.6 in subsequent chapters.

Leaders and other volunteers

To carry out its work the Association seeks to appoint effective and appropriate Leaders, and to involve other volunteers in supporting roles, all of whom are required to accept the responsibilities of their commitment fully.

The overriding consideration in making all appointments in Scouting shall be the safety and security of young people, and their continued development in accordance with the Purpose of the Association. Accordingly, all those whom the Movement accepts as volunteers must be 'fit and proper' persons to undertake the duties of the particular position to which they have been appointed (including where relevant, meeting the requirements of the Sponsoring Authority) and, where appropriate, the responsibilities of membership.

In issuing an appointment to a particular leadership or support position it may be appropriate to consider the gender and/or ethnicity of the potential appointee, in particular to ensure appropriate composition of leadership or supporting teams.

The physical and mental ability of a particular potential appointee to fulfil a particular role will always be a relevant factor to consider.

Within these constraints, and those imposed by the need to ensure:

- the safety and security of young people;
- the continued development of young people; and
- equal opportunities for all;

No person volunteering their services should receive less favourable treatment on the basis of, nor suffer disadvantage by reason of:

- age;
- class;
- ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness) or race;
- gender;
- marital or sexual status;
- mental or physical ability;
- political or religious belief.

Note: Paedophilia and any other criminal offense is a bar to any involvement in the Scout Movement.

Rule 2.2 Responsibilities within the Equal Opportunities Policy

All adults in Scouting have a responsibility for the operation of the Association's *Equal Opportunities Policy*.

- a. The District Commissioner or the Chief Commissioner (as appropriate) must be satisfied that all applicants for Leader or Commissioner Appointments are fully aware that they will be required by their personal example, to operate the Association's *Equal Opportunities Policy*. They must also be satisfied that all those whom they invite to assist them in other ways in the work of the District or at National Level are upholding the Association's *Equal Opportunities Policy* by the personal example that they set before the Scouts in the District or at National Level as the case may be.
- b. Group Scout Leaders must be satisfied that all those whom they invite to assist them in the work of the Group will uphold the Association's *Equal Opportunities Policy* by the personal example that they set before the Scouts in the Group.

- c. The District Commissioner or the Chief Commissioner (as appropriate) must be satisfied that all applicants for appointments, in their gift are fully aware that they will be required to operate the Association's *Policies* by their personal example.

The Safety Policy

It is the policy of The Scout Association of Malta to provide Scouting in a safe manner without risk to health, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Association believes that this responsibility ranks equally with the other responsibilities incumbent upon those providing Scouting activities and functions

It is the responsibility of all those involved in Scouting to seek, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that:

- all activities are conducted in a safe manner without risk to the health of participants;
- the provision and maintenance of equipment and buildings for Members and others is safe and without risk to health and adequate for their welfare;
- information, instruction, training and supervision is provided with the object of ensuring the health and safety of all those involved in Scouting activities or who may be affected by them;
- appropriate arrangements are made to ensure safety and the absence of risks to health in connection with the use, transport, storage and handling of equipment, and substances which are inherently or potentially dangerous.

Rule 2.3 Responsibilities within the Safety Policy

- a. All persons involved with Scouting are responsible for the operation of the Association's *Safety Policy*.
- b. It is the responsibility of all persons to ensure that:
- they do not endanger the health and safety of themselves or others;
 - they observe the rules established for the safety of those involved in Scouting activities.
- c. The District Commissioner or Chief Commissioner (as appropriate), must be satisfied that all applicants for adult Appointments are fully aware that they will be required to implement the Association's *Safety Policy* by their personal example.
- d. The District Commissioner should designate one or more Safety Co-ordinators. They should have the responsibility of advising the District Commissioner on the implementation of the Association's *Safety Policy* within the District and shall assist District Commissioners in operating the policy.
- e. Group Scout Leaders must be satisfied that all those whom they invite to assist them in the work of the Scout Group are competent persons to carry out the tasks given to them and are aware of their responsibilities under the Association's *Safety Policy*.
- f. When an appointment is cancelled or not renewed because the holder had not acted in accordance with the Association's *Safety Policy*, the District Commissioner must inform Island Headquarters in writing, giving reasons for the termination of the Appointment.

- g. Local responsibility for the management of the *Safety Policy* of the Association rests with the Group Scout Leader and/or the District Commissioner.

The Child Protection Policy

It is the policy of The Scout Association of Malta to safeguard the welfare of all Members by protecting them from neglect and from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

Accordingly The Scout Association of Malta is committed to:

- taking into account the interests and well-being of young people in all its considerations and activities
- respecting the rights wishes and feelings of the young people with whom it is working;
- taking all reasonable, practicable steps to protect them from neglect, physical, sexual and emotional harm;
- promoting the welfare of young people and their protection within a relationship of trust.

Rule 2.4 Responsibilities within the Child Protection Policy

- a. All adults aged 18 or over within Scouting are responsible for the operation of the Association's *Child Protection Policy*.
- b. It is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that:
- their behaviour is appropriate at all times;
 - they observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people;
 - they follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse;
 - they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed;
 - in every respect, the relationships they form with the young people under their care is appropriate
- c. The 'Young People First' (yellow card) sets out a Code of Behaviour which is essential for all adults in Scouting to follow. Adults who fail to implement the Code of Behaviour or procedures issued by Island Headquarters may have the matter drawn to the attention of the relevant Commissioner who must take appropriate disciplinary action.
- d. Adults must not consume alcohol when they are directly responsible for young people on a Scouting activity and must not permit young people (under 18 years) to consume alcohol at Scouting activities. The Association issues further advice on Alcohol and Scouting, which is available from Island Headquarters.
- e. The use of illegal substances during Scouting activities is unacceptable and appropriate action should be taken where necessary by responsible Commissioners. Island Headquarters issues additional guidance on request.
- f. The Association may designate one or more Safeguarding Awareness Co-ordinators. They shall have the responsibility of advising the Chief Commissioner and the District Commissioner/s on the implementation of the Association's *Child Protection and Anti Bullying Policies* within the District/s. They shall also have a specific remit for monitoring compliance with these policies within the District/s and reporting their findings to the District Commissioner and the Chief Commissioner

- g. The Safeguarding Awareness Co-ordinators shall provide general guidance to the various Groups in the District to which they are appointed, but should not be involved in responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse.
- h. The role of the Safeguarding Awareness Coordinator must not be combined with an appointment as a Group Scout Leader or Commissioner within the same District.
- i. The Team Leader of Safeguarding Awareness at Island Headquarters is the Association's ultimate source of advice on all safeguarding matters, subject to any direction from the relevant sub-Committee.
- j. The District Commissioner or the Chief Commissioner (as appropriate), must be satisfied that all those whom they appoint are 'fit and proper' persons to carry out the responsibilities of the appointment. They must ensure that all applicants demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to the principles and procedures supporting the Association's *Child Protection Policy*.
- k. Group Scout Leaders must be satisfied that all those whom they invite to assist them in the work of the Scout Group are 'fit and proper' persons to carry out the tasks to be given to them and are aware of their responsibilities under the Association's *Child Protection Policy*.
- l. In cases where there is an allegation or suspicion of child abuse, the District Commissioner or Chief Commissioner (as appropriate), must immediately take steps to ensure that no Scouting situation arises which could cause further concern and that no adult or youth Member is placed in a position which could cause further compromise. To this end, suspension of membership may be necessary (see Chapter 15).
- m. Island Headquarters may from time to time, issue procedures detailing the reporting arrangements for suspicions or allegations of abuse. Group Scout Leaders and relevant Commissioners must follow these procedures.
- n. The Safeguarding Awareness Team at Island Headquarters has a remit to advise Commissioners of the actions required in the event of a suspicion or allegation of abuse. The Head of Safeguarding Awareness may issue mandatory advice regarding the management of such situations.
- o. Commissioners or Group Scout Leaders must consult the Safeguarding Awareness Team at Island Headquarters as soon as possible in the event of any incident, concern or allegation of abuse being made. In any event this must occur within 24 hours of the incident being reported.
- p. Island Headquarters may appoint a Situation Manager to be responsible for the Association's response to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Situation Managers appointed by Island Headquarters shall have full powers to act.
- q. Where urgent issues of child protection are involved the Chief Commissioner has the authority to suspend the membership of any adult or youth Member.
- r. The suspending authority must ensure that the Administration Department at Island Headquarters is informed immediately.
- s. When the District Commissioner or the Chief Commissioner do not renew, or when they cancel appointments because the holder has not acted in accordance with the Association's *Child Protection Policy*, or has breached the code of behaviour, set out in the *Young People First* guidelines, they must inform the Administration Department at Island Headquarters in writing of the reasons for the termination of the appointment.

- t. Nothing in the rules of the Association, or any guidance produced by it, may be construed as permitting an adult to take a young person away on an activity alone. No activity may take place where only one adult and one young person are present. An activity can only take place if there is a minimum of four (4) minors.
- u. During overnight activities, separate sleeping arrangements must be made for male and female members and adult and minor members.

No adult member may share sleeping quarters with minors during these overnight activities.

Anti-Bullying Policy

“Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical or mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.” *[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19]*

The Scout Association of Malta is committed to this ethos and seeks to ensure the prevention of all forms of bullying among all Members, as far as is reasonably practicable. To this end all Scouting activities should have rigorous anti-bullying strategies in place.

Rule 2.5 Responsibilities within the Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the policy of the Scout Association of Malta to safeguard the welfare of all members by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm.

- Taking into account the interests and well-being of young people in all its considerations and activities
- Respecting the rights, wishes and feelings of the young people with whom it is working
- Taking all reasonable, practical steps to protect them from physical sexual and emotional abuse
- Promoting the welfare of young people and their protection with a relationship of trust.

It is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that:

- their behaviour is appropriate at all times
- they observe the rules established for the safety and security of young people
- they follow the procedures following suspicion, disclosure or allegation of child abuse
- they recognise the position of trust in which they have been placed
- in every respect the relationships they form with the young people under their care are appropriate

Should any of the above stipulations be contravened it is the responsibility of the Group Scout Leader to hold an investigation and report the incident/s to the District Commissioner. The District Commissioner should attempt to resolve the situation, but if in extreme cases dismissal of the offending party is contemplated, then Rule 15.6 to Rule 15.10 should be enforced.

Development Policy

Subject to the Rules governing age ranges and mixed membership, the Scout Movement is open to all young people of whatever background.

The Scout Association of Malta recognises however, that access to Scouting is not equally available to all groups and communities across society as a whole.

The National Scout Executive of the Scout Association of Malta at Island Headquarters supports the Movement in its work in making Scouting available to all.

In particular, through the use of innovation and experiment, it supports local Scouting in meeting the needs of young people in areas of urban disadvantage or priority, in highly rural areas, and among the minority ethnic communities.

It also works in collaboration with other agencies to support those disadvantaged young people who might benefit from its programme and ethos, and who may never become full Members of the Movement.

The National Scout Executive supports local Scouting in a number of different ways:

- through the production and distribution of development material;
- through the sharing of experience and models of good practice;
- through support and advice from Island Headquarters staff, volunteers and professionals.

Those seeking help in this field should contact Island Headquarters in the first instance.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

It is not permitted for Scouters, adult helpers, and/or any other members of the Association to drink alcohol, smoke or take drugs during meetings, camps, activities of any kind where young people are present. Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs should not be on sale at any venue where Scouting is taking place.

The Association will take action against any member of the Association found to be drunk or under the influence of drugs during any Scout activity or in any Scout Headquarters or other scouting venue.

During Scout activities, adequate facilities for use as smoking areas must be provided, well away from the presence of young children.