

Notes for the parents / carers of a young person under suspension



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Action taken by the Association

Under the rules of The Scout Association, a youth member may be suspended if it is alleged that they have committed a serious criminal offence or they are accused of actions or offences that have put adults or young people at serious risk of harm.

Young people that have been suspended should not participate in any activity connected with Scouting. They should not attend meetings or events of any kind and may not wear the uniform or badges.

Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply the Association has decided that the allegation is true, or that guilt is established. Suspension is intended to ensure that no situation can arise that may cause further concern and allows a period where further information may be received and if appropriate the statutory agencies (typically the Police or Social Services) may carry out their duties.

It will usually be necessary to inform some adult leaders of the suspension but these will be kept to the minimum that circumstances allow. The District Commissioner will maintain an overview of who is informed, and to what extent confidentiality can, or should, be maintained.

Support available from Scouting

During suspension social contact with Scouting friends is not precluded unless this is likely to be prejudicial to an investigation, or would subject them to unfair or undue pressure. Social contacts must not be used to circumvent the purposes of suspension, for example by attending Scout activities or entering Scout premises.

The District Commissioner will appoint someone to provide support and to act as a link to Scouting during the period of suspension. The supporter will not be involved in any way with the allegation, or with any subsequent Scout investigation, and will not play any part in the process of suspension.

The supporter should not be expected to enter into any legal, financial or personal commitment, for example bail, surety, binding over, or be involved in court proceedings and will not act as an "Appropriate Adult" (see below).

Sources of advice

The Association recommends that independent legal advice is taken at an early stage, not least because the information which now follows may require updating from time to time:-

- You / your child has the right to obtain professional legal advice from a solicitor at your own expense at any time.
- Limited free legal advice is also available through the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- If your child is taken to a police station under arrest, or is arrested at a police station, they have the right to consult privately with a duty solicitor, who will give independent legal advice, free of charge.
- Should your child attend a police station voluntarily, or be under police caution, you are entitled to obtain free and independent legal advice and have the right to speak to a solicitor on the phone.
- If your child is under 17 years old, they should not be interviewed, charged or cautioned without an "Appropriate Adult" being present.

The Scout Association

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The Appropriate Adult will normally be a parent or carer, however if a parent or carer is not available, in certain circumstances a social worker or an independent volunteer may act as the Appropriate Adult.

- Some household insurance policies, and membership of some motoring organisations, include a degree of free legal advice. However, before relying on this, the policy holder or member needs to establish clearly the nature and extent of such cover at the earliest time.

The Association cannot provide legal advice or representation to either an alleged offender (or complainant) where an allegation of a serious disciplinary or criminal offence has been made.

Termination of suspension

Experience has shown that any disciplinary, legal or judicial processes that result from an allegation can become drawn out over a long period of time.

When the investigation and any legal proceedings have been completed, the District Commissioner and Group Scout Leader will determine if a return to Scouting is appropriate.

Where a statutory agency such as the police or social services have been involved in the matter, advice will be sought from that agency.

Possible outcomes following a period of suspension include:

- Reinstatement
- Reinstatement with conditions

Examples of conditions might include the transfer to an alternative Group, Unit or Section, the provision of additional adult support or supervision or the exclusion from particular activities.

- Dismissal

The dismissal of a young person (whether following a suspension or not) will follow the rules of the Association regarding the dismissal of youth members.