



Safeguarding Youth While Keeping Scouting Open to All

Safeguarding youth is Scouting America's first responsibility. The safety of every young person shapes how Scouting programs are designed, delivered, and supervised. Clear safeguards, defined boundaries, and strong partnerships with parents and guardians are essential to protecting youth and maintaining the trust families place in Scouting.

Safeguarding is reflected in how programs are structured, how adults are trained, and how expectations are communicated and enforced. When safeguarding is prioritized, Scouting programs function as intended—providing youth with opportunities to grow, learn, and participate in a safe and respectful environment. These principles are consistent with our practice that a youth has the right to participate in the unit which best fits the youth's needs, subject to approval by the youth's parents or legal guardian and the unit's leadership, and in compliance with Scouting America's policies.

Safeguarding in Practice

Scouting welcomes every youth and is committed to treating each young person with dignity and respect. Harassment, bullying, or mistreatment of any kind is not tolerated. Parents and guardians should expect Scouting activities to be delivered responsibly, with safety, prevention, and appropriate supervision at the forefront.

In privacy-sensitive settings such as sleeping accommodations, shower facilities, and changing areas, Scouting maintains separate spaces for males and females, consistent with Safeguarding Youth Training and long-standing Barriers to Abuse. These safeguards are prevention-focused and designed to protect youth privacy and maintain appropriate boundaries.

Parents as Partners in Safeguarding

For safeguarding and privacy purposes, including planning sleeping arrangements and access to privacy-sensitive facilities, Scouting relies on information provided by a parent or legal guardian during the youth registration process. Scouting does not independently verify this information or replace parents or guardians as decision-makers.

Safeguarding works best when parents and guardians are active partners. Families know their children best, and Scouting relies on that partnership to support safe participation and responsible program delivery.

Accommodations Without Stigma

When individual circumstances require accommodation, as determined in partnership with parents or guardians, Scouting applies practical, privacy-respecting solutions consistent with Safeguarding Youth Training. These may include single-user facilities, private changing options, or appropriate scheduling adjustments based on age, setting, and activity.

Accommodations are intended to be implemented without drawing attention to any youth and without guaranteeing any specific facility configuration. The goal is always to protect



youth privacy, maintain appropriate boundaries, and enable participation with confidence and dignity.

Why Clarity Matters

Safeguarding Youth Training reinforces core principles that guide Scouting's approach: every youth must be treated with care and respect, clear boundaries are critical to preventing abuse, and clarity builds confidence for parents, leaders, and youth alike.

Safeguarding youth is Scouting America's first responsibility. Keeping Scouting open to participation follows from that responsibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Pounder".

Glen Pounder
EVP & Chief Safeguarding Officer
Scouting America