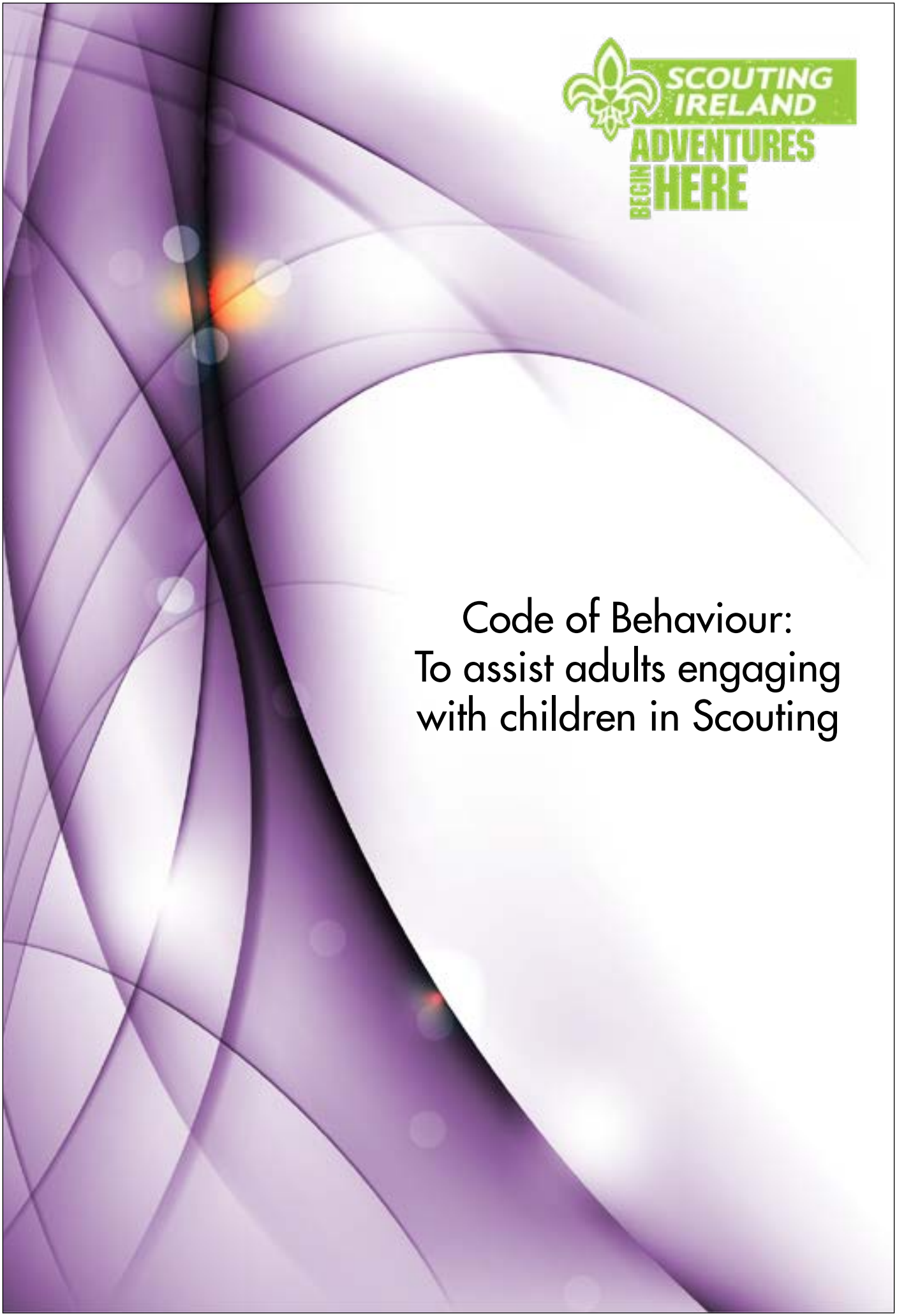


Code of Behaviour: To assist adults engaging with children in Scouting

	Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
	No. BOD-SG-002	Issued 22/12/2020	Amended 04/09/2025	Next Review Date September 2026
	Category: Safeguarding			
	Scouting Ireland Code of Behaviour: To assist adults engaging with children in scouting			

Related Documents
BOD-SG-001 - Scouting Ireland's Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
BOD-SG-003 - Scouting Ireland's Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy
BOD-SG-004 - Membership Risk Assessment Policy: Adult members suspended without prejudice for a safeguarding purpose.
BOD-SG-005 - Membership Risk Assessment Policy: Youth members suspended without prejudice for a safeguarding purpose.
BOD-SG-006 - Responding to Victims of Abuse within Scouting Ireland
BOD-MA-002 - Scouting Ireland's Procedure for Suspension without Prejudice
SID-CCD04 - Scouting Ireland's Disciplinary Process

Revision Schedule		
Revision	**Date**	**Description**
1	22/12/2020	To replace the Code of Good Practice (SID 39-05)
2	04/11/2025	No changes / Accepted as relevant, current – but full review in 2026 to introduce a Safeguarding manual for S.I.

Introduction

The **purpose** of Scouting Ireland's Code of Behaviour is to enable Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel to ensure that there is a common human rights-based approach to engaging with children. All Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel adhering to this Code will result in standardised practice across the organisation, and most importantly it creates a culture of safety and transparency while ensuring optimal fun and learning for children.

The **emphasis** of the Code of Behaviour is on safeguarding and preventing harm to children. It does not give direction on general leadership and approaches to working with children, which are covered elsewhere.

The Code of Behaviour **recognises** that children's rights and child-centred practices are paramount and form the basis of Scouting Ireland's ethos.

The **key message** of this Code of Behaviour is the need to learn from our history and have a common approach to engaging with children. Scouting Ireland is committed to a child-centred approach in which the voice of the child is heard and respected. Scouting Ireland promotes a culture of child centredness, thereby safeguarding and reducing opportunities for someone to harm a child.

The **communication** of this Code of Behaviour is essential. All Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel will receive and sign on receipt a copy of this Code and attend training on the application of this Code. All Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel are required to sign a declaration upon completion or their Safeguarding Refresher Training that they will adhere to this Code of Behaviour and abide by the policies and procedures of Scouting Ireland. It will, of course, also form part of the initial training for all new adults coming into Scouting Ireland.

If Scouters or Scouting Ireland Personnel **breach** this Code of Behaviour, there are appropriate procedures which must be followed. All Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel are expected to adhere to this Code and to report concerns they may have about any breaches of this code.

Reporting of Concerns:

Please see Section 4 of the Scouting Ireland Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Scouting Ireland Discipline Policy.

See also - Section 10 of the Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures regarding Code of Behaviour for Scouting Ireland Personnel

Scouting Ireland Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Scouting Ireland Discipline Policy

Working with children

Children involved in Scouting need to learn to become responsible for themselves in a fun and safe environment and to accept themselves and others. Discipline should always be positive in focus, providing the structure that allows children to learn to set their own goals and strive for them. Constructive and Positive praise should always be given to children for:

- Effort
- Social Skills
- Traditional Scout skills

Children must be helped to understand the responsibilities and implications of the freedom to make choices and decisions. Expectations of behaviour should be positively stated, agreed and communicated clearly in each Programme Sections Code of Conduct.

It is Scouting Ireland's policy that sanctions should be used in a corrective way designed to help children. Scouters and Scouting Ireland personnel will only invoke sanctions in line with the organisations policies. Sanctions should be fair, and in the case of persistent offences should be progressively applied.

Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel are involved to support children to take responsibility appropriate to their age in the running of the Section. It is the responsibility of Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel to guide and help them to take up these responsibilities. This can be a challenging and fulfilling role providing a wonderful opportunity to positively contribute to the overall development of the children.

Involvement in Scouting should be part of a broader healthy adult lifestyle that balances commitments to one's personal/family/work life, and Scouting. Such a lifestyle should include social engagement with adults of one's own age so that Scouting does not dominate your life.

Scouting enjoys widespread respect in the community because of its positive contribution to the lives of children. It is important that this respect is maintained by exercising the correct personal behaviour that society expects of adults working with young people.

Where a Scouter/Scouting Ireland staff member has any issues/concerns with a child, the Scouter/ Scouting Ireland staff member should engage with the parents/guardians to ensure the parents understand the issues/concerns involving their child.

General Principles

By their behaviour Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must ensure that at all times they:

- Are capable of fulfilling their responsibilities to provide a safe secure environment for the children in their care
- Provide a safe and secure environment for children to enjoy and benefit from Scouting
- Adhere to Scouting Ireland's Policy and procedures and do not permit loyalty to individuals or groups to supersede the paramount and statutory nature of Child Safeguarding principles.

Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel should be familiar with the various forms of child abuse and know how to respond to a disclosure made to them. Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel have a duty to bring any child safeguarding concern to the attention of Scouting Ireland's Safeguarding Department and should be aware of the organisations reporting procedure. **Confidentially** is essential for the welfare of all concerned. Details of a child safeguarding concern must not be disclosed to anyone who does not **need-to-know**, including other Scouters in the Group.

Adults by their example should be a positive influence on the behaviour of children in respecting themselves, other Scouters, parents and children and the property of themselves and others.

Children should treat Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel with dignity and respect, recognising the time and input that is being contributed to their personal development.

All Scout Groups must put in place a Code of Conduct for their Programme Sections in conjunction with the children, parents/guardians of those Sections.

Scouting Ireland Child Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Programme Section Code of Conduct Template

Relationships

Ratio Guidelines

Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must:

- Be aware of their responsibility to be a positive role model and conduct themselves in an appropriate way when engaged in Scouting activities.
- Respect the personal and sexual boundaries of others and never engage in sexually provocative games, talk or actions.
- Ensure children are made aware of the role of Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel and boundaries with all adults involved in Scouting and understand what is expected of them through the development of their own Code of Conduct.
- Treat all children with respect and dignity at all times and ensure that children are actively listened to in line with One Programme.
- Ensure that any necessary physical contact, which occurs in response to the needs of the child, is done in an open and public way and in a manner, which is in the best interest of the child.
- Ensure that any physical contact with children occurs only when absolutely necessary. If physical contact is required for a specific activity, the adult should explain the nature and reason for the contact and seek the child's permission.
- Ensure that the safeguarding of children is the paramount consideration in all interactions. A key element in ensuring children's safety, is that they are supervised appropriately at all times. The supervision of children should form part of the planning/risk assessment for all Scouting activities.
    - Never seek to control and/or create dependence in a child.
    - Not tolerate favouritism.
    - Not engage in, or tolerate, any form of exclusion.
    - Not administer harsh disciplinary regimes involving children.
    - Not engage with Scouts outside of Scouting activities, (unless in circumstances where there is a previous relationship with the child through their own personal network or family).

Remember - Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel are expected to develop a relationship with Scouts and be friendly with them, however they are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries.

Friendships form an important part of Scouting for children. Scouters/ Scouting Ireland Personnel may need to advise and explain to children that how they conduct personal relationships in scout settings may be inappropriate. There may be occasions when parents may need to be informed and their support enlisted.

Where two people, one age 18 plus and one aged 17 (i.e. over the age of consent) are already in a relationship, they must both be aware that their conduct must at all times reflect their responsibilities as members of Scouting Ireland.

Supervision - Section has been replaced with the **Ratios Policy**

Camping and Adventures in the Outdoors [SID YP 06]

Risk Assessment Forms Template

Scouting Ireland
Child Safeguarding
and Child Protection
Policy and
Procedures
Section 4

Children First Act 2015 (Republic of Ireland)

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

Transport Guidance Sheet

Activities Consent Form

Managing Meds Guidance

Managing Meds form

Social Media Policy

For Outdoor Ratios: please see SID-YP06 Camping and Outdoors Policy

Communication

The communication process with parents begins at the start of the child's journey with the Scout Group, and it is fostered and built upon as the child progresses. When a child joins a group, their parents should be made aware of how the group operates and what they can expect in terms of communication from the group in relation to their child and to group activities. They should also be made aware of policies and procedures that operate in the group (e.g. anti-bullying policy, procedures for dealing with disruptive /challenging behaviour) as well as Scouting Ireland's policy and procedures in relation to safeguarding children.

A positive relationship between Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel and parents/guardians should be nurtured and maintained through open communication in both directions. Ongoing good communication with parents develops a better understanding by parents of the positive benefits of Scouting for their child and of what is expected of both their child and themselves to improve their experience of Scouting. Ensuring that parents feel comfortable to talk with Scouters will provide the opportunity to get a better insight into the young person as well as allowing parents to openly voice any concerns or queries that they may have.

If parents are expressing a concern, don't be defensive, try to understand it from the parents' perspective and seek to establish a common ground. Procedures that ensure good communications:

- In all communications with children, Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must ensure that their language and tone is always respectful, inclusive and age appropriate.
- Parental/Guardian permission must always be obtained prior to contacting children.
- Individual Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must not be in contact with any individual Scout or group of Scouts outside of agreed Scouting Ireland channels or outside of Scouting business (unless in circumstances where there is a previous relationship with the child through their own personal network or family).
- Individual Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must not reveal personal information directly to children. When online or when using social media, they must ensure that their on-line presence is secure and does not invite or permit access to/with children e.g. permitting children to become friends or follow you.

Remember

Scouters and SI Personnel must keep parents/guardians informed of any issues that arise in respect of communication with their children.

Reporting Concerns/Allegations/Suspicions of Abuse

Scouters/Scouting Ireland personnel will deal with any disclosure of abuse by a child or young person sensitively and carefully. Where there is a concern/allegation/suspicion of abuse, Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel must follow the Scouting Ireland reporting procedures

Transportation

- In exceptional or emergency circumstances where Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel need to transport a single child, the permission of the child's parent/guardian should (or should have been) obtained.
- With the exception of carrying their own children, Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel should avoid transporting a single child in their own vehicles.
- In the event of a Scouter or Scouting Ireland Personnel having to carry a child in their vehicle another adult and/or a minimum of two children must accompany the child for the duration of the journey.
- There should be clear agreements between any adult and a parent/guardian regarding pick-up and drop-off arrangements for children.
- When organising off-site activities every effort should be made to use appropriate public or private transport options.
- When using transport Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel have a responsibility to ensure that children behave in an appropriate manner in line with the Programme Section Code of Conduct and National Legislation.
- Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel have a duty to ensure children's safety when using their own transport. Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel must ensure their vehicles are road worthy and have appropriate insurance.
- In the unlikely event that a child will be transported in the private vehicle of a Scouter or Scouting Ireland Personnel, children must use appropriate child restraints/car seats and seat belts.

[Transport Guidance sheet]

Managing Medications

- Parents/guardians have primary responsibility for the medical needs of their children or children under their care.

- All youth members under the age of 18 years must have an Activities Consent Form completed for them by their parents / guardians who should be made aware of why the medical information requested on the form is needed, and of the importance of giving full and accurate medical details on their children. Most sections will have young people who either take medication on a long-term basis (e.g. children with epilepsy or cystic fibrosis) or have to take it for a defined period of time (e.g. a course of antibiotics). Young people who have severe asthma may need daily inhalers but may also need additional dose in the event of an attack.

Guidance around handling and administering of medication should ideally be developed in partnership with parents/guardians and parents/guardians should take account of the comfort level of Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel in taking on such a role as well as the level of training or expertise required for more complex interventions (e.g. administering an adrenaline injection)

It is important to note also that Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel themselves may also be taking long term medication and or medication for a defined period of time and in such instances, they should advise their fellow scouter of this situation in confidence.

Social Media

Use of Phones, Email and Social Networking Sites have an enormous benefit to Groups but can also be used for harmful or abusive purposes. It is important for Groups to develop their own rules around the uses of such communications and ensure the parents/guardians and youth members fully understand the rules around the use of such forms of communications.

Consent regarding such communications and the use of photographs must clearly be sought by the Group from the parents / guardians.

[Social Media Policy]

7 points of behavioural awareness

Appendix 1

When Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel are using the scout method to encourage the social, physical and spiritual development of our youth members they should always keep in mind, and be aware of, the following behaviours. This will endeavour to ensure excellence in respect of Scouting Ireland's best possible Safeguarding practices for both our Youth Members, Leaders and our Adult Scouters.

1. Act in an open and visible manner

When working with children, Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel should ensure that an open environment exists. If a situation arises where a certain amount of privacy is required, (e.g. a disciplinary issue or treatment of an injury) this should be conducted in line with Scouting Ireland's Code of Behaviour, in the sight of another adult. For example, either 2 adults should be present in the room or the door of the room should be left open with another adult in view.

2. Sometimes it's better not to join in

There is, and always has been, the situation where Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel join in games to encourage participation or to add to the novelty of the game or activity. There is a certain element of risk associated with joining the activity and the risk involved should be given due consideration. Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel should not engage in horseplay with youth members. Therefore, the advice is organise, supervise or monitor and enjoy watching the fun!

3. Be positive in your conversation

The way Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel speak to children about themselves or others can create a positive or a negative atmosphere. Therefore, it is important that the language and tone used should at all times be positive. Never make suggestive or salacious remarks in the presence of young people and keep the conversation at the appropriate level for the age of the child.

4. Mixed gender Sections must have mixed gender leadership

It is important to have mixed gender leadership to be able to cope with emergencies, accidents, or arguments. In some situations, young people will feel more comfortable having the support of a Scouter of the same gender. Should the young person be more comfortable with the opposite gender this should be accommodated but in sight of another adult. Scouting Ireland recognises the importance of diversity and inclusion in its membership.

5. Personal awareness and managing emotions

Children can be vulnerable due to their age and immaturity. Adults must be conscious that children often trust and admire adults they come in contact

with. This can take different forms including "hero – worship" or a "crush". This can place an adult in a powerful position. It is the responsibility of the adult to manage such situations and to ensure the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. The situation needs to be handled sensitively without causing a feeling of rejection. The support of other Scouters/Scouting Ireland Personnel should be availed of to manage such situations.

Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel can experience life difficulties and emotions can fluctuate. They must avoid involving young people in their emotional problems. On occasion where Scouters or Scouting Ireland Personnel are experiencing emotional stress, they may need to consider the commitment they can give to Scouting during such time.

6. Consider the situation

Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel must consider each situation they are faced with. You must always ensure that the welfare of children remains paramount and that you comply with Scouting Ireland's Child Safeguarding Policy and procedures. While your intentions in dealing with a situation may be based on the most innocent and altruistic of motives, if you have any doubt about how your actions might be interpreted then adopt a safer course of action.

7. Protect your good name

Scouting Ireland's Policy and Procedures are in place to protect both children, Scouters and Scouting Ireland Personnel. It is important that your actions and motives are understood to be guided by the needs of the child and that your actions are open and positive. Adherence to the organisations policy and procedures should ensure that adults work in a safe manner which protects both children and themselves. All child safeguarding concerns must be recorded by volunteers and staff members. Scouting Ireland has a legal obligation to record and deal with all concerns.