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Gasóga na hÉireann / Scouting Ireland			
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Category: Safeguarding & Volunteer & Group Support			

Ratios Policy

Related Documents
All Safeguarding Policies
Code of Behaviour: To assist adults engaging with children in Scouting
Membership Policy
Camping and Adventures in the Out of Doors Policy
Camping and Adventures in the Out of Doors Guidelines
National Centers Lone Patrol Policy
Youth Programme Abroad Policy
Youth Programme Abroad Guidelines

Revision Schedule		
Revision	**Date**	**Description**
1	22/12/20	To replace the code of Good Practice (SID 39-05)
2	30/11/24	This Separated Ratios policy supersedes policy statements in BOD-SG-002 Code of Behaviour with regards to Supervision & Ratios.
3	Sept 2025	Current



1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to define the minimum ratio requirements deemed necessary by Scouting Ireland to ensure the **safety, supervision, and well-being** of youth members during Scouting activities —whether they last an hour, a day, overnight, or span multiple days. For the purpose of ratio planning a 'Scouter' is as defined in Scouting Irelands Membership Policy.

Additionally, inconsistencies across older policy documents have created confusion regarding ratio standards. This unified policy addresses those issues and supersedes all ratio policies and should now be considered the definitive source.

The ratios outlined in this policy are informed by the standards of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM), and other national organisations such as the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) ensuring alignment with best practices in youth safeguarding and supervision.

Regarding mixed-gender leadership teams, the policy is that all efforts should be made to provide a mixed-gender leadership team. However, it is recognised that this may not always be achievable in every instance. This acknowledgement does not diminish Scouting Ireland's commitment to the educational and developmental principles of the movement, including age-appropriate supervision, the small group system, and the importance of strong adult support structures.

In programme involving adventurous activities, this policy requires that a Risk Assessment be conducted. Based on that assessment and analysis, an appropriate number of skilled instructors and Scouters must be present.

All Scouters are expected to understand and comply with the adult-to-youth ratio requirements outlined in this policy. Group Council are responsible for ensuring appropriate ratios are maintained during all activities, including regular meetings, trips, and special events. Any breach of ratio requirements must be reported to the Group Council for review and may result in follow-up actions.



2. Key reasons for this policy include:

- **Child Protection & Safety** – Ensuring an adequate number of Scouters are present to supervise, guide, and protect youth members. This reduces risks and ensures a quick response to emergencies.
- **Effective Supervision** – Maintaining proper oversight so that no youth member is left at risk of harm. It ensures that activities are conducted in a structured and safe manner.
- **Legal & Regulatory Compliance** – Aligning with child protection laws and Scouting Ireland's policies.
- **Quality of Scouting Experience** – Providing enough Scouter supervision to support and enhance learning, participation, and personal development within scouting activities.
- **Emergency Preparedness** – Ensuring there are enough Scouters to handle unexpected situations, such as injuries, lost members, or sudden changes in weather conditions.
- **Fair Distribution of responsibilities** – Preventing Scouters from being overwhelmed.

3. Responsible Planning:

3.1. When planning activities Scouters must consider the following factors which will inform the number of Scouters required:

3.1.1. Minimum ratios listed below

3.1.2. Where the activity is taking place

3.1.3. What the activity / Event is – Risk Assessments

3.1.4. Emergency and contingency planning – Back up planning in the event a Scouter becomes unavailable/unwell

3.1.5. Exceptions and Flexibility

3.1.6. Competency of Scouters/Leader team – Experience and Training, and ability to meet the needs of youth members

3.1.7. Inclusivity & representation – Ensure as far as possible Scouter Teams reflect the diversity of the youth group, allowing all participants to feel seen, respected, and supported.

3.1.8. Youth Members Abilities and Experience

3.1.9. Being Transparent with Scouters, Youth members, Parents, other stakeholders.

3.1.10. Clear roles and responsibilities.

3.1.11. Non-related adult Scouter supervision where possible i.e. where two adults are related, a third non-related Scouter should be included for accountability.



4. Planning for Adventurous Activities:

4.1. Certain adventurous activities—such as climbing, paddling, hillwalking, or water-based pursuits—require specialised instruction and oversight.

4.2. These activities must be led or supervised by adults who hold the appropriate skills, current and relevant proficiency, and where necessary, nationally recognised qualifications or permits.

4.3. The required adult-to-youth ratios for these activities may differ from general Programme delivery and should reflect the level of risk involved.

4.4. Ensuring suitably qualified supervision is essential to maintaining a safe environment and delivering high-quality learning experiences.

5. Enabling Participation:

5.1. Scouting Ireland is open to all. Scouters must plan to enable those members with additional needs, both visible and hidden to participate in Scouting. Sometimes this may necessitate extra support and reasonable adjustments, including having a personal scouting assistant/carer. For example, a personal scouting assistant/carer can be appointed to accompany an individual youth member to support their participation in Scouting activities.

5.2. Personal Scouting Assistants/Carers are ***not*** part of the Scouter team or included in ratios.

5.3. A Personal Scouting Assistant / carers are subject to Vetting/Access N.I. and Safeguarding Training requirements.

5.4. Talk to your local Provincial Support Officer or the Safeguarding team for further support on individual circumstances.

6. Lone Patrol / Remote Supervision Activities Requirements:

6.1. Ratios may differ for planned lone patrol / remote supervision activities in the Scout and Venture sections.

6.2. A minimum of 2 Scouters must be 'on call' and available to youth members who are taking part in lone patrol or remote activities / events.

6.3. Scouters must be able to physically make their way to the patrol.

7. National and International Events:

7.1. Ratios for National and International events will be determined as part of the events organisation.

7.2. Scouting Irelands Event Management Plans and Guidance provided to Scouter Teams must be followed.

8. One-to-one situations



One-to-one situations between a Scouter and a youth member must not be planned, as they can pose increased safeguarding risks for both parties. However, if a one-to-one situation is unavoidable, for example, during a medical issue, or a private conversation—clear safeguards must be in place. All reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that interactions occur within sight and sound of others.

9. Transportation

When Scouters are planning transporting youth members to or from an event—whether by public transport, private hire, a Scout-owned minibus, or a personal vehicle—a risk assessment must be carried out in advance.

10. Rover Scouts (18 – 26year olds)

While there is no requirement to have an Adult-Rover Ratio policy – it is strongly recommended that there is a named/nominated individual in place for each activity.

11. Mixed Gender



11.1. Scouting Ireland recognise that relying solely on mixed gender scouter teams to ensure the provision of safety, supervision, and well-being is ineffective.

11.2. Safety comes from appropriate supervision, inclusive environments, equal rights, and cultural shifts toward acceptance, these are not specific to gender

11.3. These principles extend beyond gender alone to encompass a comprehensive approach to safeguarding that benefits all young people.

11.4. However, having mixed-gender leadership team in Scouter Teams can provide important welfare benefits for young people. These benefits include diverse role models, inclusivity, emotional support, and safeguarding balance.

	Beaver Scouts	**Cub Scouts**	**Scouts**	**Venture Scouts**
Weekly Meeting	No Requirement	No requirement	No requirement	No requirement
Non-Overnight Activity	No Requirement	No requirement	No requirement	No requirement
Overnight Activity on the Island of Ireland	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended Responsible Planning Required	Recommended Responsible Planning Required
Overseas / International	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended Responsible Planning Required

12. Absolute Minimum Ratio Requirements:

12.1.1 The table below outlines the absolute minimum ratio requirements for each Scout Section. These ratios represent the baseline supervision necessary to ensure the safety, supervision, and well-being of all youth members during Scouting activities.

12.1.2 Prior to each meeting, activity or event, scouter in charge should consider the specific characteristics and potential risks of the activity to determine if a higher minimum ratio than those listed is required.

12.2 If the absolute minimum ratios are not met, the activity must not proceed or continue.

12.2.1 Additional requirements over and above Scouting Ireland's absolute minimum ratio policy may be imposed by the Group Council of the Scout Group.

	Beaver Scouts	**Cub Scouts**	**Scouts**	**Venture Scouts**
Weekly Meeting (home base)	2 Scouters for 1 to 16 Beaver Scouts +1 Scouter for every additional 8 Beaver Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 20 Cub Scouts +1 Scouter for every additional10 Cub Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 24 Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every additional 12 Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 24 Venture Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every additional 12 Venture Scouts
Non-Overnight Activity	3 Scouters for 16 Beaver Scouts +1 Scouter for every 8 additional Beaver Scouts	3 Scouters for 20 Cub Scouts +1 Scouter for every 10 additional Cub Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 20 Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 10 additional Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 24 Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 12 additional Venture Scouts
Overnight Activity On the Island of Ireland	3 Scouters for 16 Beaver Scouts +1 Scouter for every 4 additional Beaver Scouts	3 Scouters for 1 to16 Cub Scouts +1 Scouter for every 8 additional Cub Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 16 Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 8 additional Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 16 Venture Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 10 Venture Scouts
Overseas / International	(Great Britian and Isle of Man only). 4 Scouters for 1 to 16 Beavers +1 Scouter for every 4 additional Beaver Scout.	3 Scouters for 1 to 16 Cub Scouts +1 Scouter for every 6 additional Cub Scouts.	3 Scouters for 1 to 16 Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 8 additional Scouts	2 Scouters for 1 to 16 Venture Scouts +1 additional Scouter for every 10 Venture Scouts

This table MUST be read in conjunction with the full Ratio's Policy.