

Broadstone Scout Group Support Policy

Purpose

This policy defines how Broadstone Scout Group provides support to parents and carers to ensure that activities are open to all our Young People when their ability to do so is compromised due to financial difficulties.

Scope

This Policy applies to all Young People who are members of Broadstone Scout Group and who satisfy the Qualification Criteria (Appendix 1). This policy should be made available to all leaders, as well as parents and carers of Young People. This policy is owned and managed by the Trustee Board.

Commitment

Scouting is about young people learning and having fun, not only at regular weekly meetings but also on Special Events, trips and camps. Broadstone Scout Group believes that inability to pay for membership subs, camps and events should not be a barrier to attendance.

It is recognised that for some families the extra money needed for a trip may be difficult to find. We also recognise that there may be occasions when paying subs can be a challenge. Therefore, the Group is committed to providing financial support in the form of relaxed payment conditions and subsidies to ensure that all Young People have the opportunity to take part in their Section's activities.

The intent of this policy is to provide access to Scouting for Young People who are suffering financial difficulties, whilst also ensuring that the Group meets its statutory requirements for financial management.

Policy

Specifically, it is the policy of the Group to:

- Maintain a Support Fund, approved by the Trustee Board, to provide the support required by this policy.
- Develop procedures to allow families to apply for support and to have their request processed in a fair and consistent way.
- Ensure that the procedures protect the privacy of applicants as far as is reasonable.
- Promote the existence of this Policy and its supporting procedures to all families.
- Ensure that all requests are judged strictly according to their merits and in accordance with this Policy.
- Create a Support Committee to process applications from families.
 - This Support Committee will comprise the Group Scout Leader (GSL) and Assistant Group Scout Leaders, and will be led by the Group Scout Leader.
 - An Assistant Group Scout Leader may substitute for the GSL in their absence.
 - To be quorate, at least two members shall be involved in any decision. Decisions should be recorded and may be made via email.
- Report to the Trustee Board on the number of requests that have been made and granted in the previous year and how much money has been used to subsidise activities.
- Provide quality used Scout Uniform items for those Young People who require it. This will be provisioned through donations of uniform items from across the group.

Application of the Policy

Where it is identified that a Young Person may be experiencing difficulty accessing Scouting activities, and finance forms part of the barrier, Broadstone Scout Group will seek to assist that Young Person. This could be in the form of subsidised subscriptions, assistance with funding for activities or events, or with the provision of uniform. Guidance for each of these can be found in the Appendices, but in all instances, parents and carers are encouraged to approach their section leadership team who will guide and advise.

Broadstone Scout Group also commits to minimising the expenditure expected in order to participate, whilst providing a full and engaging Scouting activity program. Leaders will inform parents and carers of any expected additional expenditure at the earliest opportunity, with approximate costs where known.

Responsibility and Accountability

1. The Group Scout Leader is accountable to the Trustee Board for the correct application of this Policy and
2. for ensuring appropriate records are kept to allow reporting to the Trustee Board.
3. Section Leaders are responsible for:
 1. promoting the existence of this Policy to all parents; and,
 2. supporting families when they apply for support.
4. The Support Committee is responsible for:
 1. processing requests; and,
 2. reporting to the Trustee Board on a regular basis.
5. The Trustee Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy.

Implementation

This Policy comes into force on the date that it is agreed by the Trustee Board – records are available in meeting minutes.

Appendix 1 – Qualification Criteria

All applications are made on behalf of a specific Young Person. To qualify for support under this Policy, the Young Person:

- Must be an invested member of their Section, except for new joiners where uniform is required for investiture;
- Should have a record of Regular Attendance where this is a reasonable expectation for that Young Person. The intent of this is to demonstrate commitment to Scouting, but should not prevent assistance being provided when it is within the spirit of access to Scouting and this policy.

Appendix 2– Requesting that Subs be Waived

Procedure Requirements

Principles

Where a parent genuinely cannot afford to pay subs, and the alternative is that the Young Person does not attend Scouts, then the Group can agree to completely waive the requirement to pay subs for the current term, or agree a reduced subs rate.

Essentials

1. The parent or guardian shall talk to the Section Leader and explain the situation.
2. The Section Leader shall confirm that the Young Person satisfies the qualification criteria. If so, they shall make a recommendation to the Group Scout Leader.
3. After discussion with the Section Leader, the Group Scout Leader shall make a recommendation on whether to support the request and then inform the other members of the Support Committee. The periodicity of reduced or waived fees (with a review period if appropriate) should be clearly communicated to all committee members, and parents/carers involved. A record should be kept.
4. Within two weeks, the Support Committee shall confer and:
 1. reach a decision on whether or not to approve the request; and
 2. record their decision using OSM (or another suitable record if OSM is not available).
5. The Group Scout Leader shall ensure a record of the decision is retained for audit purposes.
6. The Group Scout Leader shall inform the Section Leader of the decision and reason, who can inform the parent or guardian. The GSL should communicate this information in writing to the parent/guardian.

Guidance

When refusing a request, a reason should always be given.

Appendix 3 – Requesting support to allow a Young Person to attend a paid-for event or camp

Procedure Requirements

Principles

1. If a parent signs their Young Person up to a trip or camp, they are committing to make the full payment by the due date/s in the invitation.
2. In cases of genuine hardship, the parent/carer may apply to the Support Committee for financial support.

Essentials

1. The parent/carer shall talk to the Section Leader and explain the situation.
2. The Section Leader has the authority to use Section funds to cover small outgoings as necessary (eg. to provide support for low cost activities). Where this option is chosen, the Section Leader should inform the GSL.
3. The Section Leader shall confirm that the Young Person satisfies the Qualification Criteria. If so, they shall make a recommendation to the Group Scout Leader. The Section Leader should discuss every approach that is made under this policy with the GSL, regardless of recommendation.
4. After discussion with the Section Leader, the Group Scout Leader shall make a recommendation on whether to support the request and then inform the other members of the Support Committee.
5. Within two weeks, the Support Committee shall confer and:
 1. Reach a decision on whether or not to approve the request;
 2. Agree a payment schedule and any subsidy;
 3. Record their decision.
6. The Group Treasurer or OSM coordinator shall record the decision for audit purposes and record the payment schedule against the trip/camp account.
7. The Group Scout Leader shall inform the Section Leader of the decision, reason and payment terms, who can inform the parent or guardian.
8. The parent or guardian shall then either agree to meet the payment terms or withdraw the request.

Guidance

- It is the Section Leader's responsibility to ensure that the instalments are paid on time and to report to the Group Scout Leader if they are not.
- Except in exceptional cases, the Support Committee should only give approval for one event or camp per year for each Young Person.
- When refusing a request, a reason should always be given.

Appendix 4 – Provision of Uniform items

Procedure Requirements

Principles

1. The ability to pay for uniform items does not impact whether a Young Person joins the Scouting Movement.
2. The Group Secretary (or suitable delegated person) will manage a stock of suitable used uniform items that can be given to any Young Person wishing to join the Group who, through financial difficulty, is unable to obtain the uniform through the usual channels.

Essentials

1. Donations will be sought from across the Scout Group community, with the intention of collecting any uniform items that are no longer used or needed.
2. Items should be clean, laundered, all names/identification removed and ready to issue. Uniform items will be stored in the Scout Hall, for section leaders to access, in consultation with the Group Secretary.
3. The Group Secretary will maintain a stock list and endeavour to ensure a suitable range of uniform items and sizes, donations permitting.
4. No charge will be made for these items.
5. Section leaders will have discretion as to whether a Young Person is in need of this uniform.
6. If excess stock is acquired that will create storage problems, the Group Secretary can authorise that Uniform Items may be issued to any Young Person so as not to waste useable uniform.
7. Uniform items will be 'as available' on a best effort basis and no-one has the right to expect uniform, nor is the Group obliged to supply it.

Guidance

1. If no suitable uniform item is available and a need still exists, Leaders may approach the GSL for support to provide uniform items in line with the principles outlined in Appendix 2 and 3.
2. Uniform is an important part of Scouting, encouraging a sense of belonging and achievement (through the badge schemes). Leaders should bear in mind that whilst maintenance of appearance and uniform is an important Scout skill, this should focus on the core Uniform items (typically Sweater/Shirts and Neckers/Woggles).