



259th Sheffield Scout Group

Membership Policy

INTRODUCTION

- Scouting is an extremely popular activity, and we have a substantial waiting list for places in our Scout Group. This unfortunately means we cannot always offer a space to potential members as soon as we would like.
- To be transparent and open, we have defined the criteria of how we accept new members from our waiting list and allocate places within the Group.
- We operate within the equal opportunities policy of the Scout Association and membership of the Group is open to both boys and girls, aged between 6 to 14 years.

MEMBERS WHO NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

- The safety and wellbeing of all Young People is of utmost importance and each section has a set number of places which are determined by the meeting facilities and having sufficient adults to run the section safely.
- If a potential member has additional needs, then their membership will be dependent on being able to provide them the ongoing support which they need to enjoy Scouting fully and to be safe. To ensure all children can access scouting, parents will be asked to discuss reasonable adjustments to provide a safe scouting experience for all. These cases will be considered individually alongside this policy on new members.
- In line with the Scout Association's Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) 2.1.2.1, reasonable adjustments means actions to enable young people with disabilities to access the Scouts and scouting activities, as far as reasonably possible, to the same level as young people without disabilities. This should

involve working in partnership with parents/carers, to identify needs and support strategies.

- For more information about equality in Scouting, see the Scout Association's Equality, diversity and inclusion policy.

HOW WE RUN OUR WAITING LIST

- We operate a single waiting list for all Sections in our Group.
- Requests to be added to the waiting list will only be accepted via the [Get Involved form](#) on our website, or via the waiting list email: waitinglist259@outlook.com
- We use Online Scout Manager (OSM) to run our waiting list. Parents applying for a space for their child will receive a link to join OSM.
- You will receive termly reminders asking if you want to remain on the waiting list. You must respond to these reminders to keep your place on the waiting list. If you do not respond to these reminders, you may be removed from the waiting list.

MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT

- From 16th April 2024, we will only accept new young people on the waiting list who are aged 4 years and over.

OUR SECTIONS & CORE AGE RANGES

- The core age ranges for young people in Scouting are:
 - Beaver Scouts - 6 to 8 ½ years old
 - Cub Scouts - 8 to 10 ½ years old
 - Scouts - 10 ½ to 14 years old

WHEN DO OUR MEMBERS MOVE ON TO THE NEXT SECTION?

- We move members on to the next section termly (in September, in January, and after the Easter holidays). Members move on to the next section depending on when their birthday is:
 - **Beavers to Cubs:** In the Term after they reach 8.
 - **Cubs to Scouts:** In the Term after they reach 10.
 - **Scouts to Explorers:** In the Term after they reach 14.
- Extensions may be granted at the discretion of the District Commissioner.

MOVING FROM CUBS TO SCOUTS

- The 259th Sheffield Scout Group is fortunate to be able to run two Scouts Sections, which allows us to offer Scouting to many more young people.
- We run one Scout meeting on a Monday and one on a Thursday. This means that the process of moving young people from Cubs to Scouts is slightly different, and runs as follows:
 1. Cub Team Leaders and Scout Team Leaders discuss how many Cubs are ready to move up to Scouts, and how many places are available on each Scouts night.
 2. Cub Team Leaders email the parents of Cubs ready to move on, asking if they have a preference for a Monday or Thursday space.
 3. Siblings of other children in the Group are offered first choice between Monday and Thursday.
 4. If possible, we will accommodate all preferences.
 5. If it is not possible to accommodate all parents/carers' preferences, any members whose preference cannot be allocated will be randomly drawn and spaces will be offered accordingly.
 6. Parents/carers are notified of the night their child has been offered. If this place is declined, the young person is placed back on our waiting list at the **bottom** of the list.

For example:

- There are 4 Cubs moving up to Scouts, and there are 2 spaces on a Monday and 2 on a Thursday.
- 1 parent requests a Thursday, and the other 3 request a Monday.
- We accommodate Child A's preference for a Thursday, and the other 3 young people are entered into a random draw for the 2 Monday spaces.
- Children B and C are drawn for a Monday space, and accept the places.
- Child D is drawn for a Thursday space, and if they decline this place, will be returned to the bottom of the waiting list.

HOW WE ALLOCATE PLACES IN OUR GROUP

- Where places become available within a section, we will offer them to young people who have reached the minimum age for that section. The Group Lead Volunteer and Section Team Leaders will determine how many places are offered and to whom, taking account of the needs of the section and the longer-term impact upon subsequent sections.
- Any young people who decline a place in the next section when offered will be placed on the waiting list at the **bottom** of the list and offered a place when available.

- We allocate available places in the Sections of our Group in the following order:

- 1. Existing members of the 259th Sheffield Group**

Young people who are already members of the Group always take priority for places, i.e., those waiting to move up to the next Section, e.g. Beavers to Cubs, Cubs to Scouts.

If the Group is unable to offer an existing member a place in the next Section (e.g. if the next Section is full and cannot safely accept new members), the existing member will be placed at the **top** of the waiting list and will be offered the next available place.

- 2. Siblings of existing members of the 259th Sheffield Group**

Children with a brother or sister who is already a member of the Group.

- 3. People moving into the local area who are existing members of the Scout Association**

We will make reasonable efforts to accommodate such requests, but we cannot guarantee an instant place.

- 4. Families who help run the group**

The Group cannot exist without volunteers, and we feel it is reasonable that someone who is willing to invest time in helping to support the Scout Group should be able to include their child (or children) in that experience.

As a result, preference is given to young people whose parents/guardians are prepared to take a formal role in supporting the Group. If you are interested in finding out what roles are available and how you can support the Group, please make this known on your application to join.

Parents or carers will be asked to support the Group for a minimum of 6 weeks before their child is allowed to join the Group. At the end of this period, if we feel that a parent/carer is not a good fit for the role they have been performing, we will find an alternative role for them to continue supporting the Group.

EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

- There may be certain circumstances where we make an exception to the priorities set out above. These may include looked-after children or refugees.

The Group Lead Volunteer and the Group Chairperson will approve all such exceptions.

HOW OFFERS OF PLACES ARE MADE

- The Group Lead Volunteer has authority over membership and will be the only one who can make an offer of a place in one of our Sections. This contact may be made by a Team member delegated by the Group Lead Volunteer.
- Offers will only be made by email to the address you supplied when you applied to be added to the waiting list. It is up to you to notify the group if your email address changes.
- If you cannot be contacted by email, then the young person will be removed from the waiting list.
- If a place is offered and declined (or not acknowledged by the deadline specified in the email) the young person will be removed from the waiting list. If they wish to re-join the waiting list later, they will be added to the **bottom** of the list.
- Once a place is offered, the corresponding Section Team Leader will be in touch to arrange the young person's start in the Group.
- You **must** fill in all medical and dietary information before your child will be allowed to join the group.

MEMBERS WHO LEAVE THE GROUP

- If a young person leaves the Group and subsequently asks to return, they will re-join the waiting list at the **bottom**.

STANDARDS

- We expect our members to attend meetings on a regular basis. Members must attend at least 80% of the term and for full sessions. If a member cannot attend a meeting, then we expect them to inform the Leader in advance.
- If a young person fails to meet the standards required by their Section, including regularly attending meetings and events, paying subscription fees on time, and maintaining an acceptable standard of behaviour then their place may be withdrawn and be offered to a young person on the waiting list.

- All young people's medical information must be kept up-to-date so that we can continue to run our programme safely. This is the responsibility of the young person's parent/carer.

APPEALS

- If you feel your application has not been treated fairly, you are welcome to contact the Group Lead Volunteer who will make the ultimate decision about Group membership.

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