

October 29, 2012

Dear Scouting Volunteers and Scout Parents:

Please be assured that the safety of our Scouts is the **number one** priority in the Occoneechee Council. As the Key 3 of the council, Council President, Commissioner and Scout Executive, and having participated in the program with our children, we know what it means to trust the safety of your child to the Scouting program. With the recent news stories concerning the release of documents referred to as the Ineligible Volunteer Record Files, we know that you may have questions as to what we are currently doing to ensure that Scouting is a safe-haven for our children.

In the decades since the Ineligible Volunteer Files were created the Scouts have constantly worked to enhance our policies and procedures. We truly believe the Boy Scouts of America have led the way in developing techniques to keep children safe. Our multi-tiered Youth Protection approach is often cited among the best in the nation by child protection experts. You can read more about BSA Youth Protection policies at http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx.

As you will note from the link, our youth protection program requires the following of all Leaders:

- All volunteers must complete a rigorous application and screening process before joining Scouting. As part of
 this requirement, applicants must provide references and submit to review against a national database criminal
 background check. We also verify that our organization has not received any prior allegations of misconduct on
 the volunteer's part by checking names against the National BSA's Ineligible Volunteer Files.
- All volunteers are required to complete Youth Protection training within 30 days of registering as a leader in Scouting and must renew the training every two years. We encourage every adult involved in Scouting, or any other youth activity, to take this training as it provides important information about detecting and preventing abuse no matter where it may occur.
- We work closely with our chartered organizations to help recruit the best possible leaders for their units. The adult application requests background information that should be checked by the unit committee and the chartered organization before accepting an applicant for unit leadership. While no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential situation, we can reduce the risk by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position—his or her experience with children, why he or she wants to be a Scout leader, and what discipline techniques he or she would use.
- Scouting's two-deep leadership policy requires at least two adults to be present for all Scouting activities. One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is prohibited and no youth should ever be alone with a Scout leader for any reason.

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- Privacy of youth is respected and separate facilities for Youth and Adults for sleeping, shower and restrooms at all Scout outings must be enforced.
- Every Cub Scout and Boy Scout handbook includes a pamphlet to help parents teach their children how to recognize, resist and report abuse. Parents are encouraged to review and discuss this information with your child.
- All Scouting activities are open to parents, and we encourage families to enjoy Scouting together. The most important way you can support this effort is to become and involved volunteer with your unit.
- All persons involved in Scouting shall report to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. You may not abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person.
- Anyone suspected of inappropriate behavior will be immediately and permanently banned from Scouting. If you
 ever have any concerns about your child's safety, please contact our Occoneechee Council, Boy Scouts of
 America Volunteer Scout Center immediately at 919-872-4884.

These and additional efforts are designed to ensure a safe environment for children. The Occoneechee Council board of directors, staff and our 7,500 volunteer leaders are committed to a culture of safety in which even one instance of abuse is unacceptable.

There are no secrets when it comes to keeping our children safe. If you have any additional questions or concerns about what we are doing to protect our children, please contact our Scout Executive, John Akerman at john.akerman@scouting.org.

We are personally committed, along with every other adult on the Scouting team, to make certain that our approach to protecting our youth continues to evolve with the best practices for protecting each of our Scouts.

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Sincerely,

Joe Pizzi President Susan Long Commissioner John Akerman Scout Executive