1st Dullingham and Stetchworth Independent Scouts

Attendance, Punctuality and Engagement Policy

1. Purpose

The Group recognises that regular attendance, punctuality and positive engagement are important to ensure that young people gain the full benefit from Scouting and that activities can be planned and delivered safely and effectively.

This policy sets out the Group's expectations regarding attendance, punctuality and participation, together with the steps that may be taken where a young person's attendance or engagement becomes a concern.

The policy is intended to be fair, consistent and supportive while also recognising the commitment made by our volunteer leaders and the impact that persistent non-attendance can have on the Group.

2. Attendance Expectations

Young people are expected to attend their scheduled Scout meetings, activities and camps wherever reasonably possible.

Parents/carers should notify the Group or the relevant Section Leader as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend.

Absence due to illness, family circumstances, holidays or other genuine reasons will be considered sympathetically. The Group understands that occasional absence is unavoidable.

However, regular or unexplained absence may result in the Group reviewing whether continued membership remains appropriate.

3. Three-Week Non-Attendance Period

Where a young person has not attended for three consecutive weeks without an adequate explanation or communication from the parent/carer, the Group will contact the parent/carer.

The initial contact will:

- Highlight the lack of attendance.
- Ask whether there is a reason for the absence.
- Remind the parent/carer of the importance of regular attendance.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss any difficulties preventing attendance.
- Make clear that continued non-attendance may result in membership being reviewed.

The Group will seek to resolve issues wherever reasonably possible before considering termination of membership.

4. Continued Non-Attendance

If attendance does not improve following the three-week warning, or if there is continued unexplained absence, the Group may request a meeting with the parent/carer.

The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss:

- The young person's attendance.
- Any barriers preventing regular attendance.
- Whether the young person remains interested in Scouting.
- Whether the current Section remains suitable.
- Whether reasonable adjustments or other support may assist.
- Whether continued membership is in the best interests of the young person and the Group.

Following this discussion, the Group may agree a reasonable period for attendance to improve.



5. Lateness

Young people are expected to arrive on time for meetings, activities and events.

Persistent lateness can:

- Disrupt the programme.
- Affect the wider group.
- Create additional work for volunteer leaders.
- Cause difficulties with supervision and safeguarding.
- Result in the young person missing important instructions or activities.

Occasional lateness will be understood where there is a genuine reason. Persistent or unexplained lateness will be discussed with the parent/carer and may form part of an overall attendance review.

Parents/carers should make every reasonable effort to ensure that their child arrives on time and is collected promptly at the end of activities.

6. Engagement and Participation

Scouting is a group activity and young people are expected to make a reasonable effort to participate in the programme.

Leaders will recognise that young people have different personalities, abilities and levels of confidence. A young person does not have to participate in every activity in exactly the same way as others.

However, persistent refusal to engage, repeated disruption, unwillingness to follow reasonable instructions, or behaviour that prevents other young people from participating may result in a discussion with the parent/carer.

Leaders will seek to understand the reason for poor engagement and, where appropriate, work with the young person and their parent/carer to improve participation.



7. Membership Review

Where attendance, punctuality or engagement remains unsatisfactory despite reasonable attempts to address the matter, the Group may request a formal meeting with the parent/carer.

The parent/carer will be advised that the purpose of the meeting is to determine whether continued membership is appropriate.

Possible outcomes may include:

1. Continued membership with an agreed improvement plan.

2. A further period of monitoring.

3. Temporary suspension where appropriate.

4. Termination of membership where continued membership is no longer considered appropriate.

Termination of membership will be considered carefully and will not normally be undertaken without the parent/carer first having been given an opportunity to discuss the circumstances with the Group.

8. Communication with Parents/Carers

The Group expects parents/carers to maintain reasonable communication with Section Leaders.

Where a young person is unable to attend regularly, parents/carers should communicate this with the Group rather than allowing prolonged unexplained absence.

The Group will endeavour to communicate concerns promptly and respectfully and will give families an opportunity to explain any circumstances affecting attendance or engagement.

9. Volunteers and Group Resources

Our leaders are volunteers who give their time freely to provide Scouting activities for young people.

Persistent non-attendance can have a significant impact on programme planning, equipment requirements, activity bookings and the use of volunteer time.

The Group therefore reserves the right to review membership where a young person's attendance is consistently insufficient to justify the ongoing allocation of a place.

Membership places are limited, and the Group must ensure that available places are being used by young people who are able and willing to participate regularly.

10. Exceptional Circumstances

The Group will take individual circumstances into account.

This may include, for example:

- Significant family circumstances.
- Illness or extended recovery.
- Educational commitments.
- Bereavement.
- Other circumstances communicated to and agreed with the Group.

The Group will seek to act reasonably and proportionately and will not treat genuine unavoidable absence in the same way as unexplained or persistent non-attendance.

11. Final Decision

Where membership termination is being considered, the final decision will be made by the appropriate Group leadership in accordance with the Group's governing arrangements.

The welfare and best interests of the young person, the effect on the wider Section, safeguarding considerations and the practical requirements of operating the Group will all be taken into account.

12. Policy Statement

Regular attendance, punctuality and positive engagement are fundamental to being a member of 1st Dullingham and Stetchworth Independent Scouts.

The Group will always seek to support young people and families where difficulties arise. However, where a young person is persistently absent, regularly late or unwilling to engage, and reasonable attempts to address the matter have not resulted in improvement, the Group may review and, where appropriate, terminate the young person's membership.

Three consecutive weeks of unexplained non-attendance will normally trigger an attendance warning and contact with the parent/carer. Continued concerns may result in a parent/carer meeting and a formal review of membership.

Policy Owner: Group Scout Master / Group Leadership Team

Approved by: Group Trustee Board

Effective Date: _____

Review Date: _____