

	Gasóga na hÉireann/Scouting Ireland			
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Policy on Girls & Boys, Women & Men in Scouting Ireland				
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Introduction

"Scouting Ireland is a voluntary, uniformed, non-formal educational movement for young people. It is independent, non-political, open to all without distinction of origin, race, creed or gender, in accordance with the purpose, principles and method conceived by the Founder, Robert Baden-Powell and as stated by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement."

Article 2 of the Constitution of Scouting Ireland

Therefore in accordance with the stated aim of the association, Scouting Ireland is co-educational in nature.

Scouting Ireland is therefore committed:

- to the fulfilment of its educational purpose: to contribute to the education of young people, females and males, as equals and on the basis of the needs and aspirations of each individual;
- to the principles of equal opportunities and equal partnership between males and females, both within Scouting and in society as a whole;
- to reach a situation where gender equality is a reality in terms of youth programme, adult resources, management and all other aspects of the Movement at all its levels.

This policy is adapted from and in accordance with the Policy on Girls and Boys, Women and Men within the Scout Movement¹, looking at

- Membership,
- Youth Programme,
- Adult Resources, and
- Management

¹ Policy on Girls and Boys, Women and Men within the Scout Movement", World Organisation of the Scout Movement, 1999 - http://scout.org/en/content/download/3794/34045/file/ConfDoc09_E.pdf

Membership

In its role in helping young people to prepare for active and constructive participation in a mixed social environment, Scouting Ireland caters for both genders through a coeducational approach.

All new Scout Groups formed in Scouting Ireland will be open to both genders (youth and adult), taking into account the accommodation of unique dimensions of the human personality – physical, intellectual, emotional, social & spiritual.

All existing Scout Groups who are not currently open to both genders (youth and adult) are encouraged to facilitate mixed gender membership (where feasible) through a decision making process of youth members and adult scouters working together.

Youth Programme

The provision of Youth Programme to young people of both genders requires more than simply putting both together; it requires practicing coeducation. Coeducation is not simply a matter of having youth members, female and male, in a mixed setting, sharing the same activities. It implies a specific approach.

Coeducation can be defined as an approach in which the response to the educational needs of boys and girls, young men and young women, is conceived on the basis of a common educational proposal and a clearly defined set of objectives and method which aim at the development of both genders equally, bearing in mind the individuality of each person and her or his gender identity.

It involves a setting in which:

- *girls and boys, young women and young men, operate together, in a manner that offers equal opportunities to everyone in such things as participation in activities, sharing tasks and responsibilities, making decisions;*
- *they pursue a common framework of educational objectives at each person's own pace;*
- *the needs and interests of each gender are met;*
- *the individuality and gender identity of each person is respected;*

- *Differences in the pace of development in the various dimensions of the human personality - physical, intellectual, Character, emotional, social and spiritual - are recognised and accommodated.*

A coeducational approach has major implications for all aspects of the Youth Programme of Scouting Ireland.

- Each of the steps in the process of programme development (educational proposal, personal development areas, age sections and stages of development, learning objectives, activities, application of the Scout Method, progressive scheme) must be developed consistently with the definition of coeducation.
- Similarly, the content and presentation of publications and other materials produced to support the delivery of the Youth Programme, including images and terminology, are aimed at all youth members, male and female, and reflect the principles of equal opportunities and equal partnership. Likewise, all leader training and other support provided to the delivery of the Youth Programme must reflect these same principles.
- At group level, the implementation of the Youth Programme - through the structure and functioning of the group, peer and adult-youth relationships, conduct of activities and pursuit of learning objectives - must be carried out in a manner that is sufficiently flexible so as to stimulate the development of each youth member, female or male, and enable each one to feel that she or he is respected as an individual.
- Similarly, at county, provincial and national levels, the implementation of the Youth Programme - through the structure and functioning at that level, peer and adult-youth relationships and conduct of activities - must be carried out in a manner that is sufficiently flexible so as to stimulate the development of each youth member, male or female, and enable each one to feel that he or she is respected as an individual.

Adult Resources

In order to fulfil its Mission, Scouting Ireland should have the adult leadership it needs to develop and function effectively.

In the context of providing for the needs of girls and boys, women and men, this requires:

- a distribution of roles and functions within all teams based on competencies, not gender, while continually striving to achieve and maintain a balance between male and female membership at all levels;
- the development of competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) required to deal with both genders;
- Relationships among all team members based on an attitude of respect, acceptance of differences and acknowledgement of demonstrated competencies.

Wherever they operate - with youth at group, county, provincial or national level or with other adults - adults usually work in teams and it should not be expected that any individual will personally display all the qualities and competencies required. These, however, should be collectively available from the entire team in which members, either male or female, complement each other.

All aspects of Adult Resources apply to both genders at all steps of the process (i.e. selection and recruitment, the provision of training and support, follow-up and evaluation). They should therefore be clearly aimed at all, females and males alike, and equal opportunities should be provided to all to help them understand and accept the provisions adhere to the values which underlie them, and continually develop the competencies required.

Management

All adults must have access to all functions, and selection must be made on the basis of competencies required for the job and demonstrated by a potential candidate, not on gender.

This is only possible if the necessary conditions are in place to enable adults of both genders to have access to all functions and participate effectively in any meeting or activity related to their function.

- The structures of Scouting Ireland and the decision-making process at all levels, must reflect the fact that Scouting Ireland is open to both genders in a spirit of equal partnership and shared responsibility between men and women.
- Internal and external communication must reflect an image of Scouting Ireland as open to both genders in order to enable each member, whether youth or adult, to identify with the Movement.

- This is only possible if the language, the images and the messages conveyed, both in educational and promotional materials, reflect a Movement which is open to both genders without distinction.
- Both within Scouting Ireland and outside Scouting Ireland - locally, nationally and internationally - communications, public relations and representatives of Scouting Ireland must reflect an image of an association which is open to both genders.
- The marketing of Scouting Ireland should reflect both genders and therefore take the needs of both into consideration in the definition, promotion and distribution of all products or services offered by the association.

Responsibilities of National Level

The National level of Scouting Ireland has the responsibilities:

- To provide support to Scout Groups, Scout Counties and Provinces in the implementation of all aspects of this policy in order to assist them in ensuring that gender equality becomes a reality in terms of membership, youth programme, adult resources, management and all other aspects of the Movement.
- To encourage equitable representation of female and male Scouting Ireland members on all Councils, Committees, Teams and positions at Scout Groups, Scout Counties and Provinces and National levels.
- To offer equal opportunities to men and women in the recruitment of personnel for Scouting Ireland.
- To ensure that the fact that Scouting Ireland is open to both females and males is reflected in the way in which the Movement is presented (language, image, etc.) and in representation on external bodies.
- To develop implementation guidelines and resources, and provide support to all levels of Scouting Ireland in implementing this policy