



Diversity Guide

"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength."

—Maya Angelou

Troop Mission

BSA Troop 1028 is a Scout-led unit. Our very diverse and skilled Scouters provide strong support for boys seeking true self-reliance. We hope that Scouts ultimately become ready and prepared to do the right thing, doing their best wherever they are, whenever they can, with whatever they have.



Diversity Guide Overview

"It is never too late to give up your prejudices."

—Henry David Thoreau

BSA Troop 1028 uses this guide to prepare its Scouts to be effective leaders. This guide addresses general leadership policy, principles, structures, and methods, serving as a review document and teaching tool. Thus, it touches on physical, mental, and spiritual preparedness.

Diversity Generally

Diversity also comes in many forms: socio-economic differences, religious differences, ethnicity, family makeup, personal history, age, physical makeup (including mental disposition), etc. Most of these differences are subtle, if not invisible. Some differences are extreme. Others are mere variations of the "norm."

BSA Diversity Policy

Scouting is truly a melting pot. Scouts come from all walks of life, all types of family units, faiths, and racial and ethnic groups. The BSA respects the rights of people and groups who hold values that differ from those encompassed in the Scout Oath and Law, and aims to allow youth to live and learn as children and enjoy Scouting without immersing them in the politics of the day.



Troop Inclusion Policy

Troop 1028 seeks to include a diverse community of Scouts and Scout families. We invite anyone to join within the bounds of proper conduct. Of course, we remain governed by the guidelines set by our charter organization, council, and the BSA.

Troop Diversity Commitment

We seek to provide an open, clearly structured environment within which a diverse group of Scouts can grow collectively and individually toward self-reliance without harming one another. *Conduct, not status, govern our team.* Troop 1028 is committed to this goal. Our committee, Scouters, and troop leadership all subscribe to making it happen on a constant basis.

Our troop remains firmly rooted in the core values of Scouting. We understand that, rather than conflicting threatening those values, diversity only strengthens their character and common worth.

Challenges & Opportunities

"In this country we have no place for hyphenated Americans."

—Theodore Roosevelt

Scouts come from all walks of life and are exposed to diversity in Scouting that they may not otherwise experience. At the same time, modern communication and transportation permit an ever unprecedented and increasingly interchange of ideas and norms. This constant and accelerating evolution challenges our Scouting community.

With challenges come opportunities. Diversity provides new and sometimes challenging perspectives that ultimately enrich our program, strengthen our teams, and enlighten our Scouters, parents, and (most of all) kids. Diverse relationships may take time to foster and may require extra work on everyone's part, but the payoff can be rich. Exposure to



folks from other cultures, religions, ethnic groups, generations, physical norms, etc. can be invaluable. Few lessons open a Scout's eyes like those offered by peers with vastly different life experiences.

So, link diversity-related challenges to opportunities. Tackle the obstacles knowing that success will yield greater experience, education, and fulfillment for all.

Diversity Awareness

"In such a diversity it was impossible I should be disposed to melancholy."

—Daniel Boone

Understanding begets inclusion. It all starts with awareness. Recognizing diversity requires an acknowledgement of differences in others. This entails an understanding of how people perceive themselves, how they perceive others, and how those perceptions affect their interactions and their community.

Diversity in Scouting comes in countless forms. While all Scouts are unique and require individual attention, we also look at Scouts in a broader categorical way. This allows us to better identify their challenges and ways to help them work within the troop.



Socio-Economic Diversity

"I'd rather entrust the government of the United States to the first 400 people listed in the Boston telephone directory than to the faculty of Harvard University."

—Writer William F. Buckley, Jr.

Socio-economic diversity deals with differences in people's wealth, income, and social status. Some Scout families enjoy tremendous material fortune. Others struggle to make ends meet. Rich Scouts may possess an abundance of gear and seek expensive adventure. Their families may be well connected to those in politics and business, allowing them tremendous flexibility and access to resources.

Scouts from less fortunate families may be denied those options. They may even have to work, and thus face constraints on the time available for Scouting.



Their parents might be forced to labor on odd or difficult schedules, and have little chance to participate in their son's Scout experience.

Such diversity may challenge scheduling, activity planning, gear acquisition, fund raising, etc. At the same time, it exposes Scouts to a host of healthy experiences. Wealthier Scouts may find a better work ethic. Their less blessed brethren may become more aspirational in terms of education or travel.

Religious Diversity

"Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."

—Abraham Lincoln

Religious diversity deals with differences in faith. It is a fundamental challenge. Scouts are reverent and our troop is an interfaith program. Yet faith is abstract in nature and is filtered through each individual's prism. Our troop has embraced Scouts with very diverse religious beliefs. Our Eagle alumni include Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, a Deist, a Jewish Scout, a Wiccan, a Shinto adherent, etc. We've been blessed with believers in Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.

"I care not for a man's religion whose dog and cat are not the better for it."

—Abraham Lincoln

Religious diversity presents philosophical challenges, but we've heard wonderful informal campfire debates. It presents scheduling challenges, but this teaches our Scouts that there are many ways to revere God via a Sabbath or holiday. It presents challenges in interfaith program content and delivery, but our Scouts have found strength by creating genuinely inclusive opportunities for common prayer. It lets them explore different ways of looking at what's important about the nature and balance of things.

Ethnic Diversity

"My potential is more than can be expressed within the bounds of my race or ethnic identity."

—Arthur Ashe

Ethnic diversity deals with differences in culture and cultural groups. Our United States is home to countless different ethnic communities. We draw great strength from them.



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Scouting, of course, is an international youth movement. It transcends national and cultural boundaries. Founded by an Englishman, Lord Baden Powell, it was infused with many forms and norms borne from Zulu culture. Our BSA is similarly an amalgam of European and Native American forms and norms. BSA troops contain Scouts from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds.

So too does our troop. While reflective of local ethnic demographics and the challenges the BSA faces in recruiting Scouts from minority ethnic communities, we strive for, and remain sensitive to, cultural diversity.

Ethnic diversity presents broad challenges, especially with respect to different norms. Some cultures, for instance, encourage loud, collective celebration. Others promote introspection and individualism. Dealing with these normative differences helps Scouts think and act outside their comfort zone. It can open their eyes and hearts to see life and culture from many angles, ultimately making them stronger in their means of valuation and better decision makers.

Language may be the biggest barrier. Most Scouts in the BSA speak English as their first, and generally sole, working tongue. Even when they encounter English-speaking kids from ethnic groups with a different mother language, they may struggle with basic communication. Conflict may rise from frequent misconception. Still, this creates an opportunity for Scouts to hone their skills in language, empathy, and diplomacy at an age when such exposure and education is especially valuable.

Age & Generational Diversity

"[There] was a time when a lot of people came to the door. The milkman. The iceman. The Fuller Brush man. Encyclopedia salesmen. There was a sense of interaction with the world that started right at your own front doorstep."

—Writer Catherine Ryan Hyde

Change is constant and accelerating. This is true of kids aging from 11 to 17. It's even more true of the evolution of the broader society from generation to generation. What is important and valuable to an 11 year-old differs wildly from an older peer, and what a 17 year-old might find dear might be alien to his 57 year-old

Scoutmaster... and vice versa.

Age diversity creates special interest and communication challenges. It also offers ways for Scouts, Scouters, and families to explore and share history, traditions, current events, fads, and innovation. It's good and fun to discover what once was cool, what is cool, and what will be cool, for it helps you understand what is truly cool.

Physical Diversity

"Beneath the armor of skin/and/bone/and/mind most of our colors are amazingly the same."

—Poet/Writer Aberjhani

Physical diversity deals with all forms of physical (including the brain) variation. This includes differences in size, coloration, strength, coordination and motor skills, cognitive ability, memory, temperament, etc.

This is a broad category, even by diversity standards. It includes all forms of physical variation and all degrees of ability and disability—too many to specifically address here. Fortunately, the BSA publishes a host of materials pertaining to issues of physical diversity, which we periodically review. For instance, the BSA offers a "Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES." (See <http://www.Scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34059.pdf>.)

Every Scout who conducts himself properly and wants to participate as a full member of our troop should be accorded equal respect, hope, and opportunity. This goal challenges us to constantly reflect on, and balance, the individual and collective needs within our community. It affects everything from meal plans to monthly themes.

Physical diversity challenges us to address our entire program in a diverse, "layered" fashion. Our Scouts and Scouters thus have an ongoing opportunity to create flexible, multi-level training, advancement, adventuring, and entertainment activities.

This permits us to bring our physically diverse crew together wherever possible, and create purposeful subgroups wherever prudent. Most importantly, it allows us to buddy Scouts of like ability or differing ability according to need... all the while giving our Scouts the opportunity to see how kids of a diverse nature see and live life.

Personal Needs

"If everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking!"

—General George Patton

We remain aware that some Scouts have other personal needs and requirements, such as specialized dietary preferences, family circumstances, school scenarios, etc. These diverse needs challenge our troop to be flexible and creative. Planning to feed a pair of vegetarians requires thoughtful and nimble meal planning and food purchasing.



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Diversity Preparedness

"Diversity may be the hardest thing for a society to live with, and perhaps the most dangerous thing for a society to be without."

—William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

As noted, diversity preparedness starts with awareness. Being aware starts us on the way to being prepared. A good attitude, solid core practices (method), personal care, and constant education (e.g., about bullying & cyber-bullying) enhance such preparedness.

Attitude

"... guide others to happiness, and you will bring happiness to yourselves..."

—Robert Baden Powell

We embrace diversity. Our troop understands that we are diminished when we exclude others. We're especially diminished if we discriminate or abuse others. By stopping intolerance—especially bullying—we all win. By recognizing diversity we change. We help others and ourselves in the process. By doing the right thing, we set an example and transform others.



Core Practices

Attitude begins with core practices. In this context, a Scout or Scouter should offer the following...

Non-Judgmental Respect

Rather than judging, practice mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from your own.

Patient, Empathetic Communication

Diversity includes different ways of being and different ways of knowing and relating to the world. So, remain patient and empathetic when communicating.

Clarity

Insure that your messages are received clearly and completely, even if you need to employ repetition or additional means of clarification.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledge receipt of others' messages.

Cheerful Reinforcement

Cheerfully reinforce the things that work. Make them routine or normative.

BE PREPARED FOR LIFE.

Reward Consistently

Offer consistent rewards for good conduct and/or performance.

Hard Work

Work hard. Always remain attentive. Stay engaged. Recognize the extra demands placed on your patience, understanding, and skill, in working on advancement with those with acute needs.



Personal Care

Ultimately, all members of our troop have very individual needs. Their association with a different group is only part of their story. So, we address their specific personal needs and requirements—such as specialized dietary preferences, family circumstances, school scenarios, etc.—on a case by case basis.

Education

True diversity preparedness requires constant education. Take the time to learn about current and evolving developments in understanding other cultures, religions, ethnic groups, generations, physical norms, special needs groups, etc.

Begin your journey at BSA's online "Training" page (see <http://www.Scouting.org/Training.aspx>). Also look to their "Research" page (see <http://www.Scouting.org/About/Research.aspx>).

Interfaith Worship & Inclusion

"An interfaith service is a brief worship or meditation, specifically designed for Scouting events where there may be members of more than one faith group. The intention of an interfaith service is to provide a spiritual focus during a camping experience that does not reflect the views of a particular denomination or faith. An interfaith service can be defined as a gathering of Scouts held to contribute to the development of their spirituality and to promote a fuller understanding of the Scout Oath and Law, with emphasis on one's Duty to God."

—www.Scouting.org

Worship at Scouting Activities

Lord Baden Powell believed that a Scout's religion is not in how he behaves. It is in what he believes. This is where the Scout Law intersects with spirituality.

Our troop frequently takes time to give thanks for all we've received and otherwise address the spiritual needs of our crew. Our chaplain's aide, or another Scout designated by our SPL, typically leads us when we so gather. That Scout puts his specific religious views in a broad, inclusive context, respecting the spiritual diversity of our com-



munity. At the same time, he does need to dilute the essential core message. We thus promote diversity.

Religious Tolerance

It is thus incumbent on all Scouts and adults within the Troop 1028 community to exercise tolerance and invite inclusion. This doesn't mean that a group of wholly Catholic Scouts cannot worship according to their specific faith. It means that, should a Scout of another denomination or faith participate, they all employ an inclusive, interfaith program.

Outside of worship, our Scouts should understand that personal faith touches us in some way at every moment. Tolerance is an important constant. We should practice it at all times. Everyone in our community deserves to be judged by their conduct, not their status—which includes their religious affiliations and beliefs. This is in keeping with the Scout Oath and Law.

Our Monticello District Heritage

The Scout Oath compels us to do our best in duty to our country. As good citizens of the United States, we abide by our Constitution and the other laws enacted through our representative legislatures.

As a troop based in the Monticello District, not far from the birthplace and home of Thomas Jefferson, we operate in a special historical and cultural context. Everywhere, we are reminded about the "Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom," a statement about both freedom of conscience and the principle of separation of church and state.

Written by Thomas Jefferson and passed by the Virginia General Assembly on January 16, 1786, this statute is the forerunner of our Constitution's First Amendment protections for religious freedom. Divided into three paragraphs, the statute is rooted in Jefferson's philosophy. The Virginia General Assembly passed it into law because dissenting sects (particularly Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists) had petitioned strongly during the preceding decade for religious liberty, including the separation of church and state.

Jefferson had argued in the Declaration of Independence that "the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle [man]...." The first paragraph of the religious statute proclaims one of those entitlements, freedom of thought. To Jefferson, "Nature's God," who is undeniably visible in the workings of the universe, gives man the freedom to choose his religious beliefs. This is the divinity whom deists of the time accepted—a God who created the world and is the final judge of man, but who does not intervene in the affairs of man. This God gives man freedom to believe or not to believe...

I. Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishment or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the Holy author of our religion, who being Lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was his

Almighty power to do . . .

The second paragraph is the act itself, which states that no person can be compelled to attend any church or support it with his taxes. It says that an individual is free to worship as he pleases with no discrimination.

II. Be it enacted by the General Assembly, that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

The third paragraph reflects Jefferson's belief in the people's right, through their elected assemblies, to change any law. Here, Jefferson states that this statute is not irrevocable because no law is (not even the Constitution). Future assemblies that choose to repeal or circumscribe the act do so at their own peril, because this is "an infringement of natural right." Thus, Jefferson articulates his philosophy of both natural right and the sovereignty of the people.

III. And though we well know that this assembly elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the act of succeeding assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act to be irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present, or to narrow its operation, such as would be an infringement of natural right.

<http://www.vahistorical.org/sva2003/vsrf.htm>

BSA Youth & Leader Applications

The BSA draws from the original declaration that gave life to the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in the preambles of its youth and leader applications:

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. Only persons willing to subscribe to these precepts from the Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of leadership.

When signing these applications, we subscribe to his principle of religious tolerance and inclusion.

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-406A.pdf>

<http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>

