

LITHUANIAN SCOUTS AUSTRALIA

Adult Conduct and Complaints Policy

1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the standards of conduct expected of all Adults in Scouting when engaging with other adults within the Lithuanian Scouts organisation. It provides a clear and fair process for raising, investigating, and resolving complaints or allegations of inappropriate conduct between adults, and outlines the protections available to those involved.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Adults in Scouting, including leaders, volunteers, committee members, and any other adults acting in an official or voluntary capacity on behalf of Lithuanian Scouts. It covers conduct that occurs during Scouting activities, events, camps, meetings, and any associated digital or online interactions.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Lithuanian Scouts is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and professional environment for all Adults in Scouting. Every adult involved in the organisation has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to participate in Scouting activities free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, or defamation.

All Adults in Scouting are expected to:

- Treat fellow adults with courtesy, fairness, and respect at all times
- Act with honesty and integrity in all dealings within the organisation
- Raise concerns through appropriate channels rather than making public or informal accusations
- Respect the confidentiality of other members and the organisation
- Support a culture of accountability and continuous improvement

4. DEFINITIONS

Adult in Scouting

Any person who holds an adult tie (purple for males, blue for females) within Lithuanian Scouts, or who is acting in a leadership or volunteer capacity on behalf of the organisation.

Harassment

Any unwanted conduct, whether verbal, physical, written, or digital, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed toward an individual or group that creates a risk to health, safety, or wellbeing. This includes behaviour that is humiliating, threatening, or deliberately exclusionary.

Defamation

The making of a false statement about a person that damages their reputation, whether made verbally, in writing, or through digital means including social media.

Discrimination

Treating a person less favourably on the basis of a protected attribute including but not limited to age, gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or cultural background.

5. STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

All Adults in Scouting are expected to uphold the following standards in their interactions with other adults:

5.1 Respectful Communication

- Communicate with other adults in a respectful, constructive, and professional manner
- Raise concerns or disagreements through appropriate channels rather than in public forums or group settings
- Avoid language or behaviour that could be considered offensive, threatening, or demeaning
- Respect differences of opinion and approach disagreements with openness and goodwill

5.2 Honesty and Integrity

- Act with honesty and transparency in all organisational dealings
- Avoid making false, misleading, or unsubstantiated statements about other adults within or outside the organisation

5.3 Social Media and Digital Conduct

- Adults in Scouting must not use social media, messaging applications, or any other digital platform to harass, bully, defame, or make inappropriate comments about other adults in the organisation
- Adults who become aware of inappropriate digital conduct involving another member of the organisation are encouraged to report it in accordance with this policy

5.4 Photography and Image Sharing

- Photography and image sharing at Lithuanian Scouts activities is governed by the Photography and Image Policy (PH-001). Adults must not photograph, film, or share images of other adults in a manner that could cause embarrassment, reputational harm, or distress.

5.5 Confidentiality

- Adults must respect the privacy and confidentiality of other members
- Information shared in confidence within the organisation must not be disclosed to third parties without appropriate authorisation
- Matters raised under this policy must be kept confidential by all parties involved unless disclosure is required by law

5.6 Psychological Safety and Wellbeing

- Adults in Scouting have a responsibility to contribute to a positive and supportive organisational culture
- Behaviour that undermines the mental health or emotional wellbeing of another adult will not be tolerated
- Adults who are experiencing difficulty in their role or in their relationships with other members are encouraged to seek support through the camp leader, tuntininkas, or a member of the Organisation Committee.

6. MAKING A COMPLAINT

Any Adult in Scouting who believes they have experienced or witnessed conduct that breaches this policy is encouraged to raise the matter through the process outlined below.

6.1 Informal Resolution

Where appropriate and safe to do so, the person raising the concern may first attempt to resolve the matter informally by:

1. Speaking directly with the person whose conduct is in question, if comfortable doing so
2. Seeking the assistance of a trusted third party such as the camp leader or Tuntininkas to facilitate a conversation

Informal resolution is not always appropriate, particularly where the conduct is serious, repeated, or involves a power imbalance. In such cases, a formal complaint should be made directly.

6.2 Formal Complaint

A formal complaint should be submitted in writing to the Tuntininkas or, where the Tuntininkas is involved in the matter, directly to the **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia**. The complaint should include:

- The name of the person making the complaint
- A clear description of the conduct being complained about
- The date(s) and location(s) of the relevant incident(s)
- The names of any witnesses if known
- Any supporting documentation or evidence available

Timeframe for Lodging a Complaint

Complaints should be lodged as soon as practicable after the incident occurs. The organisation reserves the right to consider whether a complaint can be fairly investigated if it is lodged significantly after the relevant events.

7. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

All formal complaints must be submitted in writing (verbal complaints will not be accepted) and will be acknowledged within five (5) business days of receipt. Investigations will be conducted in accordance with the following principles.

- Complaints must be submitted in writing to a nominated contact (e.g. Group Leader or Camp Leader).
- A complaint will be acknowledged within five (5) business days of receipt.
- A support person may be present for any party during meetings or discussions.
- Interim measures may be implemented during the investigation to ensure safety and integrity of the process.
- Matters involving potential criminal conduct or child safety concerns will be referred to appropriate external authorities and/or the governing body.
- A party may request a review of the outcome within a specified timeframe (e.g. 14 days) on the basis of procedural error or new information.
- Records of complaints and investigations will be maintained securely in accordance with privacy requirements.

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- Outcomes may include no action, mediation, warnings, or disciplinary action in accordance with group policies.

Possible Outcomes

Following an investigation, the Tuntininkas or **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia** may determine one or more of the following outcomes:

- No further action
- A formal written warning
- Mediation between the parties
- Reassignment to a different role within the organisation
- Suspension from Scouting duties for a specified period
- Withdrawal of participation in Lithuanian Scouting

8. APPEALS

Any adult in Scouting who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may lodge an appeal with the **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia** within fourteen (14) days of receiving the written outcome. The appeal must state the grounds on which it is made. The **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia** decision on appeal is final.

9. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

Any Adult in Scouting who raises a concern or makes a complaint in good faith under this policy will be protected from retaliation, victimisation, or any form of adverse treatment as a result of doing so. Any retaliation against a person who has raised a concern in good faith will itself be treated as a serious breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

10. FALSE OR VEXATIOUS COMPLAINTS

This policy is intended to protect Adults in Scouting from genuine harm. The making of a complaint that is knowingly false, malicious, or intended to cause harm to another person is itself a serious breach of this policy and will be dealt with accordingly. The organisation reserves the right to take action against any person found to have made a vexatious complaint.

11. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation, organisational circumstances, or best practice guidance. The Organising Committee and Tuntininkas is responsible for ensuring this policy remains current and effective.

Declaration

All Adults in Scouting are required to sign a declaration confirming they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Adult Conduct and Complaints Policy prior to commencing or continuing any role within Lithuanian Scouts.