



The Singapore Scout Association

Safe from Harm Policy and Framework

Updated by:
Commissioners' Council
September 2024

Contents Page

A. Definitions	3
B. Principal Considerations	3
C. Introduction	3
D. Statement of Policy	4
E. Key Harms and Abuses	4
F. SSA Safe from Harm Committee	6
G. Implementation Cascade	6
H. Review and Updates	8
I. Conclusion	8

Safe from Harm Policy and Framework

A. Definitions

Harm - refers to any detrimental effect on a persons' physical, emotional or psychological wellbeing and integrity.

Abuse – refers to any manner of maltreatment which is inflicted on children and young people.

- Abuse can be categorized into different typologies such as physical, psychological, emotional and can take various forms such as bullying, neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation.
- Generally, “abuse” consists of anything that individuals or institutions do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms an individual or group or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development.

Adults - refers to all Adult Members above the legal age of 21 in SSA and shall also include any other adults who are involved on an ad hoc or contract basis in Scouting.

Youths - refers to all Youth Members of SSA, i.e. Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venture Scouts and Rover Scouts; and include any other young persons who are involved in a programme organised by SSA, e.g. International campers for Singapore International Jamboree, Red Cross Youths participating in National Patrol Camp.

Members – refers to all youths and adult members of SSA, or anyone else who takes part in a SSA organised event or activity.

B. Principal Considerations

1. Holistic Approach

SfH is broad and encompasses most aspects of Scouting from Youth Programme to Adult Training and from individual actions to institutional policies. Thus, to create a safe environment for Scouting, a holistic approach is necessary to ensure synergy and effectiveness.

2. Collective Impact

As SfH straddles many areas and involves policies and implementation by various parties, it will only be successful when collective efforts by all members of the organisation are highly coordinated and synergistic.

3. Ease of Implementation

As SfH is a policy for all members, the implementation should be seamless and simple for all members to follow and adhere to, with clear guidelines and conditions, leaving no room for ambiguity and doubt.

C. Introduction

The World Safe from Harm Policy was adopted by the World Scout Conference in 2017. It is a cumulation of work since the conference adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Youth in 1990 and resolution ‘Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm’ in 2002.

“In the context of Scouting, keeping children and young people safe from harm encompasses all areas of child and youth protection work, and includes a full range of strategies, systems and procedures that aim to promote that the wellbeing, development and safety of children and young people is a priority in all Scouting-related activities.” (WOSM Safe from Harm World Policy, 2017)

The Singapore Scout Association is committed to ensuring a safe Scouting environment for our youth and

adult members. With the adoption of the policy, it allows the Association to have a universal SfH policy to enhance our existing policies and guidelines with the aim of an integrated approach to keep our members out of harm's way.

Thus, Safe from Harm is a set of actions designed to ensure that every person involved in Scouting is responsible and committed to protecting our members, youths and adults alike, so everyone can feel safe, at all times, anywhere.

D. Statement of Policy

1. The Singapore Scout Association has an overarching duty of care to our members to provide a safe environment and protection from harm. This is achieved through institutional policies, regulations and guidelines.
2. All Adults are accountable for fulfilling that specific responsibility on behalf of the Association at all times. Commissioners have the added responsibility of ensuring such policies and regulations are adequate, updated and implemented in their area of work.
3. The Association is committed to an environment of **zero tolerance** toward bullying, neglect, insults and emotional, physical, psychological or sexual abuse of any kind.
4. When an incident occurs, our absolute priority is to ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the individual(s) who may be harmed. This duty of care for the safety of our members is maintained throughout the course of the investigation. This includes referring to professional help for cases that show signs and symptoms pertaining to the mental wellbeing of our members without neglect whenever possible.
5. All members must report any conduct directly seen or suspected that does not comply with this Policy and/or the SSA Code of Conduct. Without fail, members must report any disclosure, allegation or suspicion of abuse of youth and other adult members in accordance with this Policy immediately and in the manner specifically required by law or the authority under which the group is formed.
6. Youth members are to be educated on SSA's SfH Framework through an age-appropriate programme and are encouraged to report any conduct that does not comply with this Policy. They are also to be regularly reminded through the Youth program of their rights to feel safe and what action they can take if they do not feel safe.
7. Responding to incidents of harm and allegations of abuse must be undertaken with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality.
8. All investigation will be deemed necessary with the preservation of the rights of the accused.

E. Key Harms and Abuses

These harms and abuses have been identified as possible incidents which a Youth or adult member may be exposed to during the course of their Scouting journey. In identifying and educating members about these key harms, it allows them to be cognizant of the measures that they can take to prevent or mitigate these harms.

1. Physical Injuries

This occurs when members are injured while involved in activities and events organised as part of the Scouting activities. Such injuries may be due to insufficient risk control measures or the lack of it, or simply due to personal negligence. An injury may take the form of bruises, abrasions, cuts, burns, fractures or asphyxiation.

2. Physical Abuse

This occurs when a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure another person. The abuse can take the form of (but is not limited to) slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning, shoving, pushing, holding or grabbing. An injury may take the form of bruises, abrasions, cuts, burns, fractures or asphyxiation. Physical abuse may leave no visible sign of physical injury. This abuse can also be the result of 'Hazing' (the practice of rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group).

Additionally, physical abuse can be a single incident or a number of different incidents that take place over time. The 'level of harm' inflicted is not necessarily relevant in determining whether physical abuse has occurred. Instead, the focus is on whether harm has occurred or not. For harm to be considered 'significant', it must have a substantial or serious detrimental effect on an individual's well-being, which can be demonstrated through the individual's presentation, functioning, or behaviour.

3. Emotional and Mental Abuse

This occurs when an individual is repeatedly rejected or frightened by verbal or non-verbal threats. The abuse can involve name-calling, the use of words to cause harm including yelling, insults and threats, being put down or continual coldness from a person to the extent that the behaviour of the individual is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of impairment (this can include the effects of bullying). It also includes exclusion or bullying through social media.

Emotional abuse suffered through bullying can leave a devastating, long-lasting effect on members. Although prevalent, a large percentage of incidents go unreported, owing to both institutional gaps and lack of protection for victims against their abusers. Often, victims face doubts among their friends and loved ones, hence making them question their own experiences.

For youths exhibiting or suspected of having mental and psychological conditions with signs of distress, it is recommended that adult leaders take on a duty of care. While prolonged neglect and indifference stemming from a lack of expertise do not amount to abuse, such inaction can exacerbate the situation and lead to severe consequences. Therefore, it is crucial to refer these cases to appropriate professional help.

4. Sexual Abuse

This occurs when a Youth or adult member is used by a person (either an Adult or another Youth or adolescent) for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. These can be contact or non-contact acts, including grooming by perpetrators, inappropriate touching, penetrative abuse, and exposure to pornography, accessing pornography, the retention of pornography or involving an individual in the making or sending of pornography.

5. Sexual Grooming

This occurs when communication or conduct is linked to facilitating the involvement of a Youth in sexual behaviour with an Adult. Youths are particularly accessible through social media. Indicators of 'grooming' include but are not limited to:

- Developing special relationships with, favouring or giving gifts to a Youth.
- Inappropriate interactions with Youth either in person or via through forms of media and electronic devices.
- Asking a Youth to keep a secret on any aspect of their relationship.
- Testing of or ignoring professional boundaries or rules.
- The coercive use of social media, texting and online forums to groom, or directly abuse.

F. SSA Safe from Harm Committee

An SSA Safe from Harm Committee shall be established to direct, coordinate and monitor SfH policy and implementation. This includes custodianship of SSA SfH policy and directing functional departments in generating policies in adherence to the SfH policy. The Terms of Reference for the SfH Committee is presented in Annex A.

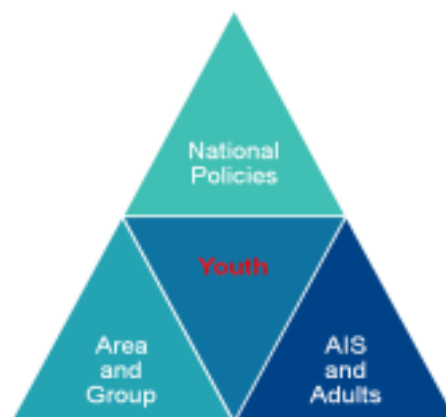
Additional members may be recruited from the members of SSA with expertise or sub-tasks groups trained or recruited of the mentioned domains.

G. Implementation

1. National Policies and Framework

National teams are to ensure integration of SfH policy in their respective area of work, policies and events. E.g. Youth Programme policy, National Patrol Camp.

- a. Design and implement an **Activities Safety Framework**.
This addresses physical harm in the form of injuries.
- b. Design and implement an **Event Framework and Guidelines** which includes SfH as an integral component. This should include an event-based Code of Conduct for both Youths and Adults, special dietary management and emergency response and crisis management plans. All National Events shall also establish a SfH unit to ensure the event is compliant with all SfH policies.
- c. Design and implement a **Code of Conduct for Adults**. This includes a system to ensure all Adult Members subscribe to the Code of Conduct and renew it yearly.
- d. Design and implement an **Incident Reporting and Management System** which includes Whistle Blowing Policy, incidence monitoring and incident response plan.
- e. Design and Implement a **Digital and Communications Safety Framework** to combat the misuse of personal data, falsehood and inappropriate contact.
- f. Design and Implement a **Diversity and Inclusion Framework** to reduce and eliminate discriminatory practices that may result in an unsafe environment for the Youth.
- g. Integration of **SfH in Youth Programme schemes** as core components appropriate at each section.
- h. **Adults In Scouting (Human Capital Management)**
 - i. Adult recruitment, selection and induction processes to be aligned with the SSA Safe from Harm Policy.
 - ii. Leader profile (specifications) and role descriptions for all key positions and any other positions that deal with young people, should include the responsibility to keep Youth safe from harm.
 - iii. Appointments of Adults are made only after all appropriate checks have been conducted. They include:
 1. Suitable background check (regularly repeated, in accordance with national guidelines



and legislation),

2. References check,

3. Interview process.

iv. The process of performance assessment for Adults Leaders includes the appraisal of elements related to Safe from Harm (e.g. risk planning and management in activities; facilitating interpersonal relationships; attitudes and behaviours).

i. Adult Training

i. **Integration of SSA SfH in all National Training Courses** as core modules. This includes the integration of all other relevant policies and frameworks appropriate for respective courses.

ii. Develop and Implement a dedicated **SfH course for all Adult Members**.

2. Areas

Areas are responsible for implementing the SfH policy through its constituent Groups and Area level guidelines and events. This includes the appointment and training of all Adult Leaders and constant monitoring of the adherence of SfH by the Area Team and Groups.

All Areas are required to have an Area SfH committee to implement and enforce SfH for all Area events and ensure the compliance of SfH at the Group level. The Terms of Reference for the Area SfH Committee is presented in Annex B.

3. Group

Scout Group is the last link to a successful implementation of SfH. Accordingly, the Group Council or Group Leader shall be responsible for the implementation of SfH at the Group level at all times.

4. Adults

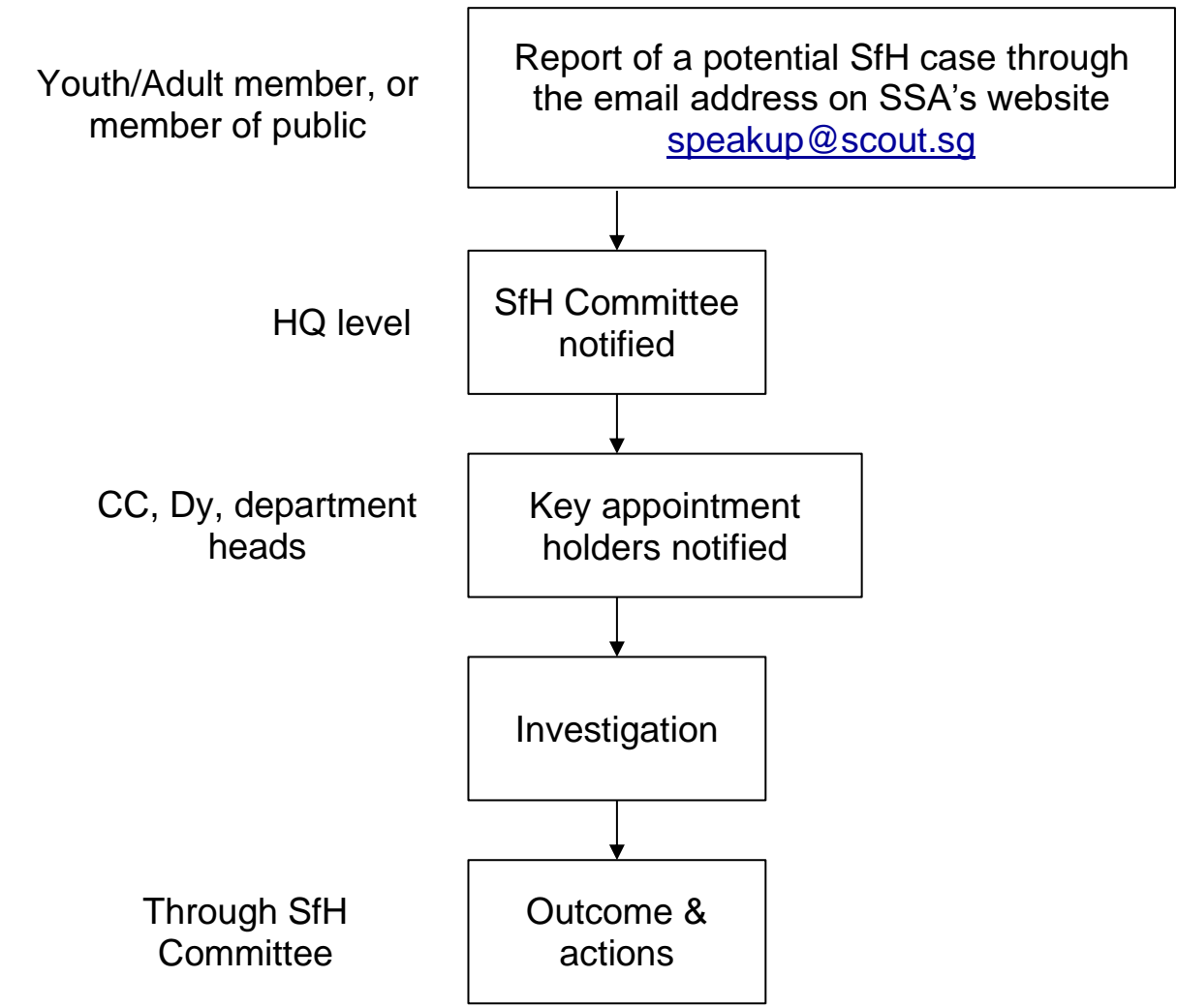
All Adults shall be personally responsible for the following:

- a. Undertake training on SSA SfH policy and any other relevant policies and guidelines. This includes refresher training where available.
- b. Implement SfH in their areas of work.
- c. Report all incidences of breaches or near misses in accordance with SSA policy for incident management.
- d. Understand and undertake to adhere to the SSA Code of Conduct and to renew acknowledgement of this Code of Conduct yearly.
- e. Promote a culture of Safe from Harm within one's area of involvement, contributing to the overall fostering of safety as an Association core value.

5. Youths

- a. Be educated on the SfH framework age-appropriate to their section through the respective leadership courses.
- b. Understand and undertake the Code of Conduct specific for individual events, e.g. campers or staff for National Patrol Camp.
- c. Report all incidences of breaches in accordance with SSA policy for incident management.

Generic Reporting Flow



H. Review and Updates

The SSA SfH Committee shall review the progress and effectiveness of SfH policies and implementations annually with reference to World Safe from Harm Self Assessment Tool and any other suitable audit process. Recommendations proposed by subject matter experts or train domain sub-task groups should be taken into consideration in the immediate review of the SfH policy.

This document shall be reviewed on a triennial basis with any changes made known to all parties involved.

I. Conclusion

In the pursuit of achieving the Mission of Scouting, we must first ensure all members are kept Safe from Harm. This is an absolute prerequisite to a successful Youth Programme.

Annexes

- A - SSA Safe from Harm Committee Terms of Reference
- B - Area Safe from Harm Committee Terms of Reference

References

1. Safe from Harm World Policy, Dec 2017, World Scout Bureau
2. Scouts Australia CHILD PROTECTION POLICY and PRESCRIBED PROCEDURES, Nov 2018, The

Scout Association of Australia

3. Safety in School Handbook, Mar 2018, Ministry of Education (Singapore)

ANNEX A

Terms of Reference - SSA Safe from Harm Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The SSA Safe from Harm Committee is responsible for the coordination and enforcement of the SSA's Safe from Harm (SfH) policy and other related policies and guidelines. Members of the Committee shall strive to create a safe environment for Scouting for all members through sound measures to prevent, identify and mitigate all types of harms that members may be exposed to in the course of their Scouting journey.
- 1.2. This Terms of Reference (TOR) aims to help the Committee to better understand its roles and responsibilities so that it may fulfil its purpose and duty towards the Scouting community.

2. Committee Constitution

- 2.1. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Chief Commissioner. This person is usually the National Emergency Preparedness Commissioner but may also be another Commissioner as the Chief Commissioner deems fit.
- 2.2. Ex-Officio Members
 - 2.2.1. National Commissioner (Emergency Preparedness)
 - 2.2.2. National Commissioner (Operations)
 - 2.2.3. National Commissioner (Youth Programme)
 - 2.2.4. National Commissioner (Adult Learning & Development)
 - 2.2.5. Chairperson of Area SfH Committees or his/her delegate
- 2.3. The Chairperson may invite additional members to the committee as the chairperson deems fit. For example, Programme Commissioner (Sea) may be co-opted as and when necessary.
- 2.4. The Executive Director shall nominate one or more staff to the committee to act as secretary of the committee.
- 2.5. Membership within the committee is determined by the appointment of the person and not on a term basis.
- 2.6. Subject matter experts within the SSA or trained adult leaders of particular domain e.g. psychological first aid, suicide prevention, etc.

3. National Safe from Harm Committee Meetings

- 3.1. The Committee shall convene at least once every 6 months to apprise members of updates of policy implementation and enforcement.
- 3.2. The Committee shall also be expected to conduct a yearly review of the SfH policy and guidelines under its purview i.e Safe from Harm policy, Activities Safety and Operations Guidelines (ASOG) and RAMS.
- 3.3. The World Safe from Harm Self-Assessment Tool shall be used as a referencing guide in reviewing the SfH policy.

4. Accountability

- 4.1. The Committee shall produce reports annually to the Commissioners' Council on any non-

compliance incidents, infringement of guidelines and any other matters pertaining to safe from harm within the purview of the Association.

- 4.2. The Committee shall also be responsible for ensuring all National Level activities (e.g Jamboree, National Patrol Camp) are in compliance with the SSA Safe from Harm Policy which includes adherence to the risk management framework and other components. Where such compliance is lacking, the committee shall direct the event organiser/s to take remedial measures immediately.
- 4.3. To support point 4.2, all National Events shall establish an SfH unit whose key role is to ensure that the event is compliant with all SfH policies. This SfH unit may be responsible for drawing up event-specific policies and the implementation of them; or may play a supervisory role if there are other committees within the event dealing with different areas of SfH.

Annex B

Terms of Reference - SSA Area Safe from Harm Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The SSA Area Safe from Harm Committee is responsible for the delivery and implementation of SSA's Safe from Harm (SfH) policy and other related policies and guidelines at the Area and Group level. Members of the Committee shall strive to create a safe environment for Scouting for all members through sound measures to identify, prevent or mitigate all types of harms that members may be exposed to in the course of their Scouting journey.
- 1.2. This Terms of Reference (TOR) aims to help the Committee better understand its roles and responsibilities so that it may fulfil its purpose and duty towards the Scouting community.

2. Committee Constitution

- 2.1. The committee shall be chaired by the Area Commissioner.
- 2.2. The AAC overseeing Adults-in-Scouting (Human Capital) will be the secretariat of the Committee.
- 2.3. The Chairperson shall invite additional members to the committee as the chairperson deems fit.

3. Area Safe from Harm Committee Meetings

- 3.1. The Committee shall convene at least once every 6 months to apprise members on implementation efforts and feedback from groups on the measures.
- 3.2. The Committee shall conduct a yearly review of the Area SfH implementation measures to improve all aspects of safety in Scouting in the Area.

4. Accountability

- 4.1. The Committee shall report to the National SfH Committee where it will be represented by its Chairperson or his delegate.
- 4.2. The Committee shall provide updates on implementation measures and report any non-compliance of safety measures.
- 4.3. The Committee shall be responsible for all Safe from Harm compliance for all Area Level activities (e.g Leadership Course, Area Games Day).