

Introduction

This document describes the policy for the allocation of places for young people wishing to join 1st Corsham Scout Group¹. It does not cover the allocation of places to other scout groups or any Explorer Scout Unit.

Its content was approved by the Group Executive Committee on 27th June 2017.

The policy is effective for entry into the Scout Group from 27th June 2017 and will be reviewed by the Group Executive Committee no later than July 2018. A revised policy will then become effective for entry to the Group from 1st September 2018.

Background

For many years, the number of young people wishing to become members of 1st Corsham Scout Group has exceeded the number of places available. There is no sign of any reduction in demand, yet the leadership team considers large section sizes unsustainable in the long term.

The Group intends to manage the youth membership places available to strive for an optimum balance between the following goals:

- To provide access to Scouting for as many young people as possible;
- To provide a high-quality Scouting experience for all young people and adults involved; and
- To ensure that the sections and Group are sustainable and able to provide high quality scouting in the long term.

Clear rules will be applied in the allocation of places to ensure that, as far as is possible, fair and equal treatment is given to all young people.

Target Section Sizes

The Group considers that the optimum section sizes are as follows, and intends to gradually move towards these numbers over the period of this policy.

- Beavers - 24 Young People
- Cubs - 40 Young People
- Sea Scouts - 60 Young People

Existing Members

Under normal circumstances, a young person who has a place within the Group and wishes to continue his or her membership of the Group will be able to do so until they reach an age to leave the Sea Scout section. They will progress from section to section at the appropriate age.

If a young person, with their parent² (s) agreement, decides that they wish to leave a section, they will forfeit their membership of the Scout Group. For the avoidance of doubt, where a young person and their parent(s) make a decision to leave a younger section, they will not be guaranteed a place in any older section at a later date.

If a young person fails to attend regular section meetings for three occasions in a row, without their parent/guardian contacting the section leader to provide a satisfactory explanation, they will forfeit their membership of the Group. The section leader will make at least two attempts to contact the parent in these circumstances and will use two different methods of contact wherever possible. A failure to respond to the second contact within 7 days will automatically lead to loss of membership of the Group.

Applying for Future Places

A waiting list of young people wishing to join the Group will be maintained. It will record the young person's details, their parent's contact details and the date on which they joined the waiting list. Parents may add their child's details to the waiting list by using the relevant form on the Group's website. They may also do so by providing the same information through any other reasonable means.

As a young person's details are provided, the Group will be able to give a good indication of the likelihood of any given child being offered a place, based on future projections.

Joining Sections

Beavers

Young People will be admitted to our Colony **at age 6 only**. Places will be allocated on the following criteria:

- To maintain the Beaver Colony with 24 Young People
- To strive for entry into the Beaver Colony as soon as possible after a child's 6th birthday
- To give priority to those potential members whose details were recorded on the waiting list earliest.

Where a place is unlikely to become available in Beavers, the parents will be informed and asked if they wish their child to be transferred to the Cubs Waiting List or be given details of other Scout Groups. Should a child gain a place in another Scout Group their details will be removed from the 1st Corsham Scout Group waiting list to ensure continuity of Scouting for the Young Person.

Cubs

Young People will be admitted to our Pack **the term after they have turned 8**. Places will be allocated on the following criteria:

- To maintain the Cub Pack with 40 Young People.
- First priority for places in the Pack are as follows:
 - 1st Priority – Beavers from 1st Corsham moving up to Cubs.
 - 2nd Priority – Young People on the Waiting List that did not secure a place in Beavers based on the date they joined the Waiting List.
 - 3rd Priority – Young People that are in the Scouting Movement but have not been able to secure a place in Scouts (eg Groups that 1st Corsham has a partnering arrangement with).
 - 4th Priority – Young People in our community that have gained an interest in Scouting while of Beaver age based on the date of their expression of interest to join the Group.

Note: Given the popularity of Scouting in the area, it is highly unlikely we will have places available to join Cubs for Young People that fall under priorities 3 and 4. Should a Young Person not be allocated a place in our Cub Pack, the parents will be informed and asked if they wish their child to be transferred to the Scouts Waiting List or be given details of other Scout Groups. Should a child gain a place in another Scout Group their details will be removed from the 1st Corsham Scout Group waiting list to ensure continuity of Scouting for the Young Person.

Sea Scouts

Young People will be admitted to our Troop **the term after they have turned 10½**. Places will be allocated on the following criteria:

- To maintain the Sea Scout Troop with 60 Young People.
- First priority for places in the Troop are as follows:
 - 1st Priority – Cubs from 1st Corsham moving up to Sea Scouts.
 - 2nd Priority – Young People on the Waiting List that did not secure a place in Cubs based on the date they joined the Waiting List.
 - 3rd Priority – Young People that are in the Scouting Movement but have not been able to secure a place in Scouts (eg Groups that 1st Corsham has a partnering arrangement with).

- 4th Priority – Young People in our community that have gained an interest in Scouting while of Cub age based on the date of their expression of interest to join the Group.

Note: As with Cubs, given the popularity of Scouting in the area, it is highly unlikely we will have places available to join Sea Scouts for Young People that fall under priorities 3 and 4. Should a Young Person not be allocated a place in our Cub Pack, the parents will be provided with details of other Scout Groups.

Movement Between 1st Corsham Sections

Young people will move between sections on three occasions during the year. Their first meeting with the section section they are moving up to will be the first to take place after the following dates (transition dates):

- 1st September
- 1st January
- On return after the Easter school holidays

The Section Leader of the Losing Section will determine the date of move between sections, contact the parents of affected young people and provide them with details of the Gaining Section. They will also provide member details to the Gaining Section Leader.

A young person will move:

- From Beavers to Cubs: at the first transition date following their 8th birthday
- From Cubs to Scouts: at the first transition date following them reaching 10yrs and 6 months.

A young person will leave Sea Scouts at the first transition date after their 14th birthday.

Exceptionally, where the younger Section Leader believes a young person would achieve an unusually high degree of benefit from moving to an older section earlier or later than would be normal, they will seek permission from the Group Scout Leader, who will consider all the relevant facts and make a decision. The wider impact of such a decision on the Group as a whole will be paramount.

Exceptions

The Group is entirely reliant upon the support, hard work and commitment of a dedicated band of volunteers to provide scouting opportunities for young people. With this in mind, the Group may be prepared to give additional priority to membership for a young person, where a parent or other suitable adult is prepared to assist with the running of the Group and make a significant commitment in doing so.

The minimum commitment expected to qualify for this exception would be to act as a Section Assistant, Assistant Section Leader or Charity Trustee and to guarantee to do so reliably and in a committed way for a minimum period of at least two years. The role could be to help in any part of the Group and need not necessarily be within the same section as their child. This would only be possible where a suitable vacancy was available. Any adults applying for such a role would be subject to the normal Scout appointments process, including relevant disclosure (DBS) checks. Any adult interested in exploring such opportunities should contact the Group Scout Leader in the first instance.

The Group is not able to make an exception purely on the basis of existing Beavers, Cubs or Scouts outside of our partnering arrangements who move into the local area, as this would deprive another child of a place within the Group. This is unfortunate, but unavoidable. On request, we can supply details of other local groups, who may be able to assist.

The Group is not able to make an exception purely on the basis of sibling(s) who are already members of the Group. Parents are advised to add the details of all interested children to the waiting list at the first available opportunity.

The Group is not able to make an exception purely on the basis of particular friendship groups or attendance at a particular school. This would not provide sufficient control over membership numbers and runs counter to the principles of fairness at the heart of this policy.

Key contacts

A request to add a child's details to the Group's waiting can be made by completing the relevant form on the Group's website here: <http://corshamscouts.org.uk/public/join/joining-enquiry/>

If you wish to discuss supporting the Group as a volunteer, please contact the Group Scout Leader, Steve Ball, in the first instance, by emailing steve.ball@corshamscouts.org.uk