

Parent/Carer Conversation Framework

Ready to Scout Conversation



This framework is designed to support conversations with parents or carers where an existing youth member is having difficulties engaging or participating in Scout activities.

Planning the Conversation

Plan an appropriate place for the conversation take place. This should be a neutral and comfortable space, where you will be able to talk without being interrupted. The conversation should involve the Section Leader and another leader in the Group; the parent or carer; and if appropriate, the youth member themselves.

The Group Leader (and District Commissioner or equivalent) should be provided a copy of the completed Ready to Scout Plan for their awareness and should be the contact if additional support is required.

Tips for the Conversation

- Before having a 'Ready to Scout' conversation, consider whether any other strategies (e.g reference to the Unit Code) are appropriate.
- Remember the conversation should be a collaborative process, all parties should contribute to the discussion.
- Any outcomes should be reasonable and agreed by all parties.
- Prior to the conversation, the leader should have prepared a short list of identified behavioural concerns and specific examples.
- A review timeframe should be agreed to provide opportunity for review and amendment.
- All child safety processes should be followed. The outcomes of this conversation are not a substitute for child safe reporting.

Starting the Conversation

Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the conversation – so that agreement can be reached about the best way to support the youth member to enable them to engage in the Scouting Program.



The Conversation

To help ensure all view viewpoints are heard and a constructive outcome is reached, the following structure is recommended for the conversation – Start by acknowledging what is working well, then discuss the current challenges and finally agree on targeted positive outcomes for the future.

You can also reassure the parent or carer that any information you record will be used for Scouting purposes only and will be kept confidentially.

What's working well?

This is important to start the conversation on a positive tone and encourage the youth member to identify what they like about Scouts.

- Example questions: *What do you like to do at Scouts each week?, What is your favourite Scout activity?, Who are your friends in the Unit?, What Achievement Pathways are you currently working on?*

Current Challenges

The next step of the conversation is to introduce the idea that there are some challenges which are impacting the youth member's ability to engage in the Scouting Program.

Opening statement: introduce the idea that there are concerns.

- Example statements: *Recently we have noticed [name] withdrawn from the Scouting Program, [name] appears to be not their usual self recently.. Has there been any changes recently we should possibly be aware of?*

Invite the parent/carer or youth member what they think might be the challenge?

- Example questions: *Do you know why [name] behaviour at Scouts might have been different lately? How do you think [name] is going at Scouts? Is there anything you want to discuss?*

Share your observations and some specific examples of behaviour concerns (note – it is helpful to have these prepared in advance)

- Example: *[name] regularly sits by themselves and does not engage in any Program activity. During the woggle making activity last week, they sat under the table and threw beads at other youth members.*

Describe any strategies that have already been trialled to address the behaviour (unsuccessfully)

- Example: We have recently trialled a buddy system – identifying another youth member to be [name's] buddy each week, we have also trialled putting [name] in a smaller patrol and running patrol rotation activities to reduce the additional noise and amount of people doing an activity at any time.

Moving forward at Scouts

The final step of the conversation is to mutually agree on some positive resolutions to help the youth member to re-engage in the Scouting Program.

Strategies must be tailored for individual circumstances and should result in positive outcomes wherever possible.

- Example strategies: trial a buddy system so that the youth member has more people that they feel comfortable to ask questions of or for assistance, trial switching up the patrols to rotate the different personalities of all the youth within the Unit, trial reduced time at Scouts with youth member to leave 30 minutes before the end of the Program,.

Note: If a youth member requires regular one-to-one supervision at all times in Scouting, the Unit is not obliged to provide this. The parent, carer or a professional carer may need to attend to support the young person. At all times in Scouting, all adults follow their Branches' Child Safety Standards.

Complete the Ready to Scout Plan together. Explain that the purpose of the documented plan is to capture the agreed outcomes of the conversation to move forward at Scouts.

Closing the Conversation

Thank the parent / carer and youth member for their time and reassure them the strategies agreed in the conversation and documented will be trialled over the coming weeks. It is important to agree on a timeframe for strategy implementation and capture that in the plan.

Next steps – Ask the parent/carer if they would like to attend the next couple of Scouting activities to help their youth member re-engage in the Program. If not, begin to implement the agreed strategies as soon as practically possible.

Review - Agree when you will discuss how things are going (e.g., monthly), and document this in the plan. Be honest and open with the parent or carer. It may be appropriate to explain here, that if a mutual agreement to move forward to help the youth member re-engage in Scouting within the Group cannot be reached, the District Commissioner (or equivalent) will be notified and can offer support to find a mutually agreeable solution.

After the Conversation

The completed Ready to Scout template should be shared with leaders within the Unit, the Group Leader and the youth member's family. A copy should also be shared with the District Commissioner (or equivalent) for awareness.

Stay in touch with the parent / carer and youth member regularly to check-in on how things are going and discuss or revise any support strategies.

Further Support

Remember you're not alone and you are not expected to be an expert. Your Branch Diversity and Inclusion lead is there to support you, and sometimes just getting a different perspective on a situation can be really valuable. Information and guidance is available via <https://scouts.com.au/members/key-resources/>

For any further support, please contact your Branch D&I team.

To provide feedback about this resource, please email d&i@scouts.com.au