



Providing a warm welcome

Joining a new scout group for the first time is a very exciting but sometimes also a very daunting experience, both for young people and new adult volunteers. Everything is new, a new environment, new young people, new leaders but also new rituals, traditions and customs. No wonder this can sometimes be a bit of an intimidating environment!

Research shows that 30% of new members quit within the first six weeks, not because they do not enjoy the activities, but because they feel they do not fit in. Creating a culture of a warm and welcoming environment is key to engage and retain new members. Luckily with this checklist you are already halfway there. Don't forget to connect with other local groups to find out what they do as well.

For everyone, young people and adults:

Information

- Create a checklist of all the important things you want to talk to a new youth member or volunteer about. This will need to be adapted to each group and should be reviewed regularly. You can use this checklist to start your thinking!
- Establish a welcome point that provides all info and details for new people. This could be a web page, or a notice board in a group headquarter.

Support

- Ask existing members to be buddies for new members, ask them to think about:
 - What was their own introduction to Scouting like?
 - What did they learn from others in their first year?
 - What knowledge and information they can share?
 - Who is going to be the right buddy for which new members?
 - Being welcoming and friendly
 - Encouraging new members to be curious and ask questions
- Make sure new members can get their uniform and scarves as soon as possible.
- Identify a welcome-volunteer in each age section serving as a point-of-contact, responsible to proactively connect with parents, newcomers, etc to capture questions

Inclusion

- Run welcome events for young people or adults where you can share information with them, and they can ask any questions in a safe space.
- Make sure everyone is involved in the games and activities during the meeting or the weekend. If they are not, check in with them and try to understand what prevents them from engaging.
- Plan dates to check in with new members regularly to see how they feel and get feedback from them. We suggest at least after the 1st week, 1st month, and 3 months.
- Encourage new adult leaders or young people you feel are comfortable in Scouting activities, to pick up a special responsibility in the patrol or unit such as taking the lead in a special assigned activity or one of the roles for the patrol members (first-aid support, logistics support etc).

For new adult volunteers:

- Find out what new volunteers want to get out of their volunteering in Scouting experience and support them to achieve their personal goals
- Understand how much time new volunteers have to give, and respect this commitment, do not exceed the agreed time
- Speak to the new volunteer regularly and make sure their involvement fits their expectations and your agreement.



- Work on a personal development plan with the new volunteer (individually) including the different supports that can be offered (training, mentorship, skill sharing, one on one meetings).

For young people:

Activities

- Design diverse activities with different aims to address different needs of young people (stations with different types of activities: handcrafts, physical, music, brain teasers, cooking, how to use swiss knife, astronomy...)
- Play some inclusive ice-breaker games. Even when most of the young people already know each other. You can make them progressively more informative. Focus on allowing the young people to discover what they have in common.
- Adapt the programme to suit the group and to allow the newcomers to feel included

The Scout Method

- Give new members a big event to look forward to (camp, trip, jamboree...)
- Induct the newcomer to the personal progression method and encourage the young person to start building on their personal progression through a project or Scouting activities
- Empower the patrol lead of the newcomer to check-in with him from time to time and make sure the newcomer feels included and safe. The patrol lead should be encouraged to seek the support of the leader at any time in his task.

Local Group level

- Check in with the new member regularly to make sure they are enjoying their time, and the other young people in the group are also being friendly and welcoming.
- Connect with the parents of the newcomers to have feedback 1-2 weeks and again 1 or 2 months after they joined.
- Organise an event with other local group to connect young people and allow them to see and experience the bigger family of Scouting

