



Leader Support Guide

THE SUSPENSION STANDING DOWN EXCLUSION OF LEADERS.

As you are aware, there are times when for various reasons we need to ask Leaders in Scouting not to participate in the delivery of the program. In the most part this has been facilitated through the process known as “suspension”. To provide more flexibility in the current process we now offer three alternatives:

- Suspension
- Stand down
- Exclusion

The situations when these may be used follows.

SUSPENSION of a leader:

This remains the prerogative of the Chief Commissioner, or his delegate. Suspensions always have a set time limit and are usually applied in conjunction with serious allegations.

STANDING DOWN of a leader:

This is the prerogative of both the Chief Commissioner AND Regional Commissioners.

It can cover a wide range of reasons and situations.

The maximum time frame for which a standing down can be applied is **two (2) months**.

EXCLUSION of a leader:

The ability to exclude someone from an event or activity is open to all Leaders when they have a reasonable fear that youth members, themselves or others, are at risk, but is only used in exceptional circumstances.

Therefore, the most senior Leader at an activity or event (other than the leader in question), on those **rare occasions**, where they have a **reasonable fear** that youth members, or others are at **imminent risk** by the actions & presence of a leader, can **exclude that leader** from **that particular activity, event or meeting** for the safety of all. Note, in doing so, there are two additional requirements:

- i. Where other Leaders are present this should be done in consultation with them, and
- ii. Such an action must be reported to the Regional Commissioner (or Chief Commissioner where it is a State run activity or event) within 48 hours of the event.

Examples for each are outlined on the next page

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SUSPENSION of a leader:

This is the prerogative of the Chief Commissioner or his/her specifically delegated representative.

It is reserved for use where there are those rare ALLEGATIONS of a serious nature have been made against a leader. In most cases this is a matter that has either gone directly to the authorities or one is likely to go to the authorities.

The fact that a member is suspended does NOT in any way infer that the Association has made any determination in relation to the allegations. The purpose of the suspension is administrative and serves to protect both that leader and any alleged complainant/witness during the investigatory process. It is in keeping with the action normally required by the authorities.

At the time of the suspension the leader is advised of the nature of the allegation. If this is a matter that is in the hands of the authorities there is usually little we can tell the leader as this type of information can only be given to the person concerned or his legal advisor. In all cases we pass on the contact of those dealing with it as soon as we know them

The suspension is on a strictly need to know basis and the reason even more strictly controlled.

In most cases where someone is being investigated by the authorities the person subject of an accusation will have received, or will later receive, legal advice to **make no statement or comment to anyone**. Most don't appreciate that this means ANYONE at all, including friends and Scouting associates, or that anyone they do speak to could be required by the prosecution, to give evidence and be cross-examined in a criminal hearing as to what the accused said to him or her.

It is very common that the accused will not appreciate that this legal advice is given to protect them. While they may want to explain themselves to scouting associates, they may not appreciate that this could be seen by a Court as an attempt to affect what a witness may say. They often claim Scouts has abandoned them - but it is in their interest for us not to investigate or hear their story until advised by the State Office that it is appropriate to do so.

They should be encouraged to seek the support of family and friends and a lawyer if they haven't already done so. Any referral should be to their medical practitioner, religious advisor or Community Health Centre or some other accredited agency for support. They are always provided with the name and phone number of the State Commissioner for Members Support to assist in getting help.

STANDING DOWN of a leader:

This is the prerogative of the Chief Commissioner or Regional Commissioner or their specifically delegated representative.

This would be used where there had been allegations of ongoing breaches of the Association Policies and Procedures or Code of Conduct, none of which had been resolved at section or group level. It would not be used where the matter was being referred to the authorities or police. (With the exception of those times when a suspension from the Chief Commissioner was anticipated.)

One off, or occasional breaches of the code of conduct would normally be dealt with at section or group level.

EXCLUSION of a leader:

This is the prerogative of the leader in charge or most senior leader at a meeting / activity / function (unless the person under question is that person, when the second in charge or seniority has the responsibility) in consultation with any other leaders present/involved.

The need may arise with older leaders suffering chest pains; someone reacting badly to a change in medication; an unusual behavioural change due to stress, or being overtired etc. It is only when they refuse to take a break you might need to resort to the exclusion because all else has failed.

At a recent Jamboree many Leaders and senior leaders were sent back to their tents because of exhaustion and tiredness making them irritable and/or resulting in them having difficulty in making decisions. Often they don't realise their own state. The Camp Chief even had to send a Commissioner (who was responsible for overseeing other people going back for well needed rests), back to his tent for a 'rest'.

In most cases exclusion wouldn't be necessary (if the problem can be simply dealt with by requiring the leader to go back to the tent and have a lie down, or "I really think you should go home"). It is only if they persisted in inappropriate conduct or language that this ultimate action be needed.