

16th September 2009

Circulation:

Group Leaders
County Commissioners
Provincial Commissioners
Training Commissioner
Provincial Training Coordinators
County Training Coordinators
Campsite Support Staff
Campsite Managers
Provincial Support Staff

Dear Colleague,

Campfire singing is a long held and much valued tradition in Scouting. It symbolises and cements the ties of friendship and comradeship amongst Scouts and Scouters alike. This is a tradition we are proud of and aim to nourish.

It is with much regret and concern that we now write to you regarding reports that songs with inappropriate content (sexual innuendo, racial disparagement) and /or inappropriate simulated actions have been sung at scout events.

This behaviour is totally at odds with the values and ethos of Scouting and with our aims for the development of our youth members. We must be vigilant against the possibility of it taking root in our Association.

We would ask Group Leaders to raise this issue with their programme Scouters and advise them to be alert to the behaviour, to monitor situations so as to prevent its occurrence, and to take immediate and decisive action to stop any incidents that may occur.

Monitoring this behaviour should involve engaging older youth members in a conversation about the inappropriateness of singing such material, whether within their own age group or in the company of younger children who may not understand the innuendo but will nevertheless pick up inappropriate words/actions and reproduce them.

We would ask our trainers to include additional guidance in their training of Scouters around the proper conduct of campfire activities.

We would also ask all our Campsite staff to monitor, prevent, and take action if necessary to stop any incidents they become aware of. Any incident of this behaviour should be reported directly to us.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all the hard work that our Scouters do, and know that they will continue to do, for our youth members.

Yours in Scouting,

John Brennan
Chief Commissioner
(Adult Resources)
Chairperson: Child Protection Management Team

Kiernan Gildea
Chief Commissioner
(Youth Programme)