

Overview

Special needs can range from special dietary requirements, to allergies, to physical and mental disabilities and to some of the more challenging behavioural areas such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ADHD and Autism. As an organisation Scouting Ireland promotes integration and is open to all.

Relevance to you

As a Group Leader you should encourage the Programme Scouters to educate themselves as much as possible in dealing with the specific needs of the young people in their programme Sections. It would be impossible to train all Scouters in each of the areas of Special Needs they may encounter so below are some pointers on how you might provide support and assistance to them.

The very best advice we can offer is to encourage the Scouters to talk to the parents and ask them to make full disclosures on a activities consent forms regarding any conditions which may apply to their children. Tell them to inform the parents this will be discussed only with those who need to know and will be treated with the best interest of the child in mind at all times.

Once the parent has made you aware of a special need ask them if they would be willing to speak to the relevant Scouters to ensure they all have a full understanding of what is involved and how to deal with any issues which may arise. It has been found that most parents are willing to do this and can provide invaluable information and insight.

Scouters should remember a few very important things when dealing with any child with a special need

- First and foremost remember that the child should be paramount in everything we do
- Keep details of the condition confidential - only share relevant information with those who need to know
- Do not exclude the child - if you are doing an activity they cannot take part in give them a job; they could keep score or take photographs or you could ask them if there is something they could do to be involved. Do not avoid activities because they cannot do them as others may resent this. Keep a balance.
- Do not be afraid to discuss the condition with the young person if they bring it up - they can offer insight into what they can and can't do better than anyone else.
- Be careful of 'labels'. This can cause us to make assumptions regarding conditions. When we think of someone being dyslexic we generally assume they have

problems with writing and spelling, this is not always the case, there are various different types of dyslexia and they all have different effects, some of which are physical.

Scouting Ireland's programme is based around a Personal Journey and we should always bear this in mind when dealing with any member of the association who has a special need.

We have attached a link to Scouting Ireland's 'Supporting Special Needs' booklet which outlines some of the conditions your Scouters might encounter and offers advice on how to deal or cope with some of these conditions. You could also visit the various websites that offer information on individual Special Needs, however please remember that the best source of information on a young person's specific needs are the parents or if appropriate the young person themselves.

Useful Documents and Publications

www.scouts.ie -> Resources -> Adult Resources -> Supporting Special Needs
Please use this book as a reference and not a bible.

Where to get help

The County Commissioner should be your first point of contact for any support you might need. The Group Support Facilitator and the Provincial Support Officer may also be called upon for assistance.

Other Group Leaders in your Scout County and other Scouters in your Scout Group may have knowledge and/or experience you could draw on if required.

You can contact Scouting Ireland's National Office on 01 495 6300 if you require any advice during normal office hours. You can also use the same number on Monday night's between 7pm and 9pm to contact a member of the National Adult Resources Committee.

Overview

The aim of Scouting Ireland is to encourage the Social, Physical, Intellectual, Character, Emotional, Social and Spiritual development of young people so that they may achieve their full potential and, as responsible citizens, to improve society. We refer to this as the SPICES, from the first letter of each of the areas of development, in the youth programme (ONE Programme).

One of the roles of every adult in Scouting is to aid the spiritual development of young people and to offer them the chance to begin the search of themselves through the building of a personal values system, beliefs and deep convictions. The aim is to bring them closer and closer to their own truth. However, spiritual development is a personal process. Scouters can only guide and support young people in their own development. Our role is not to pass on a philosophy, religion or belief, but to allow each person to live, express and share the truth that they have chosen.

A Scouts' Own is an important aspect of our Scouting life. It allows and supports spiritual expression by adults and young people of diverse or no particular religious backgrounds.

Relevance to you

Useful things you can do to promote an awareness of the Spiritual dimension of Scouting might include:

- Creating a culture in the Scout Group where peoples' views are respected and valued.
- Using thought provoking readings, poems, quotes, and passages in an appropriate way at Scout Group meetings and events.
- Encouraging reflection on special occasions and at special times.
- Enabling young people and adults to meet the requirements of their religion while on Scout activities.

You don't need to take on the role of a parent, psychologist, religious or secular counsellor. Your objective is to promote an appropriate environment and to enable and encourage reflection and sharing so that adults and young people feel supported and valued.

Useful documents and publications

www.scouts.ie -> ONE Programme -> Embracing Spirituality

SID 52.07 - Scouting Ireland - Spiritual and Religious Policy

SID 22.04 - Supporting the Spiritual / Religious Development of Members

Where to get help

There is an established structure in Scouting Ireland to support the spiritual development of our members; it is set out in the documents listed above.

The County Commissioner should be your first point of contact for any support which you might need, the Group Support Facilitator and the Provincial Support Officer may also be called upon for assistance.

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