



34th Chesterfield (Brimington) Scout Group

Subs and Payments

Purpose

This policy sets out how subscriptions ("subs"), activity / event payments and financial support are managed by 34th Chesterfield (Brimington) Scout Group. Its purpose is to ensure that payments are handled consistently, transparently and fairly, while making sure that financial circumstances do not prevent young people from participating in Scouting.

Group Subs

All young people aged 4-14 registered with the Group are required to pay Group subs. These are currently set at £120 per year split into six half-termly payments of £20.

Subs contribute towards the costs of running the Group, including:

- Rent
- Capitation
- Programme materials and activities
- Equipment and maintenance
- Insurance and administration
- Training and support for volunteers
- Other reasonable costs associated with providing Scouting.

The level of subs will be reviewed periodically by the Group Trustee Board and communicated to parents/carers before any change takes effect. Parents/carers will be given at least one half-term's notice of any changes to subs.

A young person's subs will cover:

- All activities which take place on a Friday evening during term time
- The first necker issued when a youngster is invested into the Scout Group
- All Scouts UK badges

Subs do not cover:

- Uniform or activity wear (other than the first necker)
- Replacement badges or neckers
- Activities which do not take place on a Friday evening during term time
- Visits, Nights Away, Camps or Sleepovers

Activities, Camps and Events

Some activities, camps and events may require an additional payment because their costs are not covered by ordinary subs.

The Group aims to make the cost of Nights Away events, trips and additional activities as affordable as possible for our members. Charges are set with the intention of covering the costs incurred by the Group in providing the activity, including accommodation, transport, activities, food and other associated expenses.

The Group does not seek to make a profit from any Scouting activity.

Where possible, the Group uses fundraising income and other available funds to help keep the cost to members as low as reasonably practicable, while ensuring that the Group remains financially sustainable.

Parents/carers will be given reasonable notice of all costs and payment deadlines – including dates at which any payments become non-refundable.

Where financial assistance is required, parents/carers should contact a member of the Lead Volunteer Team as early as possible.

Gift Aid

Where eligible, the Group may claim Gift Aid on qualifying payments or donations where the appropriate declaration has been completed. Any Gift Aid received will be used to support the Group and its activities.

All eligible parents / carers are encouraged to sign up for Gift Aid via OSM to allow us to claim on their Subs payments. Declarations are sent when young people join the Group, with follow-up emails sent termly unless parents/carers have declined. Reminders allowing parents to change their Gift Aid status if necessary are sent termly.

The Group will only make Gift Aid claims where it has the appropriate declaration and is satisfied that the claim is permitted under the applicable rules.

Fundraising

The Group aims to keep subscription fees as affordable as possible for families while continuing to provide a varied, high-quality programme of activities and experiences.

An important part of achieving this is through fundraising. Funds raised help to support the ongoing running of the Group, purchase and maintain equipment, subsidise activities and camps, and enable us to keep Group subs and other costs as low as reasonably possible.

We ask all members and families to support the Group's fundraising efforts wherever they are reasonably able to do so.

More information about Fundraising can be found in a separate Fundraising Policy.

Payment Arrangements

Subs are normally payable half-termly and should be paid on or before the second Friday of each half term. Subs deadlines for each academic year are set in September.

Subs and other activity payments are normally paid through OSM. Parents / carers experiencing difficulty making a payment through OSM should contact a member of the Lead Volunteer Team.

Parents/carers will be provided with clear information about:

- the amount due;
- the payment frequency;
- the payment deadline;
- accepted payment methods; and
- who to contact with questions or difficulties.

Joining and Leaving the Group

New members will be advised of the applicable subs before joining the Group.

A new starter's first payment deadline will be different from the normal half-termly schedule. A new starter will be added to the Subs Schedule after their second meeting, with the first subs payment due before they attend their third meeting.

If a young person leaves the Group, any outstanding amount should normally be settled before their membership ends.

We would not usually issue refunds where youngsters leave partway through a half term.

Late or Missed Payments

The Group understands that payments can occasionally be late or missed. Where payments are missed or overdue, the Group will observe the following process:

- **1 week overdue:** the Section Team Leader will speak to the parent / carer to give a friendly reminder.
- **2 weeks overdue:** the Treasurer or another Lead Volunteer will send an email reminder to the parent / carer
- **4 weeks overdue,** the Treasurer or Group Lead Volunteer will contact the parent/carer to discuss the situation and agree an appropriate way forward.
- **Persistent non-payment,** where no arrangement has been agreed, may ultimately be referred to the Group Trustee Board for consideration.

Where a parent/carer has contacted the Group about financial difficulty, the Group will seek to agree an appropriate support arrangement before progressing the normal late-payment process.

Where there are persistent or recurrent non-payment issues and parents / carers are not working with the Group, we reserve the right to ask a child to leave the Scout Group.

A young person should not be excluded from Scouting simply because their parent/carer is temporarily unable to pay. Financial difficulties should be dealt with sensitively and confidentially and in line with our financial assistance agreements outlined below.

Financial Assistance and Concessions

The Group recognises that some families may experience financial hardship which may be temporary or longer term.

Parents/carers who are experiencing difficulty paying subs or other Group costs are encouraged to speak confidentially with a member of the Lead Volunteer Team:

- Rachael Brown (Group Lead Volunteer)
- Carl Bagshaw (Deputy Group Lead Volunteer)
- Antonia Kelly (Group Treasurer)
- Sarah Bagshaw (Group Chair)

The Group may, depending on circumstances and available funds:

- offer a deferred payment deadline
- agree a payment plan
- provide financial assistance towards subs or other payments
- assist with the cost of activities, camps or equipment
- apply for hardship funds offered by District, County or similar
- consider other reasonable arrangements.

No family should feel embarrassed or uncomfortable about asking for help as requests will be treated sensitively and wherever possible, confidentially.

Support can only be offered if agreed and approved by the Trustee Board in advance – when seeking approval from Trustees, confidentiality is maintained and the name of the member requiring support is not disclosed.

Refunds and Cancellations

All refunds must be discussed with a member of the Lead Volunteer Team and approved by the Trustee Board before they can be issued.

Refunds will not usually be offered on Subs payments other than in exceptional circumstances.

Refunds for activities will be issued where an activity or event is cancelled by the Group.

For cancellations by a participant, the amount refundable will depend on whether the Group has already incurred costs that cannot be recovered.

Where an activity or event has a non-refundable payment deadline, this will be clearly communicated to parents/carers in advance.

The Group will always aim to provide fair and reasonable refunds while protecting the Group from financial loss.

The Trustee Board may make the final decision on any exceptional circumstances leading to refund requests.

Cash Payments

The Group does not accept cash payments for Subs, Camps, Activities or Trips. The preferred method of payment is through OSM. In exceptional circumstances, and with agreement from the Group Treasurer, payment by bank transfer may be offered.

Cash may be accepted for some fundraising activities or events. Where cash is accepted:

- it must be recorded promptly;
- a receipt should be provided where appropriate;
- cash should be stored securely; and
- cash should be passed to the Treasurer or another authorised person as soon as reasonably possible.

Volunteers must not keep Group money mixed with their personal funds.

Payment Records and Data

The Group will maintain appropriate records of payments received and amounts outstanding.

Financial information will only be accessible to volunteers who need it for legitimate Group purposes.

Information about a family's financial circumstances or requests for assistance will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Volunteer Payments & Expenses

The Group recognises the valuable contribution made by all volunteers, including Young Leaders, and aims to ensure that volunteers are not personally disadvantaged financially as a result of supporting the Group.

Please see the separate policy for details of volunteer payment and expense arrangements.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- paying subs and other agreed costs by the relevant deadline;

- keeping their payment details up to date; and
- contacting the Group if they anticipate difficulty making a payment.

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- maintaining accurate financial records;
- monitoring payments and outstanding balances;
- reporting relevant financial information to the Trustee Board; and
- ensuring payments are handled in accordance with Group financial procedures.

The Lead Volunteer Team is responsible for:

- setting budgets and payment deadlines
- contacting parents / carers to discuss and follow up non-payments
- discussing financial support with parents / carers & seeking approval from trustee board where required
- handling information about a member's financial details confidentially
- approving volunteer expenses

The Group Trustee Board is responsible for:

- setting and reviewing the level of subs;
- approving significant changes to payment arrangements;
- overseeing financial assistance arrangements; and
- ensuring the Group's financial practices are appropriate and sustainable.

No Disadvantage Due to Financial Circumstances

The Group is committed to making Scouting accessible to all young people.

Financial circumstances will be handled with dignity and discretion. Where a family is experiencing genuine difficulty, the Group will seek a supportive solution wherever reasonably possible before considering any action relating to outstanding payments.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner if there are significant changes to the Group's financial arrangements or relevant guidance.

Any amendments must be approved by the Group Trustee Board.