



**Scout Association of Australia  
WA Branch**

**Electronic Communications  
Procedure**

**Version: 1**

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## **1. PURPOSE**

Scouts WA is a youth development organisation which has been involved with the development of young people for over 100 years. The success of this organisation is in no small part due to the ability of leaders to interact and communicate with young people in a contemporary setting. While communication methods such as a telephone trees previously provided an effective method for leaders to pass on information, Leaders are now expected to communicate electronically. Whilst these new methods are to be encouraged, it needs to be done safely for both Youth and Adult Members. This Procedure covers email, social networking and other electronic communication.

Everything that a Member does with or for Scouts WA must be undertaken in accordance with the Scout Law and Promise; the Aim, Principles and Methods of Scouts Australia. Adult Members are also expected to abide by the Code of Conduct for Adult Members and the Mutual Agreement. Where this Procedure does not provide the appropriate guidance, Adult Members should seek advice from their line leader.

## **2. POSITION**

Adult Members are in a position of authority and responsibility. Adult Members should maintain a suitable relationship with Youth Members at all times. It is the position of the Branch that Adult Members should not be 'friends' (or similar) with Youth Members in Joeys, Cubs, Scouts or Venturers. Contact with Youth Members in the electronic and online environment is restricted to certain acceptable activities, like open forums such as Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI). I.E: in sight, but out of hearing.

Adult Members may become 'friends' with other Adult Members. Adult Members in the category of *Rover* may become 'friends' with Venturer Youth Members on online sites for the purposes of enabling linking between sections. This is permitted because Rovers who are not Leaders are not in a position of authority over Venturers.

## **3. PROCEDURE**

### **Social Networking**

- a. Leaders will not accept or request Youth Members as 'friends' on social networking sites.
- b. Leaders who have existing 'friends' on social networking sites should either restrict the access of Youth Members to their site or 'de-friend' them. This is intended as a transition rule.
- c. Setting up 'Groups' on social network websites, e.g. for a particular Unit or Crew is encouraged as it allows members to communicate publicly without being 'friends' with each other.
- d. Private communication between Leaders and Youth Members on social networking sites should be avoided in the same way that private email communications should be avoided.
- e. Leaders who use social networking sites should be wary of photos that are posted on their site, keeping in mind that it is possible for other friends to take and tag photos of them without their permission.

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- f. There are no restrictions for Youth Members and Rovers who are not Leaders who use social networking sites, other than reminding these members that they have made the Scout Law and Promise and are expected to live by them at all times. Social networking sites are a useful way to help members link between sections. Rovers are reminded that as adults, society expects and enforces certain appropriate conduct in regards to behaviour with people under 18 years.

### Email Communications

- a. All communications to Joeys, Cubs or Scouts must be via the Youth Member's parent or guardian and must be scouting related only.
- b. Emails to individual Venturers have to be carbon copied (cc) to either a parent or guardian or Adult Leader (ideally in their section), but never to the Venturer solely.
- c. Group emails for a Unit, Crew or Section using a system such as Google Groups or Yahoo Groups do not need to be copied to parents as they are effectively public conversations that are visible to all subscribed members.

### Phone Communications

- a. All communications to Joeys, Cubs and Scouts must be via the Youth Member's parent or guardian and must be Scouting related only. Parents or guardians may grant permission for Adult Members to contact Youth Members directly for specific purposes.
- b. Calls or SMS contact can occur directly with Youth Members to confirm location/status as per the documented Activity/Trip Plan for safety checks.
- c. Calls directly to Youth Members are permitted in case of an emergency.
- d. Members are reminded of Scouting's 'Electronic Personal Devices Policy' which applies to the photographic and video recording capabilities of mobile phones.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Group Leaders and District Commissioners are responsible for monitoring appropriate use, as they are responsible for ensuring the appropriate conduct of Adult Leaders. As general communications between Youth and Adult Members is covered by the Code of Conduct, breaches of this electronic communications procedure must be reported by Leaders to an appropriate line leader.

This procedure can be diverted from in specific situations if approval is given in writing by the Deputy Chief Commissioner - Youth Programs.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner - Field Services is responsible for updating this procedure every 3 years, with input from the Deputy Chief Commissioner - Strategic Services, given the use of social networking sites to market Scouting to the community.

## 5. APPROVALS

Number	Document Process	Person Responsible	Date Approved	Signature
1	Draft Preparation	PJ Axford	18/05/2011	<b>PJ AXFORD</b>
2	Review	Clinton Smith	18/05/2011	<b>C. SMITH</b>
3	Approval	CCC	24/05/2011	<b>L. LUCAS</b>

This Procedure has complied with all necessary approvals and is accepted as the *Electronics Communication Procedure* for Scouts WA.

Signature: .....**LARRY LUCAS**..... Date: .....**24/05/2011**.....

*Chief Commissioner*