**1st Bernwood Forest Scout Group: Waiting List Policy March 2023 v3.0**

**Introduction**

Scouting across Chiltern Vale district is very popular and many groups have substantial waiting lists which unfortunately means that we cannot always offer a place to potential members as soon as we would like. To try to be transparent and open, we have defined the criteria of how we select which Young People on our Waiting List are offered a place when one becomes available.

We operate within the Equal Opportunities Policy of the Scout Association, and we are fully open and completely inclusive (boys and girls, race, or ability) to all Young People aged from 6 to 15 subject to spaces being available.

Each section (Beavers; Cubs; and Scouts) are constrained in their capacity 1) by their having sufficient adults to operate safely (called adult to child ratios) and 2) the size of the premises. The maximum number each section can accommodate may change over time depending on the availability of volunteers.

The safety and wellbeing of all Young People is of utmost importance and if a member has special needs then their membership will be dependent on the section being able to provide them with the ongoing support which they need in order to enjoy Scouting fully and to be safe.

**Minimum/Maximum ages**

There is no minimum age at which any Young Person can enter the Waiting List. There is no maximum age for registration up to age 15. From age 15 a Young Person can join the linked Explorer section, called Panthers which covers 1st Brill, 1st Haddenham and 1st Bernwood Forest Scout groups. We do not run that waiting list.

**Coordinated Waiting List & Reviews**

The group operates a **Coordinated Waiting List** where each section list is shared and reviewed across the group. Each section has their own list that forms part of the coordinated list. The coordinated list is managed and maintained centrally on the group’s OSM (Online Scout Manager) system. The lists are reviewed each term, as existing scouting members move on to the next section or leave the group. The review is both at an individual section level, and at the Group Leader meeting that is held every term. The **Coordinated Waiting List** is managed by the Group Secretary, and reviewed with the Group Scout Leader, on a regular basis.

Each Young Person will be considered for the Section appropriate to their age at the time. All potential members, regardless of the criteria to be used for the consideration of a place, must be registered on the group’s Waiting List. No one, not registered on the Waiting List will be considered.

**Application Process**

Applications to be added to the waiting list are received via the relevant Section Leader who adds the application to their own list entry on OSM which is part of the consolidated group coordinated waiting list. In addition, applications can be made directly to the Group Secretary, or via the Group Scout Leader. The Group Secretary will also update the consolidated list on OSM.

Parent contact details (email, postal address, phone number) and child’s name and date of birth information is collected, as well as any special circumstances. The list is in date order, where the date, is the date of application to join the list.

There is a contact section on the 1st Bernwood Forest Scout Group web site that routes requests via e: mail, to the Group Scout Leader and the Group Secretary. Applications can also be made via members of the executive committee, who will pass them on to the Group Secretary.

Applications to join the waiting list can also be made via the Scout Association web site, that route to the District Commissioner, who forwards them on to the Group Secretary.

**Keeping the list up to date & Communications**

Each section leader will check on a regular basis (at least termly), those people that are on the list and update it – for those that are offered places or no longer want a place. These updates are shared onto the consolidated list managed by the Group Secretary.

Every term, the Group Secretary uses the e:mail addresses in the waiting list, to send out the group newsletter, to those on the waiting list, with a reminder that if there are any circumstance changes, or if they no longer want a place, to please let the Group Secretary know. The Group Secretary will update the list accordingly.

**GDPR and its implications**

In accordance with GDPR - General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) which came into force on 25 May 2018 – our waiting list constitutes a GDPR impacted register. As such, by parents/guardians applying for their child/children to be placed onto the waiting list, they are giving permission for their personal data – Name, Childs name, Date of Birth, Postal Address, E:mail address and any special circumstance information, to be stored on the waiting list. The waiting list is stored securely and there is limited access to the list on OSM. At any point, a parent/guardian can request that they can have their details removed from the waiting list, but as they will no longer have their child registered on the waiting list as it is not possible to, without this information, to manage the waiting list and contact parents/guardians when a place becomes available. In effect, not on list equals no place.

**Selection Criteria**

Places are offered according to the following criteria in order of **descending priority**:

1. **Existing Scouting Young People who have moved into the Group’s catchment area** and who have previously been actively involved in Scouting in their previous local community. We will verify membership of a previous scouting group prior to offering a place.
2. **Young People who are already members of 1st Bernwood Forest Scout Group** and are moving up to the next section i.e. Beavers to Cubs; or Cubs to Scouts. We feel it is important that young people, once they have embarked on their Scouting adventure, are able to see through their scouting time at 1st Bernwood and progress through their badges and awards without interruption.
3. Young People whose **parents/guardians are already volunteering as Uniformed Leaders**. No Group can exist without volunteers, and we feel that it is reasonable that someone who is willing to invest time in supporting uniformed Scouting should be able to include their children.
4. Young People whose **parents/guardians are already volunteering as members of the executive committee**. No Group can exist without volunteers, and we feel that it is reasonable that someone who is willing to invest time in supporting Scouting should be able to include their children.
5. **Young People with one or more siblings who are already members of the Group**. Siblings of existing members would undoubtedly feel left out if they were not able to experience the same fun that they see their brother or sister enjoying. We also appreciate the convenience to parents of being able to drop-off and collect at the same time. Parents must still register each child on the Waiting list –there is no automatic prioritisation for unregistered siblings.
6. Young People whose **parents/guardians newly volunteer** to actively help 1st Bernwood Forest Scout Group as **uniformed leaders**. The level of commitment required will be determined at section level and agreed with the Group Scout Leader. The recommended minimum is 2 years commitment up front.
7. Young People whose **parents/guardians newly volunteer** to actively help 1st Bernwood Forest Scout Group as **members of the executive committee**. The level of commitment required will be agreed by the Chair, Group Secretary and Group Scout Leader.
8. **Those who are socially disadvantaged**. Not every Young Person starts life with an equal opportunity and scouting can help redress this by giving those who are currently in care; have been adopted or are from single parent families where no local family support structure exists, a helping hand. This also extends to those Young People who have physical or mental health issues subject to our meeting places being suitable and that adequate continuous adult support is available***.***
9. **Those who’s parents are members of the armed forces**.
10. **Time on waiting list**. It is appropriate that, having got this far down the criteria, a place should be offered to the Young Person who has been waiting longest for a place to become available. A Young Person will not usually be invited to join a section if their age means that they cannot spend at least 9 months with that section as they will not have the opportunity to settle in and progress in earning badges –however they will be given priority to the next section where possible.
11. **Group Scout Leader discretion**. If none of the previous criteria can be used to differentiate between two candidates for a place then it will be at the discretion of the Group Scout Leader as to which person is offered a place. The GSL will consult with the Group Secretary and the relevant Section Leader and come to a mutually agreed decision.

**Offer of a place**

The offer of a place will be made directly to the parent/guardian of the Young Person through the Group Secretary. If a place offered is declined (or not acknowledged within one month), or the Young Person leaves the Group and subsequently asks to return, they will re-join the Waiting List at the bottom of the list.

**Second Opinion**

If it is felt that your application for a place has not been treated fairly by the relevant Section Leader, the matter should be referred to the Group Scout Leader whose decision is final.

***March 2023***