

There's enthusiasm for the launch of Scouts BSA everywhere you look.

You see it on social media, where young people are saying, #ScoutMeIn. You see it on the news as reporters highlight the BSA's commitment to the whole family. And you see it in **all 50 states**, with new Scouts BSA troops for girls forming from coast to coast.

As with anything new, there's bound to be some questions. The BSA has covered almost all of them on **the Family Scouting page** (look for the link marked "FAQ").

But today I thought I'd extract the top 10 questions I've seen from parents and volunteers. Here we go.

## 1. Are all BSA programs now co-ed?

While it's true that all BSA programs now welcome both boys/young men and girls/young women, it's not accurate to call every program co-ed.

Let's review the structure of each program:

- **Cub Scouts (ages 5 to 10):** Dens are either all-boy or all-girl. Packs come in three varieties: only all-boy dens, only all-girl dens, or a mix of all-boy dens and all-girl dens.
- **Scouts BSA (ages 11 to 17):** Troops are either all-boy or all-girl. Linked troops are an option (see question 3, below).
- **Venturing (ages 14 to 20, or 13 and completed eighth grade):** Crews are co-ed.
- **Sea Scouts (ages 14 to 20, or 13 and completed eighth grade):** Ships are co-ed.
- **Exploring (ages 10 to 20):** Clubs and posts are co-ed.

## 2. Why did the BSA decide to welcome girls into Scouts BSA?

Simply put, because girls and their parents asked.

We heard anecdotes of girls wanting to go camping, earn merit badges and become Eagle Scouts like their brothers, dads or grandfathers.

Those stories were then confirmed by national surveys. The BSA asked girls ages 11 to 17 whether they're interested in joining BSA programs. Some 90 percent said yes.

The BSA then asked parents whether they're interested in a program like Boy Scouts for their daughter. Yes, 87 percent said.

Convenience likely plays a big factor in that response from parents. Families are pulled in a million directions these days, so the BSA designed its programs to better fit into busy lives.

## 3. How does a "linked" troop work in Scouts BSA?

Linked troops are two troops — one for boys and one for girls — that share a chartered organization and may share some or all of the troop committee.

The approach preserves the single-gender troop model while making things more convenient for families.

Linked troops could meet in the same location on the same night. The troop for boys might meet in one room, while the troop for girls meets in another.

Linked troops can share troop numbers, too. Councils have the ability to differentiate an all-boy troop from an all-girl troop in their records.

## **4. What is the organization's name?**

The organization is still called the Boy Scouts of America.

The BSA is composed of several programs, including Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA (formerly known as Boy Scouts), Venturing, Sea Scouts, Exploring and STEM Scouts.

## **5. What do we call a youth member of Scouts BSA?**

We'll call them Scouts, just like today. The term "Scouts BSA members" works fine, too.

Some examples:

- "I'm a Scout in Troop 123."
- "This is my last year in Cub Scouts. Next year, I'll be in Scouts BSA."
- "OK, Scouts, it's time to elect your senior patrol leader."
- "The event will be open to Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA members, Venturers and Sea Scouts."

## **6. Are the requirements the same for boys and girls?**

Yes, the requirements in all programs are the same for boys and girls.

The BSA, after consulting with Scout volunteers and education experts, confirmed that its existing programs are relevant for young men *and* young women.

Think about the 12 core elements of Scouting enshrined in the Scout Law. Those are things young men *and* young women should aspire to be: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

As a result, every requirement in Scouting — from Lion to Arrow of Light, Scout to Eagle Scout, the Venturing Award to the Summit Award — is the same for everyone.

## 7. Why not keep Boy Scouting and introduce a separate program for girls?

Different program names might lead someone to believe there are different requirements for each program.

Because all single-gender troops will run the same Scouting program, earn the same merit badges and achieve the same ranks, one program name made the most sense.

## 8. Why have two separate versions of the *Scouts BSA Handbook*?

The volunteer-led board of directors wanted to ensure Scouts can see themselves represented accurately in the pages, and having two handbooks was the most effective way to do that.

The photos reflect the troop of which the Scout is a member. In other words, boys will see images of other boys in the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys*; girls will see images of other girls in the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*.

When comparing the two, you'll see the content, requirements and page numbers are exactly the same. All that's different is the photos.

For more, read [this post](#) from last month (scroll to the handbook section).

## 9. Are there two separate versions of the Scouts BSA uniform?

When you go to your favorite department store to buy a T-shirt or jeans, you find separate fits, styles and sizes for men/boys and women/girls.

The Scouts BSA uniform is no different.

While the fit and styling may be different, the uniforms will remain fundamentally the same.

The Scouts BSA shirt is tan and features a BSA fleur-de-lis emblem and the letters "BSA" in red over the right pocket. It's available in sizes for girls and women now and will be available for boys and men once the existing inventory of tan shirts, with "BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA" in red over the right pocket, is sold out.

Both are approved for wear in perpetuity.

## 10. What are the Scouts BSA adult leadership requirements?

Effective, Oct. 1, 2018, two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. This is a change from the previous policy where one leader could be 21 years of age or older with a second leader who could be 18 years of age or older.

**For Scouts BSA troops for girls**, these are the leadership rules:

- Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings.
- Volunteers may be all female or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over and at least one must be female.
- There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit that is serving females.
- A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

**For Scouts BSA troops for boys**, these are the leadership rules:

- Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings.
- Volunteers may be all male, all female, or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over.
- Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.