

**Scouting Ireland  
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**Ref: L20-2019 – Group Leader Support - Tusla Letter**

27<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Dear Groups Leader,

Following on from the Board update regarding the Tusla Letter issued this evening we are writing to all Groups Leaders and groups contacts to assist you with potential queries that may arise as result of today's events.

Scouting Ireland fully understands our obligations to meet the expectations of our Minister, Minister Zappone.

- Over the past 18 months we have put in place an extensive safeguarding programme
- We have fully co-operated with Tusla and the Gardai and have informed them of all we are doing to make sure that Scouting Ireland is safer than it has ever been for our children and volunteers.
- Working with the Minister and her department Scouting Ireland has succeeded in having funding restored and subsequently a commitment to an increase
- We have sought an urgent meeting with the Chair Tusla to understand better their concerns to better enable us to act on them
- Our continuing challenge is to create the best and safest environment for scouting and to build confidence among our key stakeholders including Tusla and Minister Zappone

Please see below support that will assist in dealing with concerned parents.

Regards,

Scouting Ireland,

Reg. No. 397094  
Charity No. CHY3507

**PATRON Michael D. Higgins PRESIDENT OF IRELAND**



Member of World Organisation of the Scout Movement

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# Support in dealing with concerned parents

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Minister Zappone in a statement issued this evening has urged parents to seek assurances that no over-night trips take place without adequate numbers of trained supervisors.

The Minister's Statement, together with details of the Tusla letter which entered the public domain today means you may be approached by concerned parents.

It is important that all parents are given correct and consistent information and we recommend that you use the following in any response you give.

Please acknowledge the concern of the parent, while reassuring them.

## *Recommended Response:*

- I understand your concerns, and your need to be assured that <name of child> is safe when they are with us.
- I want to assure you that we take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. We have Ian Elliott who is one of Ireland's foremost experts in this area working with Scouting Ireland.
- All scout leaders are Garda vetted and receive safeguarding training. We have to renew our Garda Vetting and undertake mandatory refresher safeguarding training every 3 years.
- Camping and adventures in the outdoors are fundamental to Scouting and give children the opportunity to develop skills and appreciate the natural world and our environment.
- We have detailed policies and guidelines in place for all our activities including our overnight camps. For example there must be a minimum of 3 adults for trips with 4 - 16 Beavers or Cub Scouts. The number of adults attending increases as the number of Beavers and Cubs increases. So there must be 1 additional adult for every additional 4 Beaver Scouts on any overnight camp or 1 additional adult for every additional 6 cub scouts. We increase the number of adults for trips abroad.  
*(Note: See below for ratios if asked about Scouts or Venture Scouts).*
- The welfare of each Scout is paramount for Scout leaders - whether attending activities in the Den, on day trips or on overnight trips at home and abroad. Special attention is given on camping trips to sleep, food, hygiene, injuries, sickness, happiness and safety.
- You can look at our policies on [scouts.ie](http://scouts.ie).
- *If appropriate: As a parent myself, I fully understand your concerns. I have my own children in Scouts and want to know they are safe.*
- We have made great strides in the last 18 months in strengthening our safeguarding, under the guidance of Ian Elliott and we are also in the process of recruiting a new safeguarding manager for the safeguarding team. Safeguarding is front and centre of everything we do now in Scouting Ireland.
- I hope you are reassured by this, but if you have any other questions or concerns please do come talk to me.

**Ends.**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Youth Members</b>	<b>Scouters (Adults)</b>
Beaver Scouts	4 – 16	3
	Each additional 4	1
Cub Scouts (island of Ireland)	4 – 16	3
	Each additional 8	1
Cub Scouts ABROAD (British Isles & Main Land Europe)	4 – 16	3
	Each additional 6	1
Scouts (island of Ireland except 3.4 above)	4 – 16	2
	Each additional 8	1
Scouts ABROAD	4 – 16	3
	Each additional 8	1
Venture Scouts (except 4.2 above)	4 – 16	2
	Each Additional 16	1