



It starts with Scouts.

Tout commence
avec les Scouts.

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April 2012

Beaver Scout Membership Age

BACKGROUND

While BP&P indicates that Beavers is an age appropriate program for children between the ages of 5-7, we know that in many Groups in Canada children are being registered early, in many cases lining up with local school registration policies, i.e. must be 5 by a certain date.

With schools now offering Junior Kindergarten, youth are going to school at an earlier age hence causing confusion as to whether or not they can register as Beaver Scouts. Add to this the reoccurring reality that parents bring their younger children with them so as to be able to be a Leader in a Beaver Scout section.

Scouting has always used common sense in this area, allowing for youth who were to turn the section age before December 31 of that year, to join the section early (i.e. Cub Scout turning 11 in Oct/Nov/Dec could register as a Scout in the fall). Commissioners were to ensure that the best interest of the child remained the driver behind any and all such decisions. In regards to first time Beaver Scout registration, this practice was also in keeping with many school systems across the country, which allow for class registration if the youth was to turn 5 before December 31 of that year.

This year when looking at our registration numbers we found this to be true. We certainly don't want to exclude a child who may want to join when heading off to school in September, especially if there are friendships established etc..

Facts:

1. BY-LAWS POLICIES AND PROCURES

5001 – PROGRAMS

Scouts Canada provides programs designed for the following sections:

- (i) Beavers - for children ages 5, 6 and 7.

5001.1 – Program Age Exceptions

Commissioners may, where appropriate, authorize a variation of one year in the program ages between age 5 and age 18 to enable child and youth membership in various program sections to correspond with membership in divisions in the local school system. The final consideration shall be what is in the best interest of the child or youth concerned.



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Further:

5001.3 – Program Goals

Each program section sets forth goals for meeting the Mission and Principles at a level appropriate to the age range and capabilities of the youth members in that section. Together, the programs for all sections combine towards the development of the whole person and an in-depth appreciation and commitment to the Mission and Principles of Scouting.

POSITION:

The practice of making allowance for youth to register early for a section, based on turning the section age before December 31 of that year, should be continued.

This affords the flexibility to Commissioners to ensure that the best interest of the child is paramount.

It also allows for youth, who are in school with a certain circle of friends due to age, to continue to attend with this circle of friends.

REGISTRATION YEAR 2012-2013

Starting with the new registration year of 2012-2013, Youth must be 5 years old before December 31st in order to register as a Beaver Scout member.

Doug Reid

Deputy National Commissioner – Program Services