

Guidelines for Managing Colony Waiting Lists



Item Code FS155058 April 06 Edition no 3

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Success breeds success and Beaver Scouting is certainly successful! We should celebrate this success.

The down side to this is that an increasing number of young people are clamouring to join but are being denied the chance to do so. Our primary concern is the long waiting lists of unhappy, disappointed youngsters.

These guidelines will give some ideas to help you manage your waiting list, and some examples of good practice that work towards enabling all youngsters who are eligible to be Beavers, to have that opportunity.

Setting the size of the Colony

A Beaver Scout Colony normally comprises of a maximum of 24 Beavers. The decision to increase the maximum beyond 24, in either the short or long term, is made with the agreement of the Leadership Team and the GSL.

Something that will affect the size of the Colony is the number of adults available to run the Colony. The warranted Leader should plan to ensure that there are at least 2 adults present at the Colony meeting, at least one of whom must hold a warrant. There is no minimum ratio of adults to Beaver Scouts for regular indoor Colony meetings, but there should be enough adults to ensure a safe meeting environment for the Colony, which will vary according to the programme. The minimum ratio for outdoor activities and Sleepovers is 1 adult to 6 Beaver Scouts plus the Leader in charge.

Managing Membership

Having decided the maximum number of Beavers that you are comfortable with in the Colony, the next thing to do is to decide how to manage any who are waiting to join.

All Colonies need some form of waiting list, as they become the new recruits to replace those moving on to Cubs. In an ideal world we would not have any 6 and 7 year olds on the list, but many parents will ring up to put their child's name down after their 6th birthday.

So, the first step is to draw up two separate lists:

- A **'waiting list'** – to include anyone who has already reached their 6th birthday and is waiting for a place to immediately become available in your Colony
- A **'register of interest'** – to include anyone under the age of 6 years, who wants to join the Colony when they are old enough

For both lists you will need name, date of birth, parents name, address and parent's phone number of the young person. One suggestion is to have an application form to send to parents to gather all this information and to record whether they are able to help or not.

What can affect the size of your register of interest and waiting list?

There are a number of factors, which can influence the size of your lists. Such as:

- Local recruitment drives in schools and communities
- Well publicized national Scouting events like 2007
- Growing interested support from the wider community

Being aware of these factors will enable you as a Colony or District to have systems in place to deal with the increased demand for places.

Setting the size of the 'waiting list'

Our focus should be to be in a position to offer a place in Beaver Scouting at the earliest opportunity after a young persons 6th birthday. It

will be the Leadership Team who decides the size of the waiting list, this will be done in relation to the size of the Colony and the size of the register of interest.

It is a good idea at the start of each term to look at your Colony records, waiting list and register of interest to find out the number due to move to the Cub Pack. You will then have an accurate picture of future vacancies and advance warning of situations like:

- The waiting list growing beyond the figure you have set
- The register of interest growing so that you will not be able to maintain the set number for your waiting list
- A possible shortfall in numbers

Points to consider about the waiting list

When trying to keep to the agreed size of the waiting list the Leadership Team might also consider:

- Whether to give priority if parents/carers offer to help
- Whether to give priority to those with brothers or sisters already in the Colony/Scout Group
- Whether some names appear on more than one waiting list in the District

Points to consider about the register of interest

The Colony Leadership Team needs to agree:

- The minimum age you will take a name onto the register of interest. There are no hard and fast rules here, but a minimum age of 4 might make the list more easily managed
- How to cope with names of under 6 year olds which appear on lists in other Colonies (this could be a useful topic of discussion at your District Beaver Leader meetings)

Some ways forward

If, despite your best efforts, you cannot keep the Colony waiting list to the level you have decided, here are some things you might try:

- If your meeting place would allow you to take more Beavers but you are limited by the amount of adult help, enlist the help of your Group Scout Leader and Assistant District Commissioner (Beaver Scouts) to help you to recruit more adult support. Using the 6 Step

Approach to recruit more adults will mean you are getting the type of adults you and the Colony need. Think about the tasks that you need help with – not just the role that you need to fill. Please see:

<http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/support/recruit/intro.htm> for more information.

- Could you enable more young people to be Beavers by meeting on the first and third week of the month with one group of Beavers and the second and fourth week with another? Only one set of programmes need be used for each grouping, and you would have double the number of parents to recruit for support
- Could you run two Colonies back to back using the same programmes and the same Leader Team, but with a different person assuming the role of 'The Leader' for each of the two meetings? Again this would give you a larger pool of adults to recruit to support the Colony meetings
- Is there another Colony nearby that could accommodate the youngsters?
- Would additional adults be recruited to a new Colony that could meet during the weekend?
- If you are Scouting in an urban area, could a District waiting list (possibly managed by a Scout Fellowship member, or a former Beaver Scout Leader who may no longer be able to give a weekly commitment to Beaver Scouting) solve the problem of young people being on more than one list, and some Colonies having vacancies?
- Some Districts will run District Colonies for those young people who are on a waiting lists. Those young people will move to Group based Colonies as space appears but it does mean they are already taking part in Beaver Scouting.
- Some Groups will run temporary Colonies when they find their waiting lists growing beyond manageable proportions. Similar to the District Colony the Beaver Scouts move into the main Colony as space appears.

Remember that it is important to consult with the Cub Scout Leaders if you are increasing the size or number of Colonies.

The responsibility for developing Beaver Scouting across the District lies with the District Commissioner and their District Team, but much can be achieved by all adults working together to enable more young people to experience all the fun that Beaver Scouting has to offer.