

## New Recruits

Everyone feels strange when they first come to a meeting. If they already know someone there it is made easier. Make sure that you make time to talk to both the new child and also the parents. Some parents are a bit anxious, and want to know that they are leaving “Johnny” in safe and capable hands. They will also want to know about fees, what is expected of them, and when they need to buy the uniform.

Some groups have a welcome letter to send home with the child, which clarifies opening and closing times, and all the details about your group. This can include the blue form. Although the membership fee etc does not need to be brought until the child has really decided to join, it is valuable to get the blue form back on the second week, so you have contact details. Alternatively, you may wish to ask for phone contacts and any special health requirements when you first speak to the parents, so that you are prepared if the need arises on the first meeting. (eg child falls over and hurts themselves, requiring treatment, or has an asthma attack). It is a good idea to give them your phone number as well, so they can ring if they cannot attend or to ask questions they forgot.

Give the parents a copy of the term program on the first night. This helps them to plan around their home life if there is a weekend activity, and helps to show them what fun you will be having each week. This will also bring them back next week, because they do not want to miss “that” activity.

If the child has come with another new friend, do not split them into separate Sixes/Patrols. There will be time enough for a reshuffle later, when they know everyone else. Some children need to have the bonding with a familiar face while they get to know what it is all about.

If the new recruit has come up from another Section, they still need to feel wanted and a part of the program. Just expecting them to know all about it because they have already experienced Scouting in a younger Section can be the quickest way to make them leave. The Settlers Patrol in Scouts was specifically designed to keep groups of Cubs that have recently progressed into Scouts together, with an older and experienced Patrol leader, while they find their feet. They do the same badgework as a team, and do not feel isolated as the youngest and newest in their group. Eventually they transfer into other patrols.

Make sure that the older youth in your Section welcome the new recruit, and do not make fun of them. They can be asked to help “show them the ropes”, which also makes the older child feel important.

Make sure that you make time to induct the child into the requirements for becoming invested. Do not do it all on the one night, as it will be overkill and “in one ear and out the other”. You cannot do it on an outing night either. But each new recruit should be ready for investiture after approximately a month. The parents will have had time to buy the uniform, and the child will feel ready to commit. Do not leave it longer than 6 weeks, as the child will get sick of waiting to truly become one of the group. When it is time to invest your new recruit, let them know the week before what to expect, and do a quick run-through of the proposed ceremony with them before it starts. Also let them know they can bring parents & family to watch and take photos(if they want).

Try not to hit the parent with the idea of becoming a leader straight away – they might be scared off and never bring their child back! They may also have younger children and other home/work commitments. Of course if they are hanging around, at a loose end, you might want to ask them if they might be interested in helping out, even on the Parents Committee.