



June 8, 2023

Youth Protection - Update #4

Prior communications can be found on our Scouting Safely page by [Clicking Here](#)

As you likely know from our prior communications and FAQs, on May 4, 2023, we were informed by the FBI that William Mickel, who was formerly employed as a part time clerk at the Winnebago Scout Reservation Trading Post, had been arrested earlier that day. Mickel was indicted on federal charges of possession and distribution of child pornography.

The FBI provided us 3 hours notice before they released their public statement, and we immediately began working with the BSA and FBI to coordinate a message to our Scouting community that would be supportive of the FBI investigation. On May 5, 2023, the message was jointly approved by the BSA and our volunteers at 11:00 AM and by the FBI at 1:00 PM. At that time, we immediately started distributing the message to more than 1,250 volunteers representing approximately 500 Scouting units of both Patriots' Path Council and other councils that have visited our camps. We especially appreciate the assistance of our Scouting units who were asked to pass along council messages to an estimated 20,000 plus families.

Our Scouting families' reactions have been very supportive; however, some parents and volunteers have questions about exactly what happened and what information we are permitted to share. Our volunteers and families are also rightfully concerned that we all continue to protect our Scouts in all aspects of their participation. This can be accomplished through awareness as well as continued and expanded safety protocols.

We are committed to transparency and have shared all the information that the FBI provided and will continue to do so to the extent we are permitted. We fully cooperated with the authorities and complied with all BSA protocols. In addition, we have been personally addressing individual inquiries. We will continue this practice and will take all steps to protect the safety of all Scouts and their families.

We initially distributed an FAQ on May 9, 2023, then a revised version on May 17, 2023. These FAQs have been well received and seem to have addressed our volunteer and family questions. We encourage each leader to contact Scout Executive, Marc Andreo at marc.andreo@scouting.org on behalf of their unit families if they have any additional questions.

The council Risk Management / Scouting Safely Committee is focused on awareness and safety. Based on what we learned on May 5, 2023, they have recommended that certain additional precautions regarding hidden recording devices be implemented prior to summer camp, and we intend to do the following:

- Sweep of camps by industry consultant prior to camp;
- Purchase detection equipment and train our Rangers to perform weekly and periodic sweeps throughout the year;
- Place outdoor security cameras in public areas of camp;
- Continue displaying BSA Barriers to Abuse posters;
- Develop and display PPC posters - specific to hidden recording device precautions to raise awareness; and
- Consult with other organizations on best practices.

Additionally, we will implement the following general safety features prior to our summer camps:

- Purchase license plate readers to monitor vehicles on our properties;
- Place guard houses at entrances to camp;
- Place trail cameras and signage around property boundaries;
- Implement bracelet system to identify groups in camp; and
- Distribute Scouting Safely postcards to raise awareness.

As a reminder, the BSA and PPC have a multilayered process of safeguards including the following measures, all of which are designed to act as barriers to abuse:

- Mandatory Youth Protection training for all volunteers and employees that must be renewed every two years;
- A leadership policy that requires at least two Youth-Protection trained adults be present with youth at all times during Scouting activities and bans one-on-one situations where adults would have any interaction alone with children — either in person, online, or via phone or text;
- A thorough screening process for adult leaders and staff including criminal background checks;
- A ban on the use of recording devices/cell phones near bathrooms and shower houses; and
- The prompt, mandatory reporting of any allegation or suspicion of abuse to law enforcement.

The BSA also offers a 24/7 Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1) and email contact address (scouts1st@scouting.org) for help reporting suspected abuse or inappropriate behavior. For more information about the BSA's Youth Protection policies and our efforts to be part of the broader solution to child abuse, please visit [Scouting.org/YouthSafety](https://scouting.org/YouthSafety).

We encourage everyone to also visit the Patriots' Path Council Scouting Safely page <https://ppcbsa.org/scoutingsafely/> that has both local and BSA resources available for all aspects of Youth Protection and the BSA's commitment to safety in our programs as well as prior FAQ's related to the current situation. Additionally, we want to remind everyone to report any incident that could potentially affect youth or volunteer leaders regardless of the potential severity.

We appreciate the feedback, suggestions and support we have received from volunteers, families and stakeholders and continue to welcome new ideas from the BSA, law enforcement, our families, as well as other organizations who have been a victim of similar crimes.

Thank you again for your continued support of Scouting, especially through this difficult period.