

## **APRIL – YOUTH PROTECTION**

### **Music Full then under**

LEE: Welcome to a very special CubCast/ScoutCast crossover episode. I'm Lee Shaw, Team Lead of National Alliance, and joining me is CubCast host, Aaron Derr, Senior Writer, for *Boys' Life* magazine.

AARON: Why a crossover episode? Because April is National Youth Protection Month and we want to be sure all leaders and parents are aware of the BSA's Youth Protection Guidelines.

LEE: That is right. And a topic this important doesn't require a lot of introduction banter so let's just get started.

### **Music Fades**

LEE: Joining us for this special episode is the BSA's official Youth Projection Advisor, Michael Johnson. Welcome to our crossover episode, Michael.

MIKE: Thank you, Lee and Aaron.

LEE: We're going to go through several questions and we want you to inform us as well as all of our listeners exactly what is Youth Protection and why is it so important?

MIKE: Youth Protection is what we do in Scouting. It's how we communicate to our parents our youth our leaders and volunteers as well as a community how committed we are to make sure that all Scouts participating in our programs are safe. It's our training, it's our policies, it's our procedures. It's

how we live Scouting every day, because it's very important that parents understand that their kids are safe when they're participating in our programs.

AARON: So, Michael, what are the requirements for Youth Protection for adults?

MIKE: Youth Protection Training is mandatory for all registered leaders in Scouting. We strongly encourage all parents to take the training also, and there's some requirements in the handbooks. There's requirements for parents to go over the Parent Guide with their kids to make sure the kids are knowledgeable about our Youth Protection policies and procedures, just in case something were to happen.

LEE: We've had Youth Protection in the Boy Scouts for quite a while, but what's special about this Youth Protection Training as compared to the old course, and when will these changes take effect?

MIKE: For you senior Scouters, you volunteers that have been out there for a long time. This is a completely new training. Some of the features of this training include a message from the chief about our overall commitment to keep all the Scouts safe and create a safe environment for Scouting. And then it launches directly into our revised Scouting's Barriers to Abuse which are our policies that we all enforce to keep Scouts safe. But specifically, the new features include survivors of various forms of abuse talking about some of the challenges that they have experienced and some of the behaviors that our leaders can recognize in somebody who may be a risk to youth in or outside of a Scouting program. We have some of the top experts in the nation talking about what the various forms of

abuse are as well as giving us some information about how we can watch out for certain behaviors that may put kids at risk. And, that's very important because it's leaders on the ground participating in activities that may notice something, whether it's by an adult or another youth, and do something about to make sure Scouts are safe. We also have scenarios, and then at the very end of the training we have a test. The whole training is broken down into various modules that are easy to digest. Some of the feedback that we've gotten from a lot of volunteers that have taken this training is that it is great information that goes directly to not only keeping Scouts safe but also keeping their own kids safe, and a lot of the parents and leaders are very proud of what we've released to the Scouting public.

AARON: So, what happens if a unit tries to re-charter but not all of the registered adults have taken the new Youth Protection Training, how does that affect the re-chartering process?

MIKE: Well, they will not be able to re-charter. All the unit leadership must be Youth Protection trained and part of training is be a registered leader in good standing, and a requirement of registration is be current in your Youth Protection Training.

LEE: Michael, you've always been on the cutting edge of making sure that Scouts are as safe as possible in our environment, and with that, will Youth Protection someday be required for youth and if so, why?

MIKE: Actually, I get that question from both parents as well as leaders and they want that. They see the requirements in the handbook and they see some of the other things that we've done with Internet safety specifically, the

Cyber Chip, and they want Scouts to be safe, and one of the ways we can ensure that is by we creating more requirements as part of the Scouting program. So, I do believe that Youth Protection Training for Scouts – we're going to call that Personal Safety Awareness Training will be a requirement in the near future.

AARON: In the front of the handbooks there is a Parent's Guide, Michael. Tell us kind of about that, especially for new leaders and new parents to the program. What's in there?

MIKE: I strongly advise all leaders to look at that Parent Guide, read over it, and in one of the earliest meetings you have you sit down with parents and talk about what their expectations are of you and of the program. Go over that Parent Guide with those parents and encourage them to cover that with their Scouts. That's our first step in that Personal Safety Awareness for Scouts. Research indicates that parents that have an open communication with their kids about any of the issues, whether it's abuse or bullying or harassment or whatever, that open line of communication is vital, and that booklet will help you engage in that conversation. It includes various scenarios as well as a Scouting's Barriers to Abuse, so all parents understand what the expectations are of leaders. It's a very, very valuable resource and it's also a requirement for rank advancement.

LEE: Outstanding. Well, Michael, our listeners are some of the most committed individuals and the most disciplined individuals that we have in all of Scouting.

MIKE: Fantastic.

LEE: I know many of them have taken the Youth Protection Training so, say if I took Youth Protection in November of 2017. How long is that particular training valid with the new one coming onboard?

MIKE: That is a great question. Youth Protection Training is good for two years, however, with the launch of our new Youth Protection Training we really want everybody to take it immediately. Not that the old training is that dated but the new training is just that new and revised and fresh. So, we've set a date of October 1 of 2018 that everybody must take the new Youth Protection Training. My personal apologies to all you fantastic leaders and volunteers and parents out there that may have taken the training in January the 12<sup>th</sup> but we really want you to take the new training. you'll find it very informative and it's very important to keep our Scouts safe.

AARON: And the good thing is, even if you just took the old training, it's not like it's that long, right? It's not like it's that huge of a commitment. It's important enough to take the time to do.

MIKE: Exactly.

AARON: Are any other resources where people can go to get more information on the BSA Youth Protection Policy?

MIKE: That is an ongoing process, as we continue engaging the top experts in the nation as well as survivors of various forms of abuse. So, we're constantly updating our Youth Protection page at [Scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org/youth-protection/). Just put in

“Youth Protection” and you can see the resources there. We have a “Scout is Kind” initiative, our Anti-Bullying information. There you’ll find Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse and various other resources that go to other areas of keeping Scouts safe.

LEE: So, Michael, you’ve shared a lot of information and including the date of October 2018 for everybody to be retrained with this new Youth Protection Training. Is there anything else about Youth Protection that we haven’t discussed that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

MIKE: We have so many new things that are being launched, and a lot of that is a part of our Youth Protection Training, but I’m going to ask everybody to pull out their smart phone, and if you’d get that out, I would like you to put in your smart phone the Scouts First Help Line. That is our new reporting line. And so that phone number is 1-844-726-8871. Again, that’s the Scouts First Help Line, 844-726-8871. It’s operated 24/7 by our top experts here at the Boy Scouts of America, and it’s a resource for every youth, parent, leader in case there is a policy violation or some other issue or concern that just want to talk to somebody about because you’re concerned about the safety of a Scout. Now, it is not meant to abdicate your responsibility to report abuse to law enforcement or child protective services, but it is a resource for you. In closing, I want to thank every single leader out there for the difference that they’re making in the lives of children. Whether a child is experiencing a abuse or harassment or bullying, the fact that they have parents and leaders out there that care and are guiding them through the program. Thank you for all you do.

LEE: The Scouts First Help Line will certainly be a great resource for the entire Scouting family to utilize. You know, it gets harder every day to keep yourself safe out there and Scouting is really doing everything that we can

to help everyone be protected. So, thank you, Michael for being on the show.

MIKE: Thank you very much.

AARON: We'll be back with Reminders and Tips after this brief Safety Moment.

**(Safety Moment – Scouts First)**

AARON: It's time for April Reminders and Tips. You've just heard all about it, so be sure that your Youth Protection Training is up-to-date.

LEE: On a lighter note, in the March / April issue of *Scouting* magazine, learn how to build a better budget for your unit, including tips for involving youth in planning.

AARON: And in the April issue of *Boys' Life*, see how the Pennsylvania Dutch Council turns back the clock with a day of vintage activities at its Time Travel Camporee.

LEE: I'd like to read about that myself.

**BEGIN MUSIC UNDER**

LEE: And now I can, because this special episode has come to an end. But we can't leave without a special thank you to our guest, Michael Johnson. I'm Lee Shaw.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. Lee and I are headed back to our regular shows and we'll see you there next month.

**Music Full to Finish**