



It starts with Scouts.

**Tout commence
avec les Scouts.**

Janet Yale

Executive Commissioner
and Chief Executive Officer
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October 13, 2011

Mr. Timothy Sawa
Producer
the fifth estate
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Dear Mr. Sawa:

Scouts Canada is the nation's premier youth-serving organization and includes more than 80,000 young people. Ours is a largely volunteer organization, dedicated to advancing the principles of citizenship and leadership originally articulated by our movement's founder Robert Baden-Powell.

Our focus is dedicated to nurturing the skills and abilities of young people. As such, there is nothing more important to Scouts Canada than the wellbeing of the young people with whom we work so closely and whose lives we aspire to influence for the better. It is a tremendous privilege, an enormous responsibility and each of our volunteer leaders takes it very seriously and cares about it very deeply on a personal level.

Accordingly, Scouts Canada has established a rigorous set of guidelines and policies when it comes to youth protection - from a screening process that includes extensive police checks for volunteer leaders to our "suspend first, investigate later" policy when it comes to complaints and to our 2-Leader rule that ensures that, at all group meetings, activities, trips and outings, Scouts are always accompanied by at least two adult leaders. For your reference, we have attached a summary of these policies.

Sadly, because Scouts Canada is an organization that attracts the involvement of tens of thousands of youth, we are sometimes targeted for participation by those seeking to exploit or even cause harm. We should emphasize that this category of person represents the smallest possible percentage of the roughly 23,000 volunteers who deliver Scouts Canada programs. The overwhelming majority are people of tremendous decency and generosity seeking to help young people gain critical life and leadership skills. Nevertheless, it is an unfortunate and unpleasant reality that organizations like ours must confront. Certainly, the concern and regret felt by Scouts Canada toward those who have been victimized in the past is beyond measure. For that reason alone, our youth protection policies are never at rest. They are in a state of constant improvement and advancement.

We note your particular interest in the Boy Scouts of America's practice of retaining so-called 'pink files' or 'pink folders' that track incidents, reports or even rumours concerning volunteer leaders. As we have indicated previously, this is a practice that we do not apply in Canada. We do not hold 'pink files' for a simple reason: Under our policies, reports of the kind that would trigger a 'pink file' would obligate Scouts Canada to invoke suspension and to investigate. In short, we do not monitor volunteer leaders in the face of concerns or complaints. We act. We suspend. And the only records we retain are those that document suspensions and terminations.



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Scouts Canada would be happy to offer any additional information or background that might prove helpful on the measures we take to help protect the tens of thousands of youth we are privileged to help guide.

Sincerely yours:

Janet Yale
Executive Commissioner and CEO
Scouts Canada



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October 18, 2011

Mr. Timothy Sawa
Producer
the fifth estate
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

Dear Mr. Sawa:

During an unscheduled interview conducted October 13th outside Scouts Canada's national headquarters, your Fifth Estate correspondent asserted repeatedly that Scouts Canada retains 'secret lists' or 'secret files' that detail rumours, reports or suspicions with respect to misconduct on the part of current or past volunteer leaders. Furthermore, the correspondent insisted that the contents of these alleged files have been - or are being - withheld from police and other authorities.

To eliminate any confusion or misunderstanding on your part, Scouts Canada wishes to be categorical: both assertions are completely false. As we have informed the Fifth Estate repeatedly and explicitly, unlike Boy Scouts of America, Scouts Canada has no history of keeping so-called 'pink files', 'pink folders', 'secret lists' or 'secret files'. To be clear, we keep no files, folders, lists or records of any kind that detail suspected instances of misbehaviour, policy violations or abuse on the part of volunteer leaders. To the contrary, our 'suspend first, inquire later' policy requires that receipt of any such report triggers an immediate and explicit response:

- First, we immediately suspend the volunteer leader in question.
- Second, we immediately notify both police and child protection services.
- Third, we share all relevant information in our possession with the police and child protection services and support their efforts to conduct a thorough investigation.

We expect CBC to fulfill its obligation to disclose our position and statement accurately. In particular, we expect CBC to acknowledge that Scouts Canada rejects any suggestion that it possesses 'pink files', 'pink folders', 'secret lists' or 'secret folders' of any kind and that it withholds any information from the police or child protection services.



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We also expect CBC to state the policies and practices of Scouts Canada as set out above and, moreover, we expect CBC to distinguish between Scouts Canada and Boy Scouts of America, clearly identifying them as separate organizations, taking care not to refer to them interchangeably and guarding against any implication – either direct or by way of omission – that the two organizations share like policies or practices.

Sincerely yours:

Janet Yale
Executive Commissioner and CEO
Scouts Canada