

# ***GUIDANCE NOTE***

## **SAIL TRAINING AND TALL SHIP VOYAGES**

Sail training uses residential activities on boats as a learning environment for young people. It is not just “learning to sail” but rather using the opportunity of being on a working boat to build team skills, develop friendships and foster resilience through shared experience in a safe but challenging environment.



It builds problem solving skills, shows young people their potential and presents high adventure. The activities on the former national sail training ships Asgard and Asgard II are examples.



A typical trip may include:

- Navigation
- Setting sails
- Ropework
- Overnight passages
- Ship maintenance and cleaning
- Cooking

**“ SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY. SAFEGUARDING SHOULD BE EFFORTLESS**

**”**

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The boats on which sail training voyages take place differ widely in size and facilities. Some can have quite limited space with shared sleeping, toilet and washing spaces. Finding privacy can be a challenge, but by following some good practice principles and positive behaviours, these challenges can be overcome, maximising the fun and comfort for everyone. Typically these voyages, especially those involving an overnight component, will be undertaken by Venture Scouts and Rover Scouts though sometimes older Scouts may participate also.

**YOUTH AND ADULTS IN SCOUTING SHOULD TAKE PRIDE IN KEEPING THEIR GOOD NAME BY TREATING OTHERS WITH RESPECT, BEHAVING RESPONSIBLY AND BEING MINDFUL OF HOW THEIR ACTIONS AFFECT OTHERS. IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP PERSONAL BOUNDARIES, RECOGNISE EVERYONE'S RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE. THE PRINCIPLES OF RESPECT FOR PERSONAL SPACE, PROPERTY AND PRIVACY ARE ESSENTIAL. CONSENT SHOULD BE SOUGHT BEFORE PHYSICAL CONTACT AND ENTERING SOMEONE'S SPACE, EVEN ON A BOAT. BY SHOWING KINDNESS, SPEAKING UP WHEN SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT AND ACTING WITH INTEGRITY, SCOUTS CAN CREATE A POSITIVE, INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT IS SAFE FOR ALL.**

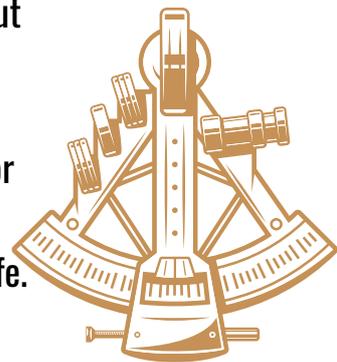
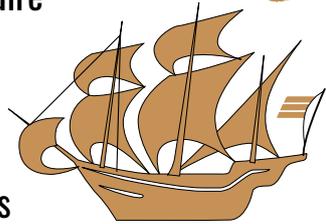
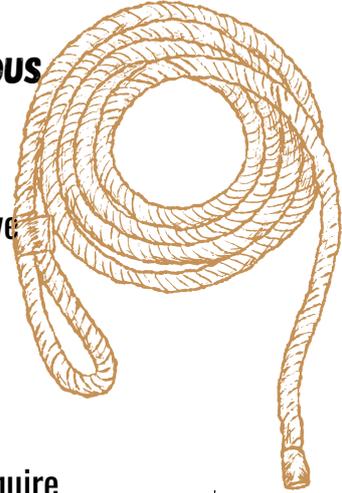
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### THE POSITIVE VALUES OF SAIL TRAINING EXPERIENCES (ADAPTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, PRIMARILY SAIL TRAINING INTERNATIONAL)

Sail Training has been shown to have significant benefits to participants. Those who have completed such voyages often say that they learned a lot about themselves and about others. The benefits of participating in sail training include:

- **Communications and confidence** - Young people who have taken part show increased social interaction and an improved ability to communicate with others.
- **Facing fears and overcoming challenges** - Sailing presents challenges that require stepping out of your comfort zone on a daily basis. This could be everything from overcoming vertigo up in the rigging, to keeping your breakfast down in rough seas.
- **New skills** - Participants learn technical skills.
- **Understanding the environment and human impact** - Every adventure presents different sights, sounds and experiences, seeing nature up close and personal. Participants may see the impact of pollution and climate change, also learning about clouds, weather, astronomy, biodiversity and sea states whilst on board.
- **Bravery and pushing yourself** - During every sail training adventure, there are opportunities to step outside your comfort zone. This might even include stressful or difficult situations, with the crew working together to manage these. Research has shown that the ability to cope in these circumstances is transferable to everyday life.
- **Teamwork, discipline and organisational structure** - There are different hierarchical living environments onboard. These give the opportunity to understand methods of organisation used in high pressure environments where safety is important.
- **Cultural competence and understanding** - Sail training knows no borders. On larger voyages, participants can make friends from different cultural backgrounds.



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### **BEFORE THE VOYAGE**

Young people who think they may have challenges with this learning environment should be encouraged to discuss this with adults, which may include the ship's crew. Through these conversations they understand the cadence of life aboard, the facilities available and the working environment that can be expected. Setting out ground rules and expectations among all those participating may make the experience more comfortable for everyone.



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### ON THE VOYAGE – POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS IN THE SAIL TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

- **Working together** - A powerful feature of sail training is that almost no task can be completed alone, so relying on others is a feature of every voyage. As you learn to live together, try to find solutions to any issues together.
- **Respecting other people's space** - Everyone's working in an environment where space and privacy are limited and people have different expectations. Be mindful of when someone needs time alone or needs a helping hand.
- **Open, honest communication is key to avoiding misunderstandings** - Setting expectations with others about schedules, chores, and personal time. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to express their needs
- **Being flexible is essential when dealing with confined spaces** - You might need to adjust your plans or routines based on the comfort of others. Be willing to compromise bathroom use, cooking times, or quiet hours.
- **Staying organised** - With limited storage and living space, staying organised is essential. Keep personal items to a minimum and tidy up after yourself to ensure the space feels clean and uncluttered. This also helps create a calmer, more respectful environment for everyone.
- **Managing noise** - Consider setting designated quiet hours, especially during the night or early morning, to allow everyone to rest without disturbances. However if you're operating a "watch" system then there will likely be crew members asleep for much of the day also, so you need to be mindful of this also.
- **Adding structure and schedules if needed** - There may be advantages to setting schedules for washing, for quiet time or for cooking, and allocating particular spaces for specific purposes. This may assist in creating predictability.



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### **AFTER THE VOYAGE**

In line with Plan-Do-Review principles, those involved in sail training voyages should be encouraged to reflect upon the learning experience. Longer trips can be intense bonding experiences, so it's good to discuss the experience.



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### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **How do ratios apply in this environment?**

The ratios are the same as for other activities. These can be seen in the Scouting Ireland Ratios Policy. External parties do not count for ratios.

#### **What sleeping arrangements should be in place?**

Adults and children must not share sleeping spaces. Young people should be accommodated separately grouped by age and gender with adults in nearby but separate areas.

#### **What arrangements should be in place for toilets and washing?**

Toilets and shower facilities do not inherently pose a risk of adults abusing children. However, to protect adults and young people, shower facilities should be private and separate for adults and young people. If facilities must be shared, clear and supervised access times should be in place.

#### **Anything else to note?**

Adults must prioritise the wellbeing of young people by maintaining appropriate boundaries and following safeguarding procedures. This guidance note can be shared with external providers in order to inform them of Scouting Ireland's requirements. Adults should avoid being alone with a young person. The Safeguarding "Beyond Basics" course can assist develop further understanding on relevant topics.

#### **What if I have a safeguarding concern?**

Contact the Safeguarding Team at National Office as normal. If communication isn't possible, reporting should be done at the earliest possible opportunity.

This guidance note was prepared by the Sea Scouting Team  
and the Safeguarding Team



[seascouting@scouts.ie](mailto:seascouting@scouts.ie)  
[safeguarding@scouts.ie](mailto:safeguarding@scouts.ie)