



The Royal British Legion

Membership Youth Policy

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For brevity, the term 'branch' is used throughout to indicate all formations including branch, section, county, district or national branch.

1. Purpose

- a. In the delivery of the purpose of membership and the activities that membership undertakes, young people are often involved. This includes young people from youth organisations (affiliated or not), schools, youth members; including youth standards bearers, and children and grandchildren of members or members of the public. Many Legion branches work closely with local organisations and youth groups which support the aims of the Legion.
- b. The aim of this policy is to provide clear guidance to members responsible for the supervision and conduct of activities which involve young people.
- c. The Board of Trustees have entrusted the ownership and review of the Membership Youth Policy to the Membership Council in order to provide a structure and guidelines by which, and within which, those volunteers responsible for authorised Legion youth activities will operate.
- d. The policy recognises that Youth Membership in its current form will end in 2029 however Youth Standard Bearers and young people who are in RBL licensed bands will continue to be closely associated with membership, under the membership categories of 'Youth Standard Bearer' and 'Youth Musician'.
- e. This policy aligns with safeguarding best practices to ensure the well-being of young people and also complies with Keeping Yourself Safe practice guidelines. Branches should remain vigilant and report any safeguarding concerns in line with this policy.

2. Scope

- a. This Policy does not provide in detail the Legion's requirements for compliance with the law relating to safeguarding and protection of children. This is covered in the RBL Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy which should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

b. While many members also participate in fundraising for the Poppy Appeal, this policy does not cover Fundraising activities which are managed by the fundraising team and covered by their policies.

c. For the purpose of this policy a youth/young person is someone under the age of 18 years.

3. **Limit of responsibility.**

a. The Royal British Legion is not a youth organisation and therefore does not conduct youth-specific activities, with the exception of those listed in Section B, however, it is recognised that the RBL's membership conduct activities where young people may be involved or are present. In all of these activities, the young person must be accompanied by and remain the responsibility of the relevant responsible adult who is defined as:

- the parent or legal guardian of the young person, *or*
- a designated adult who has been arranged by the parent or legal guardian, *or*
- an adult volunteer or adult member of staff from the affiliated youth organisation.
- *And is over the age of 18.*

b. The branch must not take responsibility for organising a responsible adult to accompany a young person to a branch meeting or activity; this must be an individual organised by the parent or legal guardian and must be confirmed in writing by the parent or legal guardian to the Chair or Secretary.

c. Para b and c above will be clearly stated on youth membership application forms and in any communication to the young person's parent or legal guardian.

d. Any member who is requested by the parent or legal guardian to be the responsible adult to accompany a young person to an RBL activity, does so acting in the private capacity of an individual known to the parent or legal guardian and not as a member of the RBL.

e. Young people, including youth members and members of affiliated youth groups, must remain under the supervision of the responsible adult for the full period of the activity or meeting. Branches must not allow persons under 18 who are not accompanied by the responsible adult to be present at branch meetings or activities and must ensure that it is clear to the responsible adult that the young person remains their responsibility throughout the activity or meeting.

f. Leaders of youth organisations are responsible for their youth members throughout the activity and must ensure appropriate supervision and control of young people in accordance with their own organisation's safeguarding policy. Prior to any event that they will take part in it must be made clear to the youth organisation that their young people remain their responsibility throughout and must be supervised by a member of staff or adult volunteer from the organisation at all times. The RBL takes no responsibility for young people attending meetings, events or activities.

4. **Key responsibilities.**

a. **Staff Responsibilities:**

(1) The Membership Development Manager (MDM) will:

- (a) have oversight of the post holders listed at para 5c and will work with the Membership Engagement Administrators (MEA) and Membership Engagement Officers (MEO) to ensure the required post holders have the right training and DBS clearance.
 - (b) Oversee the register of affiliated youth groups.
 - (c) Work with County Youth Officers (CYO) to maintain oversight of activities which involve young people being delivered by formations.
- (2) MEOs will inform MEA about new incumbents of the roles listed at para 5c so that the centrally held records can be updated.
- (3) MEAs will:
- (a) process DBS checks.
 - (b) maintain the register of individuals holding the key roles listed below and detailing the dates that training and DBS checks were completed and require refreshing.
 - (c) send the Safeguarding Policy, this policy and the Keeping Yourself Safe Guide to the member.
 - (c) contact the key roles listed below to inform them when the training and DBS requires renewal.
 - (d) update the register of affiliated youth groups.

b. Membership Responsibilities

- (1) All RBL members organising activities involving / attended by young people or where there are youth members must adhere to:
- (a) the RBL's safeguarding policy.
 - (b) this Membership Youth policy.
 - (c) the Keeping Yourself Safe guide.
 - (d) any specific instructions or guidance related to working with young people, outside of the above policies.
- (2) In addition to the above, Branch Chairs and Secretaries must:
- (a) Ensure that any activities related to young people are formally recorded in branch or county minutes.
 - (b) Ensure that sufficient supervision by responsible adults is present at any activity.
 - (c) Keep a confidential record of their youth members on the branch area of MAP.
 - (d) Ensure that branch members follow the relevant policy and procedures where young people are involved in an activity.
 - (e) Ensure that young people's personal data is protected.
- (3) The role profile for the roles listed at para 5c can be found in the Membership Handbook (MH). In addition to those role requirements:
- (a) CYOs must maintain a register of the county's youth affiliated groups and should oversee the process of affiliation within the county. This should reflect the centrally held register.
 - (b) CYOs must maintain oversight of activities within the county which may involve young people and ensure that the relevant documents are being adhered to.
 - (c) National and County Parade Marshal and Deputy Parade Marshals must maintain an attendance list of young people attending training or ceremonial events and activities.

5. Safeguarding

a. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Board of Trustees are committed to safeguarding and its priority is to provide an environment where all children are safe from harm, neglect or abuse. More information can be found in the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy (copy available on MAP). Any concerns about potential harm to a child or young person should be reported to your MEO so that action can be taken if necessary. The Safeguarding team can also provide advice on safeguarding@britishlegion.org.uk.

b. A number of procedures are in place to ensure that the Legion upholds its safeguarding commitment. This includes the following. The MEAs are responsible for collating and recording the information for each member holding these roles and should highlight any individual who requires renewal/ refresher or who has not completed required renewal / refresher.

c. **Roles.** The following roles require DBS, self-declaration and safeguarding training as described below. Members in these roles must not conduct any work with young people until those requirements are met.

- County Youth Officer (CYO).
- County Parade Marshal (CPM) and deputy (DCPM).
- The National Parade Marshal and Deputy National Parade Marshal.
- Branch Parade Marshals.
- Standard Bearers - any SB who is scheduled to support youth standard training on more than one occasion or does so more than once an ad-hoc basis.
- Branch Youth Co-ordinators (awaiting MC approval of role).

d. **DBS Checks.** Before taking up their duties the above roles are required to undertake a criminal records check as below (DBS in England and Wales, Access NI, An Garda Siochana in ROI or the relevant check for those in overseas branches):

(1) Enhanced to include child barred lists:

- County Parade Marshal (CPM) and deputy (DCPM).
- The National Parade Marshal and Deputy National Parade Marshal.
- Branch Parade Marshals.
- Standard Bearers - any SB who is scheduled to support youth standard training on more than one occasion or does so more than once an ad-hoc basis.

(2) Enhanced:

- County Youth Officer (CYO).
- Branch Youth Co-ordinators (BYC).

e. **Safeguarding Training.** Members holding the above roles must complete the Legion Safeguarding Children and Adults training online and the Children's Safeguarding training online and any required refreshers. These are mandatory learning modules for these roles.

f. **Declaration.** Members holding the above roles must sign the declaration on the MSI/ MSIa, MSIB (or the associated mid-year review form if they assume their role mid-year) which confirms that there is no reason why they should not hold the role, including relevant previous or current criminal offences or any restrictions placed on work involving children and young people.

6. **Data Protection.**

- a. Information will be provided to young people and their parent / legal guardian about youth membership and how their data will be held and processed and refer them to the RBL's children's data protection statement. This information will be presented in a plain clear language that they can understand.
- b. Young people's personal information, including phone numbers or email addresses, must never be kept on personal devices. Contact with a young person should be through their parent or legal guardian via an rbl.community email address.
- c. Where branches are collaborating with a third party youth organisation, including a youth affiliated group, members should never hold the contact details for young people from the organisation; all communication must be through the adult staff or adult volunteer for the youth organisation.
- d. While all members data should be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act, members must take particular care not to share a young person's personal details with other members, including other youth members.

7. **Keeping Yourself Safe**

- a. All members should adhere to the 'Keeping yourself safe' document, found on MAP.
- b. Members must never be alone with a young person or young people, without the responsible adult(s) present. This includes when young people are involved in setting up activities or at meetings. Members should never provide a lift or accompany the young person/ young people to or from activities.

SECTION B

ACTIVITIES INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

8. General.

- a. Any activity which involves young people must be a formal branch activity which has been agreed at a branch meeting and is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- b. Branches should consider and agree which members are most suitable for organising and undertaking the activities and are best placed, in terms of personal qualities, skills and experience, to engage with the young people involved. The names of members should be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- c. Youth-specific activities predominantly relate to Remembrance, commemorative or ceremonial activities, and may include (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Youth standard bearer training.
 - Youth standard bearer competition.
 - Schools' remembrance parade / service.
 - Presentations to schools or youth organisations.

9. Remembrance Parades / Services.

- a. Remembrance parades and services should be delivered in accordance with the Ceremonial Handbook. Where youth standard bearers are involved please see below regarding youth standard bearer involvement in activities.
- b. Where youth organisations are involved the young people remain the responsibility of and must be in the vicinity of the youth organisations designated adult volunteers or staff at all times.

10. Schools and Youth Organisations Engagement.

- a. Our Branches play a key role in engaging with schools and other youth organisations. This may be to introduce Remembrance, carry out commemorative activities, introduce the RBL or give presentations on themes related to the Armed Forces community. RBL believes that children are our future champions of Remembrance. Children have the potential to reintroduce Remembrance into families. The Remembrance team at the Legion produces educational materials which can be downloaded from the website at rbl.org.uk/teachingremembrance that can be shared with schools and youth organisations.
- b. When a representative of a branch attends a school or youth organisation, a DBS is not required. The member must never be alone with the children or young people; an adult member of school staff or an adult member of staff or volunteer from the youth organisation must be present at all times.

11. Youth Affiliations

- a. A Youth Affiliation is a formalised partnership between Legion branches and local youth organisations, such as the Army Cadet Force. The terms of agreement for a Youth Affiliation must be made clear before an affiliation is agreed. The partnership will:
 - (1) involve joint working to achieve the aims of the Legion, including fundraising, Remembrance and connecting with the community.

- (2) Provide clear opportunities for the young people to develop knowledge, skills and experience.
- (3) Be mutually beneficial ie: the Branch offers the youth organisation support as much as the youth organisation supports the RBL. This could be through talks for example or support with fundraising (see below).
- b. The youth organisation does not have to be a uniformed youth organisation, but must be a legally established youth organisation, with a formal constitution and governance in place.
- c. A designated point of contact for the youth affiliation should be in place, both at the branch and within the youth organisation.
- d. Members of youth organisations affiliated to Legion branches are not permitted to wear a Youth Membership lapel badge unless they are also a Youth Member of the Legion
- e. Branches cannot provide funding to any youth organisation from branch funds, however they may assist in fundraising for that affiliated youth organisation. Where fundraising assistance is given by a branch it should not be done in the name of the Legion nor use the Legion brand; it must be clear to donors that the funds are being raised for the youth organisation. Any money collected must not be put in or passed through branch accounts.

12. **Youth Members** *Note: Youth membership will end in 2029.*

- a. Youth Members of the RBL are between the age of 12 and 18 years old. Youth membership expires on their 18th birthday, after which they are welcome to apply for full membership.
- b. It is free for Youth Members to join the Legion but the branch of their choice may operate a Branch Joining Fee which may be asked of Youth Members.
- c. All Youth Member applications must be signed by a parent or guardian. The youth membership application form will make it clear that the parents or legal guardian are responsible for their child's involvement in RBL activities.
- d. The details of the youth member's parent or legal guardian must be taken at the point of joining. Youth members will be annotated as such on CARE with a link to their parent / legal guardian's CARE record, and the parent / legal guardian's CARE record will include details of the youth member's membership number. The parent / legal guardian does not have to be a member of the RBL.
- e. While a youth membership is free and expires automatically at 18, an annual review should be conducted to confirm that a youth member's detail, and those of their parent / legal guardian remain accurate.
- f. The young person will receive a membership card which is renewed annually.
- g. The MEO, CYO and safeguarding team can provide advice and guidance about youth membership where required.
- h. Branch secretaries and chairs who have access to branch membership listings must ensure that the details of youth members are never shared with any other individual or organisation, including other officers or committee members.

- i. Youth members are welcome to participate in branch activities (accompanied by a responsible adult as above) but cannot hold any office until becoming adult members.
- j. Youth members should be encouraged to become Standard Bearers, branch advocates in their communities and to raise awareness of the Legion work.

13. Youth Standard Bearer Activities

a. **Youth Standard Bearers.** A Youth Standard Bearer is a member aged between 14 and 18. For the purpose of this policy the term 'youth standard bearer' includes both young people holding the official role and young people who wish to do so, are participating in training or are carrying an RBL standard – these young people must be a Youth Standard Bearer member. The Ceremonial Handbook provides all details about youth standard bearers and the ceremonial policies that they must adhere to.

b. **Fitness to Participate.** The parent / legal guardian of all youth standard bearers must complete an MSIB to confirm the young person's fitness to participate. From January 2026 new youth standard bearers will complete this as part of their joining application.

c. **Youth Standard Bearer attendance at events.**

(1) For all events or activities where a youth standard bearer is representing the County or RBL, the parent or responsible adult (as defined above) must accompany them to the event or activity.

(2) During these events, in some circumstances, it is not appropriate for the parent or responsible adult to be in the immediate vicinity of the young person, for example at a parade or Festival of Remembrance. When this is the case, the young person must remain the responsibility of the Parade Marshal or Deputy Parade Marshal or a member of the ceremonial team with DBS and safeguarding training when not in direct proximity to the responsible adult. These individuals must adhere to the 'Keeping Yourself Safe' guidance.

(3) Next of Kin details must be held for all youth standard bearers attending such activities.

d. **Youth Standard Bearer attendance at training and competitions**

(1) No young person under 14 should be involved in standard bearer training or competitions.

(2) **Next of Kin details.** It is not required for the CPM to collect NoK details for young people undergoing training as their parent or legal guardian must remain on site, however, it is good practice to do so. These details must be held in accordance with Data Protection regulations and the RBL Data Protection policy.

(3) **Guests at Activities.** Guests may be present at training, events or competitions, such as Civic Dignitaries. Non-member guests, competition judges or members who are not the CPM or D/CPM must never be left unsupervised with youth standard bearers.

(4) **Recording attendance at training.**

- (a) Parade Marshals should inform the parent or legal guardian of a youth standard bearer that the young person's name will be recorded on the training log and held in accordance with the RBL's data protection procedures.
- (b) Parade Marshals must make a record of those young people who attend training or competitions via the youth training form in Discover in order that these details are recorded.
- (c) Once the form is submitted, the information will be uploaded to a secure area in Discover by the Learning and Development team, after which the submitted form data will be deleted.
- (d) Under Data Protection law, the RBL cannot store records for those under 14 without parental consent. The data will be subject to our usual data protection policies and Parade Marshals should inform those who undergo training that we will keep a record.

(5) **Safeguarding at training.**

- (a) Youth standard bearers must be under the supervision of at least two RBL adult members at all times, one of which must be the CPM or DCPM
- (b) One on one training must not be conducted under any circumstances.
- (c) If the activity involves young people from youth organisations such as cadets the young person must be accompanied by an adult member of staff or an adult volunteer at all times. Prior to any event, it should be made clear to the youth organisation that the YP remain their responsibility throughout.

(6) **Supervision.** Parents or the responsible adult (as defined above) must be on site, but do not necessarily have to remain in the room where the training is conducted, as long as the CPM and D/CPM have undertaken safeguarding training and have their DBS. Parents must be informed that they are not permitted to leave the site while their child is undertaking training.

14. **BCS.** There may be occasions when a BCS supporter visits a beneficiary and a child or young person is present. The BCS supporter should never be left alone with the child or young person during the visit, and this should be made clear to the beneficiary at the outset of the visit.

15. **Youth Bands**

- a. The Legion may grant a licence for a music band to operate in accordance with the Bands Policy. This includes Youth Band which are a band or Corps of Drums, Bugle Section, Marching Band, Pipe Band, Bugler or Choir that has obtained a Licence to use the name of The Royal British Legion, and where at least 55% of members are under 18 years old. Those bands are legally and financially independent entities which use the Legion name and brand in accordance with permissions granted by the Legion.
- b. They must have their own youth safeguarding policy and procedures in place and their own insurance.
- c. Every child joining such band must obtain a consent of their parent/guardian as described in Bands Policy. All young people who are members of bands must be RBL Youth Musician

members but exception can be given to musicians under the age of 12 who may be granted an honorary membership until they reach the age to become a Youth Musician member.