

Information Zone

Safety in the Company – How do we ensure everyone's safety?

Guiding Principle:

It is the duty of the Company Captain to satisfy her/himself that all individuals who are given any element of responsibility for boys are competent. She/he must also be satisfied that in all company activities, due consideration is given to the safety of boys and staff

A Safety Handbook is issued to each BB Company; copies are also available from BB Supplies and on the BB web site www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/library

Providing a safe environment for all BB activities is a fundamental responsibility for every leader. All leaders should make themselves familiar with the 'Safety Handbook' publication and updates that are issued from time to time. Company staff must also be aware of any policies devised by the church to which the company belongs.

It is strongly recommended that all leaders develop the habit of doing risk assessments. These range from the formal ones written on paper such as those for trips and visits, and the annual risk assessment of the premises through to the quick informal risk assessment you may discuss with a colleague before doing a new activity.

Remember! When planning an activity, think about the **probability** of accident or harm occurring and then think about the possible **severity** of the harm if an accident does happen. Then think about all potential hazards and the appropriate precautions you can take.

The Safety Handbook is your guide, and all BB training includes an element of safety awareness. You are particularly encouraged to read or re-read the following sections in The Safety Handbook:

- The Brigade's 'Safe from Harm' policies including child protection and the prevention of abuse, and the recruitment, selection, training and registration of leaders
- General safety awareness including staff ratios and areas of potential danger
- Emergency First Aid
- The use of public transport, private cars and minibuses
- Reporting and recording requirements for accidents and incidents
- The use of risk assessments, and annual parental consent and special event consent forms
- The regulations for the selection and training of leaders and for particular events and activities.

Officers' Handbook

All Officers should make themselves familiar with the Officers' Handbook. This publication contains the regulations and requirements for working with all age groups in the BB. Amendments to the regulations appear in the BB Gazette, the BB's magazine for leaders.

Copies of the Handbook are available from BB Supplies, a downloadable copy is also available on the BB web site at: www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/library

How can I run a successful Anchor Boy section?

Leadership of the Section:

It is extremely important that the leadership of the Anchor Boys is in good hands. Wherever possible, there should be an Officer in Charge of the section, but where this is not possible, there must be an Officer who can act as liaison between the Anchor Boys and the rest of the Company. It is important that at least one Officer is present when the section meets in addition to any instructors or helpers.

Age range for Anchor Boys:

The age range for Anchor Boys is 5 to 9 years old although many companies move boys up to the Junior Section during the session in which they will be 8; your Regional HQ will be able to offer advice on this.

The minimum age for a boy to join Anchor Boys is the beginning of the school year on or following his 4th birthday provided that he has commenced statutory education, the company has gained prior permission from their Regional Headquarters to work with this age group, at least two nominated leaders have undertaken the necessary training 'Working with 4 year Olds', and, separate provision is made for elements of the programme including games and crafts.

Aims for the age group contributing to a boy's development:

Boys of Anchor Boy age are developing rapidly. Between the ages of 5 and 8 there are big changes in a child's mental, emotional, social and physical development. However, all children are different and have a variety of needs. The relationships we form with children at this age can be important in assisting them to achieve a sound sense of personal and group identity. We should be aware of children with differing needs and there is support and information available for leaders (see the section in the 'Information Zone' on Accessibility).

As far as most boys are concerned, what takes place in the weekly section meeting is where the action is. It is therefore vital to keep it lively, fun and interesting. A well-planned programme will provide variety, excitement, interest, and above all, a time of fun and enjoyment. The programme should provide a wide variety of different activities including:

- **Learning new skills:** the dexterity required for arts and crafts, following simple instructions for games and activities
- **Developing confidence:** given opportunities to do things for themselves, praise for good behaviour, taking part in simple role-play, mime and drama
- **Developing physical skills:** co-ordination games, hopping, skipping and balancing games

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- **Developing independence:** being given simple choices of activities, short trips and visits
 - **Developing a group identity:** belonging to a group, going on trips as a group, taking part in group activities
 - **Developing an awareness of the needs of others:** learning to share and co-operate
 - **Developing a personal identity:** learning about how we are all different, looking at the different needs and interest of others

And most importantly,

- **Opportunities for fun and enjoyment!**

The Section Meeting:

The weekly section meeting would usually run for 1-1 1/2 hours and be finished by 7.30pm. Under the Children Act 1989, weeknight meetings for those aged 8 and under must not be longer than 2 hours. The occasional longer meeting for a visit or battalion event is allowed under the Act.

The start of the evening should take into account the lively and excited boys. Two members of staff must always be there in time to prepare the hall or rooms, greet the boys and have an activity or game ready to occupy them until the start of the section meeting. Choose an activity that the others can join in as they arrive. Boys of this age need to feel secure and therefore, it is recommended that a routine be established with which the boys can become familiar. These might include:

- **A group system:** The boys are divided into groups, each group is given a name e.g. an animal, a plane, a car (let the boys choose their group name). There should be a leader responsible for each group. The boys would usually stay in the same group throughout the session. Groups should have a mix of ages and abilities.
- **A group points system:** Points can be awarded each week for a variety of activities to encourage co-operation and teamwork; points should be used to encourage and reward rather than to punish. Leaders must be consistent and fair in the way points are awarded. It is important that the points are recorded in ways that the boys can see, perhaps marked on a board, or shown as marbles in a jar with the group name on or as stickers on a chart. Points could be awarded for good behaviour, being quiet (!), being the first group to be ready, for attendance, for making the best effort and trying, for helping another person. Prizes for a weekly and/or monthly totals could be given with a small trophy being awarded; keep a note of which boy takes it home so that different boys get an opportunity when their group wins again.

You could also use the Anchors stickers and certificates for individual achievements and behaviour

- **Opening and closing ceremonies:** These could either be formal, or informal. Boys could stand or sit but don't make the opening too long or they will lose interest. It is suggested that a leader mark the attendance register and collect any subs as the boys arrive. If you do adopt a more formal procedure, keep it simple. Boys should respond to a definite signal (e.g. whistle or words) so that they know that the evening has begun. As well as signifying the start or end of the evening, an opening or closing ceremony gives opportunities to:
 - say "hello" at the beginning (and "good bye" at the end of the evening)
 - have a short closing prayer before the boys go home
 - welcome new members or a visitor
 - present certificates and group awards
 - show your appreciation of their efforts and good behaviour
 - share your news

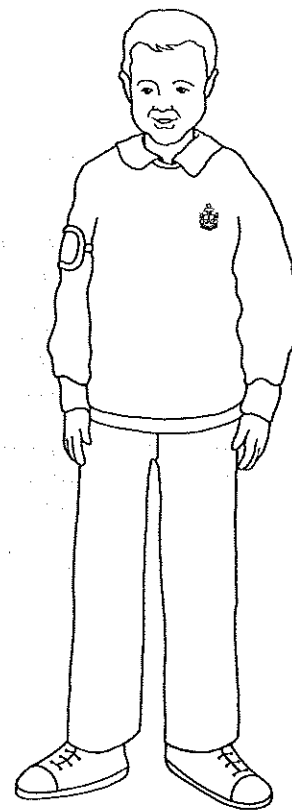
The opening ceremony also provides an opportunity for a quick inspection of the boys, checking that their uniform is correct and tidy and they are neatly turned out. Some sections have an inspection trophy awarded each week, or month, which encourages the boys to be smart in their appearance.

With boys of this age, it is a good idea to include some time during the evening whereby boys can tell the leaders their latest news, what they have been doing that day etc. This means a lot to the boys and the leaders should take a real interest in what they hear each week. It is suggested that the news time takes place in the groups perhaps when there is a break for drinks and biscuits; even news from twelve boys can take a long time if it's all done in one large group.

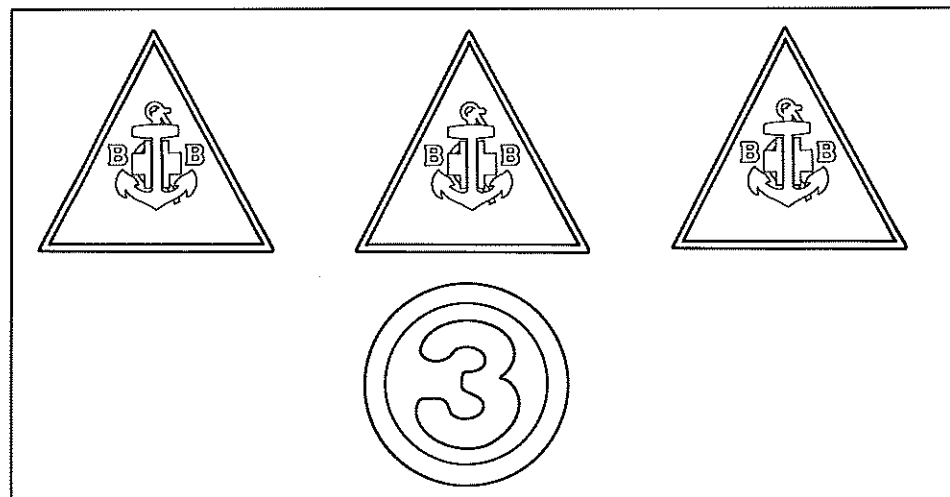
At the end of their evening, the boys may be asked to get back into their groups again prior to going home.

Uniform

Boys wear a red BB sweatshirt, a blue BB polo shirt and plain dark trousers or shorts, and appropriate footwear. An armband for Anchor Activity and service badges is worn on the right arm.



Armband showing the green, red and blue activity badges and service badge.



Uniform items for boys and leaders, badges, certificates, gift items, trophies and a range of programme support resources are available from BB Supplies, a telephone order service is available on 0870 7442292 or faxed to 01442 231681. Also from the BB 'on line shop' at: www.boys-brigade.org.uk/bbshop/.

Local depots are also available in some areas.

Programme Planning – How do I get the right balance?

It is important to provide a wide variety of activities to keep the boys interested throughout their time in Anchor Boys. It must be remembered that boys develop in many ways during the age range of this section, and the activities offered must allow for their participation by way of choices as well as providing a challenge and sense of achievement.

For much of the time the boys may be all together, but bearing in mind the wide age range of 5 to 8 year olds, it is recommended that some part of the evening's activities be spent in year groups with boys doing different activities or things to a different level. Alternatively, boys could be split into one group of 5 and 6 year olds, and another of 7 and 8 year olds. If the Company is working with 4 year olds, then special attention must be given to the programme for this age group.

The usual pattern for an evening programme involves a variety of activities that last only for 10 or 15 minutes. They need plenty of fun and variety during the evening. The programme should flow from one activity to the next without periods of inactivity where the boys are waiting for the next thing to happen. If several activities are happening at the same time for different age groups, have some filler activities or short games ready to keep the boys occupied until they can start the next part of their evening.

The Anchors programme includes different types of structured play:

Motor/Physical Play

Motor play provides critical opportunities for children to develop both individual, gross and fine muscle strength and an overall integration of muscles, nerves and brain functions.

Social Play

A variety of opportunities for children to engage in social play are the best mechanisms for progressing through different social stages. By interacting with others in play settings, children learn social rules such as give and take, reciprocity, co-operation and sharing. Through a range of interactions with children at different social stages, children also learn to use moral reasoning to develop a mature sense of values.

Constructive Play

Constructive play is when children use materials to create things. Constructive play allows children to experiment with objects; find out combinations that work and don't work; and learn basic knowledge about stacking, building, drawing and constructing.

Fantasy Play

Children learn to abstract, to try out new roles and possible situations and to experiment with language and emotions with fantasy play. Drama provides an excellent opportunity for fantasy play.

Games with Rules

The "games with rules" idea teaches children an important concept – that life has rules (laws) that we all must follow to function properly.

Using a balance of these types of play should ensure that the programme is well rounded and contains something for everyone. Children (and adults) often benefit from trying something new, even if they think it is something they will find difficult.

So why do we need to have a planned programme?

If we are to attract and hold boys within the BB, each individual company and section must provide a balanced, imaginative, exciting and varied programme of skills and activities to continually challenge the individual boy, retaining his interest and attention. The only way this can be done successfully is by careful planning, to provide a progressive programme, which offers new horizons and challenges to each boy throughout the time he is a member of the BB.

Annual programme:

This would be drawn up in outline along with any special events such as the enrolment service, battalion events, parents' night, trips and visits, special church or company anniversaries. You will need to take account of the following:

- How many staff you will have each week, noting those who work shifts or whose other commitments mean they cannot be there every week
- What night are you going to meet?
- What rooms can you use?
- What resources do you need including money and equipment?

Termly or six week programme:

It is a good practice to plan 6 weekly or termly programmes at a time because situations change; you might have an influx of boys, a staff member might be away for a few weeks, other opportunities arise to do things with the boys including trips or events.

Planning a single evening:

This is when the programme is drawn up and the final details are added:

- Which activities are we going to do?
- What equipment do we need?
- Who will be responsible for that activity?
- What rooms are available?
- Which boys will do the activity?
- Timings for each activity?
- Are we inside or outside? If outside do we need some extra help?

Programme Planning

Programme for week _____

Time:						
Activity:						
Body						
Mind						
Spirit						
Community						
Creativity						

Programme for week _____

Time:						
Activity:						
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Time:						
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Participation

Even (or especially) at this young age, it is important that there are opportunities for the boys to participate in the planning of the weeknight programme and that of the session. Boys can be given choices about which games they wish to play during the evening, perhaps with their group deciding, or giving individuals a turn in choosing. Make the choices simple and limited, so the choice might be game A or B, but it is important that they have a say. Feedback can also be gained at the end of an activity. Leaders will know if it went well, but comments from the boys to simple questions, "What did you like best/least?" will also help in planning future activities.

Boys can be encouraged to talk about what they would like to do during the time set aside for a drink and a biscuit. Again the choices should be simple perhaps in the planning of a future visit to A or B, or taking part in a battalion activity day.

Some BB companies use a 'talking stick' to help ensure that only one person talks at a time and that others listen to what is said. The 'talking stick' is passed around the group and no one can talk or interrupt until they have the stick. Boys will quickly get used to the idea and take turns in talking and listen; two difficult skills for boys to learn.

Special Events

In addition to the weeknight programme and activities that take place, the following activities often feature in the programmes for this age group:

Battalion Events:

Many battalions run events and activities for Anchor Boys with competitions and fun days. These can be an important extra part to your programme, which offers extra opportunities to your boys.

Parents' Evening and Displays:

A parents' evening provides an excellent opportunity for the boys to show their parents and friends what they have been doing in the BB. It is also an opportunity for the company to gain the support of parents, members of the church and local community.

Recruiting New Members:

Leaders should think about recruiting new members, particularly as older boys will be moving up into the Junior Section; this should be planned and agreed by section staff and could be one of the aims for the section as part of its development plan; see the information concerning the 'Company Development Scheme'.

Recruitment should take place early in the session so that new boys get opportunities to take part in all the exciting aspects of the Anchors programme, which you have carefully planned. Your best 'recruiting agents' will be the boys you already have and their parents and neighbours. A letter home to parents and to church members informing them that the company is on the look out for new boys will often bring a response. Boys can be also encouraged to bring a friend.

Recruitment and publicity material is available from BB Supplies and the various Regional Headquarters will be pleased to offer some advice and support. Your battalion will also be able to offer its help via the Company Support Officer scheme.

Accessibility: How do we make our company welcoming to all?

The BB has always had a philosophy that we welcome all boys into membership. Some companies have built reputations that reflect the fact that they have taken boys who have been unable to join other clubs or organisations.

As well as being part of the Christian mission of the BB, we have an Equal Opportunities Policy that reinforces our commitment to being inclusive. The policy can be viewed on the BB website at www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/library/factsheet.

Being truly inclusive and extending a welcome to all is not easily achieved, and demands knowledge, skills and patience. BB Headquarters recognises that leaders often achieve great things with young people in companies, and undertakes to share examples of success and provide training, support, information and a listening ear when required.

Disability Advice Network

This network of experienced and trained volunteers is available to give one-to-one advice and information to any company or individual leader who needs it. The purpose of the network is to educate and support BB leaders across the UK so that children with disabilities and impairments can participate and benefit from all that the BB has to offer. Further information about the network as well as downloadable resources on a range of topics aimed at informing and supporting leaders can be found at: www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/projects/dan.

The Disability Advice Network was initially funded by the Department for Education and Skills, and then by a grant from BBC Children in Need

Company Development Scheme – How can we ensure the future of our Company?

What is it?

The Company Development Scheme is a simple way of improving and building upon the work that your Section and Company is doing. The Scheme provides a structure to plan and review what you do throughout the year with your boys. It also provides an opportunity to celebrate what the leaders of all the sections have achieved.

Who is it for?

The Company Development Scheme is for all company and section staff, including the Chaplain.

Where should it take place?

Think carefully about where you meet and that you allow enough time. The church hall would be fine, but perhaps there's an opportunity to meet at someone's house and then have a meal after the planning work has been done.

How does it work?

It is based around two staff meetings a year and helps staff to take a fresh look at what they do and how to develop each section with new ideas and activities. The purpose of the two staff meetings is to:

- Plan and develop an exciting and relevant programme for the coming session
- Plan staffing for all sections
- Identify recruitment and training needs
- Agree goals for improving the quality of experience of the boys and young people in the company
- Provide an opportunity for the staff to meet as a whole group for support and recognition

It is recommended that the first meeting be held in June or July. This meeting is intended to help your company and section staff to think about the following:

For the session just gone:

- What you have achieved for the session?
- Did you meet the goals you set for your company and section?
- How well did the programme run? Did you try any new activities?
- What changes, if any, will you make to the programme for the coming session?

For the coming session:

- What do you want to achieve for the coming session?
- What resources and finances are required?
- How is the programme to be run in each section?
- What training needs do the company and individuals have?
- Whether or not there is a need to recruit more leaders?

A second meeting is then held mid-session (December or January) to help your company and section staff to think about the following:

- What progress is being made towards the goals that were set?
- Is the programme running to plan?
- Do you need any extra resources or finance?
- Have the training needs highlighted at the last meeting been met? Is any other staff training planned?

Where can I get copies of the material?

Copies of the Company Development Scheme material together with outline agendas and guidance notes are available from the BB web site: www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/library/publications.

Alternatively, contact Brigade Headquarters at Felden Lodge, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 0BL. Telephone 01442 231681, email: enquiries@boys-brigade.org.uk

The Company Development Scheme was initially funded by the Department for Education and Skills.

Leader development and training – How can I develop my skills?

Using the Company Development Scheme (explained above) is the best way of ensuring that all the company staff's needs are looked at. If your Captain has not yet introduced this scheme, you might want to suggest that the material is used for your company or your section. Company Captains receive details of all regional and battalion training courses which are circulated annually. Further information on courses is available from your Regional HQ. Training courses details are also published on the BB website: www.boys-brigade.org.uk/leaders/training.

Courses are run in your local battalion and districts, and also at Felden Lodge, Carronvale and Rathmore. Examples of courses available are:

- Youth Leader Training
- Holiday Leadership Certificate
- Camp Craft Certificate
- Working With Challenging Behaviour
- Working With 4 Year Olds
- Captains' Training
- Company Development Scheme

New courses are continuously in development, and if you feel there is a need for anything that would benefit you but that is not currently available, please let Brigade Headquarters know.

Section administration and record keeping

The section will need to keep some records about its work, a few details about the boys, an attendance register, the progress of the boys through the Anchor Activity scheme, copies of any letters etc. The annual and special event consent forms will also need to be kept. It's an important task, but it's not necessarily the job of the officer in charge to do the administration; perhaps another officer or helper would take it on

Register of attendance:

Sections must keep a record of those attending each week; this must be for the boys and staff including all helpers; it should also record the names of any visitors. The register should be taken at the beginning of the evening; the register could be marked as the boys arrive. A list of boys and staff attending activities held outside of the section night should also be kept i.e. battalion fun day, trips and visits etc. The register can be used to record any Sunday school, parade or church attendance.

Attendance registers are available from BB Supplies.

Boys' records:

Some basic personal information will need to be kept for each boy together with brief details about his progress through the section and with the activity awards. This should include:

Personal Information:

- Name, address, date of birth and home telephone number(s)
- Parents'/carers' names
- A note of any special needs to enable them to participate in BB activities
- Any medical conditions and allergies that leaders should be aware of
- Whether the parent/carer has indicated that they do not want their child included in any photographs taken of company activities
- The name of the person who usually collects the boy should also be noted
- The date(s) that the annual consent form was returned

The card should also record the date of joining the section, of moving up to the next section; if he leaves the date should be recorded and the reason for leaving noted.

Progress towards the Anchor Activity Scheme:

A record of when boys have completed the various topics for the Anchor Activity Scheme:

- 12 topics for the green Activity badge
- 18 topics for the red, and
- 18 topics for the blue
- The date(s) any certificates and badges were awarded, and any section trophies

Record cards are available from BB Supplies.

Other information and support details

Other information and support to help you with your work is available from Brigade Headquarters and from the Regional Headquarters for Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

The BB web site www.boys-brigade.org.uk contains a wealth of information and registered leaders can sign up for BBHQ email updates and ideas for fundraising. The web site contains various message boards so posting a request for ideas for your parents night, or ideas for some fundraising is likely to bring ideas that other BB leaders have used. You can also have a BB email address and companies can have their own web site under the BB umbrella; all details are on the web site.

Individual officers receive copies of the BB Gazette and companies receive periodic mailings from BBHQ.

In addition battalions, districts and Regions provide a wealth of support particularly with events for boys and training and support for leaders.

The BB locally is often represented on Youth Councils or umbrella organisations for voluntary youth and children's organisations. These can provide a range of support for BB work including additional training for leaders and resources and ideas for your programme. Just because something doesn't have a BB badge on it, does not mean that it cannot be used or adapted for your boys!