Squirrels



Welcome

to Brighton Hill, Somers Squirrel Drey!

Hi from our Squirrel mascot 'Somers' and all the team at Brighton Hill!

This pack contains information for new parents about our Squirrel Drey, which we hope you will find useful. Let us know if you have any questions and we look forward to meeting you soon.

What is Squirrels?

Squirrels is for children aged 4 to 6, and is the youngest section of Scouting. (Go to page 5 for an explanation of 'sections'). We learn about the world and gain new skills through fun activities such as scavenger hunts, navigating, map reading, first aid, gardening, cooking and crafts. We often hold our activities outside. We work towards badges and aim to give the children some challenge in an age appropriate way. When children turn 6, we hope that they will continue to Beavers. Our Squirrel Drey is called Brighton Hill Somers Squirrel Drey and we have around 16 children attending.

You can see photos of our activities on the Brighton Hill Scout Group Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/1134768256539427/ You can access this page by requesting to join and an admin will approve appropriate people. Admins only permit parents to join from the whole of the Scout Group and we kindly ask that they remove themselves when their child leaves our scout group. If you do not want photos taken of your child during their time with us, please tick the 'No' box on OSM (see later in this pack for OSM explanation).

Where do we meet?



Our regular meeting place is the Scout HQ on the corner of Beethoven and Schubert Road, in Brighton Hill. The Scout HQ has a big hall area, a kitchen, and toilets. The postcode is RG22 4BP. Sometimes, we go out and about to other locations in Basingstoke. We have been to places such as the Fire Station, the Orchard at Kempshott and Middle Copse, a small wooded area which Scouts can use, at the edge of Brighton Hill.

The Scout HQ has it's own small car park. Please do be careful when dropping your Squirrel off or at pick up time as the car park can be busy at this time.

What is the usual meeting format?



When children arrive, they can leave their coat and water bottle on the tables and collect their squirrel tag with their name on and hang it on the tree. Usually, there is a short activity available they can join in whilst everyone arrives. When they hear the bells, they can find a coloured spot to stand on (these are laid out in a horseshoe shape on the floor) and we have flag break. We say our promise and learn what we will be doing today. We then enjoy a story together before starting the main activity. After the activity we will come together at the end, we give out a golden acorn award for a Squirrel that has done their best during that meeting. We also tell the Squirrels any news we have, issue any badges due to be given out and then it's home time. We dismiss the Squirrels and then if you need to chat with an adult leader there are usually a few minutes to do this.

Starting Squirrels

New starters are welcome to try a few sessions to see if they like Squirrels. Parents (and siblings if you need to bring them) are welcome to stay for the first session or two to help settle their child in if this is beneficial. If a new starter is enjoying Squirrels, they will stay on and be 'Invested' into the group formally. We hold a small ceremony to present you with your District and County badges as well as our Group name tape and the 'Membership' badge. Parents and Siblings are invited to this ceremony and it usually occurs 4-6 weeks after starting.

Uniform

Children need a uniform from when they take their promise, a few weeks after they start. They can choose to wear the uniform before this if they would like to. Our uniform consists of navy shorts, joggers or activity trousers and a red jumper with the Squirrels logo embroidered on it. There are also optional polo shirts which can be nice for the summer term and be worn under their jumper.

You can get uniform from the Basingstoke Scout Shop which is open 6pm – 8pm on a Thursday and 10am – 12am on Saturdays and is based at Carpenters Down in Popley, RG24 9AE (what3words: motion.neon.spaces). This gives you a chance to try the items before you buy but please be warned the shop is small so does not always have all sizes. You can also buy online for click and collect to the shop or to an address of your choice at https://basingstokescoutshop.org.uk/.

The Basingstoke shop is run by volunteers and all profits go back to local Scouting which in turn keeps subscription fees down. You can also order from the main UK Scout shop online or some other retailers such as Skoolkit and John Lewis.

Sometimes, scout uniform is available on the Facebook site Basingstoke Scouts Pre-Owned https://www.facebook.com/groups/basingstokescoutspreowned/ where uniform and other scouting kit can be passed onto others.

In our experience, uniform sizes up quite small (especially around the neck!) so it might be worth asking another Squirrel or parent if you can try theirs on first. Typically age 6-7 jumpers give room for growth and avoid any re-sewing of badges onto a new jumper in the future!

When a member is invested into the Group, they will receive a Brighton Hill Scarf (or 'Neckerchief') and Woggle. The Scarf is worn rolled up with the woggle securing it. When taking part in activities away from the scout hut, the Squirrels can wear their scarf knotted with a friendship knot to avoid losing their woggle – we can show them how to do this. If you would like a second or replacement Scarf or Woggle, they can be purchased from the Basingstoke Scout Shop.

Badges

During our meetings Squirrels work towards Activity Badges and Challenge Awards.

Some activity badges are staged, this means they have various levels to work through. Staged badges have the same requirements throughout the Scout sections, so if you get one of these (they are blue and purple), you can move it to your Beaver uniform when you move on and continue to work through further stages as you develop more skills.

Challenge Awards tend to take longer to work towards and are based around a theme. There are four of these. When a child has all four Challenge Awards and two Activity Badges, they get their Chief Scout's Acorn Award, which is the highest award a Squirrel can gain, and can be worn on their Beaver jumper. If a Squirrel is with us for two years and attends regularly, we would expect them to be able to achieve their Acorn Award.

Joining In awards are given on your anniversary of making your first promise.



You can work on badges at home if you'd like and bring in some evidence for us to sign off. You can find the requirements online. It is worth checking with us what we have planned in our programme to avoid duplication. We may, from time to time, send small activities home to help complete parts of badges we are working on.

Sometimes you will be given a badge to mark an occasion such as the King's Coronation. These usually go on your uniform for a year then are taken off. We recommend getting a camp blanket (any blanket can be used) to add these badges to. Sometimes, we may give out a badge to mark some of our activities or an event that can go straight on your camp blanket. We will try and let parents know where special badges should go as it can be confusing.

This diagram will help you know where to put your badges onto your jumper:



Our Leaders

As a section and a wider Scout Group everything we do is the result of volunteering. We give our personal time freely to create and run a great programme of events for your child to enjoy. Our uniformed Squirrels volunteers are known to the children by tree seed or fruit names.

Team Leader

Our Squirrels Team Leader is Laura (Acorn). Laura has watched her 2 sons grow and develop whilst part of Cubs, Scouts and Explorers at Brighton Hill Scout Group and is excited to be part of the beginning of your child's journey in Scouting. Laura can be contacted at laura.porter@bhsg.org.uk

Team members

Our regular team members are:

- Sarah (Blackberry). Sarah has 3 children in the older sections of Scouting. Sarah can be contacted on sarah@bhsg.org.uk.
- Amanda (Sycamore). Amanda has a son in Beavers and volunteers most weeks.
- Kate (Chestnut). Kate volunteers as a Beaver leader with another group also.

Twigs, Catkin and Sapling are our 3 'Young Leaders' who help each week and are from the oldest 'Explorer' section in our Scout Group.

Getting involved

Running Squirrels (and the whole scout group) takes a village. It's ideal if everyone could pitch in a little. It helps us deliver a great programme for the young people and is fun too. We have

lots of parents giving a little or a lot of time helping in a variety of ways. You can find out more about different volunteer roles on the Scout website: Our local teams | Scouts

The most common way to help is to join the parent rota as a helper. You will be able to sign up to be on the rota via OSM (more on OSM later) and we hope each family will help once or twice each term. It's a great way to see the fun things we do at Squirrels as well as lend a hand. The leader in charge of the meeting will let you know how you can help but the main thing is to help the children join in. If you enjoy being part of the rota as a helper, then you can talk to Acorn about what's involved in joining our team as a Team Member.

Some parents have volunteered to join the Group Trustee Board and attend a few meetings a year to discuss and vote on the best way forward for the whole group. Others give a little time and expertise to help with the running of our hut and help with maintenance issues. If this could be for you, please speak to Acorn in the first instance.

We ask that each family that joins us at Squirrels and that is able, volunteers and helps in some way. Volunteering is fun and rewarding and Brighton Hill is a lovely group of people to be part of.

Safety

We take the safety of children and volunteers seriously. Each activity is risk assessed, and the risk assessments can be seen on request. The ratios we adhere to are one adult to six children, plus the leader-in-charge indoors and one adult to four squirrels plus the leader-in-charge at sessions away from the usual meeting place.

The Scout Group

Our Squirrel Drey is part of Brighton Hill Scout Group. The other Sections within Brighton Hill Group are:

Section	Age Range	Section Name	Day	Time
Beavers	6-8 yrs	Grylls	Wednesday	6.15-7.15
Cubs	8-10.5 yrs	Gladstone Baden-Powell	Thursday	5.30-6.55 7.05-8.30
Scouts	10.5 – 14 yrs	Maclean	Tuesday	7-9
Explorers	14-18 yrs	Kraken	Monday	7.30-9.30
network	18-25 yrs	See bwds.org.uk for details		

All the Sections wear our black and white neckerchief, apart from the Explorers, which are part of the District, and who wear their blue and golden neckerchief. Our Sections are all

named after UK Chief Scouts. Our Scout Group has a Trustee Board that supports the Sections in the Group. You will be invited to the Group AGM in the Spring. The Group is part of the Basingstoke West Scout District, which you can find out more about on their website: Basingstoke West District Scouts – #SkillsForLife (bwds.org.uk)

Keeping in touch through OSM

We use a secure online tool called OSM (Online Scout Manager) to capture important information about your child and keep a record of the progress they are making towards their badges. We also use this as a way to invite you to specific events and emailing the group as a whole. Please keep your details up to date and please ensure the important medical and photograph permission are completed asap, as otherwise this causes us a lot of issues.

Please can we ask you to use the initial link that you were given when you registered your child on our waiting list to access the system. From here you should be able to set up your account as long as you use the same email address as you originally used. Any problems with this please contact Laura who will be able to help.

Once you have access to your child's account you will be able to see what we have planned for the term, we call this plan our 'Programme'. On OSM you can also see what badge progress your child is making, and sign up to the parent rota.

Keeping in Touch during meetings

If you need to contact us during a meeting please request both Laura and Sarah's phone numbers prior to your child joining our Drey. Please be aware we are unlikely to see the message until the end of the meeting as we will be interacting with the children.

Subscriptions and costs

The income from the subs allows us to provide a programme of activities, provide badges, pay membership to The Scout Association, pay our insurances and keep the Scout hut in good condition. Please arrange payment of £16 before the 5th of every month through OSM once your child's profile is set up. Laura will confirm these details with you.

Where possible we include the cost of our activities in the monthly Subscription cost however sometimes we will do additional optional activities and events which have an additional cost. Most of the time the group will subsidise these events to help keep costs as low as possible. These costs will be detailed in any event invites you receive. The cost of Scouting should never be a barrier to young people taking part in our activities. If you do have problems paying your child's subs now or in the future, then please speak to us.

The monthly subscription contribution represents our yearly costs split into 12 instalments and so needs to be paid for the whole year, which means subs do not stop in school holidays.

Gift Aid

As the Scout Association is a registered charity, we are able to claim Gift Aid on the subscription fees you pay. Gift Aid is a tax relief set up by the Government and it enables charities to claim back 25p for every £1 donation that is made, with no additional cost to yourselves. Any adult who pays tax qualifies for us to do this. Therefore, we are requesting that every eligible person completes the form at the back of this pack, so that the claim can be made. The form can be handed in or emailed to us and we can send it on to our subs administrator.

Data Protection

Safeguarding your information is important to us. If you would like to see our data protection policy please request this by email.

Physical Touches Approach

We know that children of Squirrel age will come to leaders to hug, jump on laps, hold hands or similar. The Scout website advises this is a way for children to express they are comfortable and enjoy being around leaders. However, it can also mean they're anxious, or not comfortable with something**.** In line with Scout guidance, we accept this contact, so the children have reassurance they are important to us. As soon as the Squirrel seems ready, we will then redirect the Squirrel back to the activity we are doing.

We will also hold hands when needed to keep children near us for safety e.g. when crossing a road or if they are likely to be distracted when we are out and about. If a child needs physical assistance e.g. on a climbing frame on a park, then we would ask them before initiating touch. We would also use touch if they were in physical danger and talking to the Squirrel had not worked e.g. climbing on a stack of chairs or running near a camp fire.

We would like to reassure you that our Team Members are DBS checked and we are happy to discuss any aspect of our approach with you. More information on these topics can be found on the Scouts website:
https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/running-a-squirrel-drey/how-to-run-a-squirrel-drey/tips-for-4-and-5-year-olds/
https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/running-a-squirrel-drey/how-to-run-a-squirrel-drey/safety-and-safeguarding/

Toileting

If your Squirrel is prone to occasional accidents, please let us know and feel free to leave a bag with spare clothes. There is free access to the toilets in the hut and there are steps for those that need one. For our longer sessions we will make sure there is opportunity to use the toilet and remind children to go.

If there is a toileting accident two people will be present to support the young person to change. All toileting accidents will be recorded as an accident/incident and parents/carers informed at pick up. More information can be found on safeguarding and toileting at https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/running-a-squirrel-drey/how-to-run-a-squirrel-drey/safety-and-safeguarding/

Safeguarding

Scouts has a robust approach to Safeguarding. All Team Members and Helpers should abide by our Yellow Card. The Scout Association encourages us to share the Yellow Card with parents and it can be found online and is reproduced at the end of this pack.

And finally

We hope you have found this welcome pack useful. If there's anything we should add, please let us know. If your child is new to us, we hope they enjoy their Scouting experience with us.

Yellow Card

Safeguarding

Code of Conduct for Adults

In Scouts, the welfare of children and young people is our priority. Everyone has a duty to report safeguarding concerns, and all adults must follow this Safeguarding Code of Conduct.

Children and young people first.
If in doubt, report it.

Find out more at
scouts.org.uk/safeguarding

Scouts

If a child or young person tells you about a concern, you must do the following.

1. Allow them to speak without interruption, and accept what they say.
2. Be understanding and reassuring, but do not give your opinion.
3. Tell them you will try to help but must pass the information on.
4. Write careful notes of what was said using the actual words used. Don't ask leading questions or try to find out whether the concern is justified.
5. Make sure that Scout activities do not cause further risk to their welfare.
6. Contact the Safeguarding Team.

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child or young person, or if there is a concern, complaint or allegation, about you or another adult, inside or outside of Scouts, you must do the following.

1. Write careful notes of what was said using the actual words used.
2. Do not ask leading questions or try to find out whether the concern is justified.
3. Make sure that Scouting does not cause further risk to your or their welfare.
4. Contact the Safeguarding Team.

Procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns

1. Gather the necessary information

- Make sure that you have the name, date of birth, address and phone number of each person involved with the concern.
- Find out when the people involved will next be at a Scout meeting or activity.

2. Contact the Safeguarding Team

- Use the reporting form on the Scouts website to report the concern to the Safeguarding Team. Include as much information as possible.
- If you can't fill in the form online, call **+44(0)20 8433 7164**

- (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or email **safeguarding@scouts.org.uk**
- In an emergency outside the above times, you can contact the Safeguarding Team by calling the Scouts Support Centre on **+44(0)345 300 1818**.
- Follow the Safeguarding Team's advice and take no further action unless they tell you to.
- Ask questions if you're not sure what to do.

It is your duty to report all safeguarding concerns, whether you are told about them directly or indirectly, as soon as possible (always within 24 hours). If you are not sure what to do, or you are not sure if a concern has been reported, contact the Safeguarding Team.

If a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm, call **999** or **112** and ask for the police. Tell the Safeguarding Team you have done this.

You can also call the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** or email them at **help@nspcc.org.uk**

Code of conduct

Do remember that you are a role model at all times, inside and outside of Scouts. You must set a good example for others to follow.

Do treat everyone with dignity and respect in line with the Scout Values.

Do treat all young people equally – do not show favouritism

Do follow the adult-to-young-people ratios at all times.

Do remember that you have been placed in a position of trust – do not abuse this trust.

Do report all safeguarding concerns directly to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible, and always within 24 hours

Do contact the Safeguarding Team if you receive details of any statutory agency (for example, the police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or children's services) involvement regarding a member.

Do remember that someone may misinterpret your actions.

Do respect children's and young people's right to personal privacy.

Do act within appropriate boundaries, even in difficult circumstances.

Do encourage an open and transparent culture, where people challenge or report behaviour that is not in line with this code.

Do make everyone aware of our safeguarding arrangements. Share our Yellow Card with volunteers, parents and guardians, and display it where meetings take place.

Do create an environment where children and young people feel safe and able to voice their concerns.

Do have separate sleeping accommodation for young people and adults, as well as young leaders working with a younger section.

Do plan activities that involve more than one other person being present. If that's not possible, make sure other people can see and hear what's going on.

Do not plan to be alone with a child or young person in Scouts, either online or in person.

Do not drink alcohol when you are directly responsible for children and young people in Scouts, and never allow under 18s to drink alcohol on Scout activities

Do not trivialise concerns or abuse.

Do not let concerns or abuse go unreported. Contact the Safeguarding Team, especially if you feel your concern has not been taken seriously.

Do not join in physical contact games with children and young people.

Do not overstep the boundaries with children and young people by being involved in friendships or personal relationships with them.

Do not allow activities that encourage bullying behaviour, including initiation ceremonies, dares or forfeits.

Do not use inappropriate, suggestive or threatening language, whether verbal, written or online.

Do not rely on your reputation or position to protect you.

Do not get involved with a safeguarding concern if you have a personal friendship or family connection with those involved. Step back and tell the Safeguarding Team about the connection.

scouts.org.uk/safeguarding
Version 8. 1st January 2024

Crystal Mark 24127
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

Squirrels

Gift Aid Declaration

I want Brighton Hill Scout Group to treat all Membership Subscriptions paid and any other Donations I make in the future as Gift Aid Donations until I notify you otherwise.

Donor's details:

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Home address

Postcode Date

Signature

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income.