

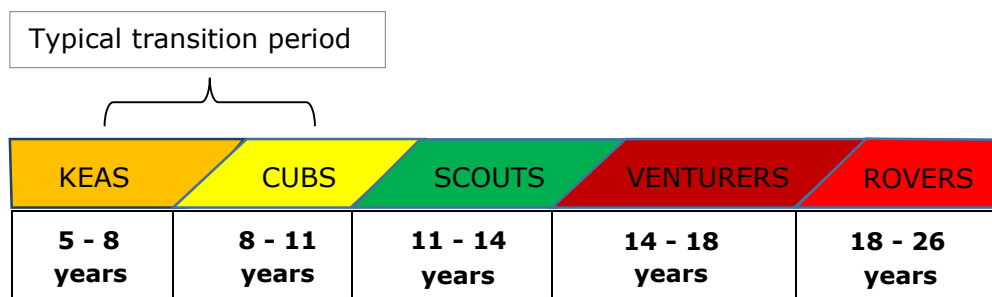
# STAGES OF TRANSITION AND AGE SECTIONS POLICY

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 SCOUTS New Zealand places its youth members into one of five sections (Keas, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers, and Rovers), based on the changing developmental needs of a young person as they grow. As young people mature at different rates, due to their life experiences and learning needs, defining transition ages is not a perfect science. By adopting a Youth at the Centre approach, the system can be flexible enough to adapt to most young people's needs
- 1.2 There are some common behavioural and/or developmental indicators which help to illustrate what a young person could typically look like for each age group. Examples of these are included in Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Transitioning between sections can be challenging for a young person. It requires careful consideration of the developmental needs of each individual. The best way to do this is through a flexible and collaborative approach between the young person, their parents/caregivers, and leaders.

## 2 FLEXIBLE TRANSITION

- 2.1 There are two aspects of a flexible transitions approach that need to be considered - age and time of year. Leaders must make a collaborative decision with the young person and their parents/caregivers about both the right age and time of year to transition.
- 2.2 Age of transition: This table shows the typical age ranges for each section. A young person would usually transition to the next section within six months either side of their birthday and this is dependent on their readiness to move on.



- 2.3 Time of year to transition: There is no set time of year for young people to transition between sections, providing flexibility to suit the needs of the young person.

## 3 KEY POLICY POINTS

- 3.1 No young person may start before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 3.2 If a young person is invested into a particular section then they are considered a member of that section. This is important in terms of eligibility for national events.

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*"[Scout leaders] deal with the individual [child] rather than with the mass."*

*- Baden Powell*

## 4 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 This policy is about empowering local leaders to make good decisions with a **Youth at the Centre** approach. The points in this section outline some considerations for making youth empowering decisions in the transition process. A related flow chart can be found in **Appendix 1**.

## 5 TIMELINE

- 5.1 **Typically, a** young person should be able to transition six months either side of the usual starting age of the section. For example, a Cub could transition to Scouts anywhere between the ages of 10½ and 11½ years old.
- 5.2 Please note that this timeframe is flexible, and decisions should always be made with the young person at the centre.

## 6 MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE YOUNG PERSON

- 6.1 A young person transitions between sections in order to meet their individual developmental needs, learning stages, and individual wishes.
- 6.2 Health, disability, learning ability, own personal challenges, reliance on peer groups and skill sets are factors which may inform transition decisions.
- 6.3 The length of the transition period is based on each young person's needs.
- 6.4 A young person might wish or need to transition at a different time to their peers.
- 6.5 If a cohort of young people is at a similar developmental stage, it may be appropriate for them to transition at the same time. However, it is essential that each young person is at the centre of the decision-making process.
- 6.6 The transition needs to be about meeting the needs of the young person, rather than being a leader's preference or fitting in with a section's programme.

## 7 MAKING THE DECISION

- 7.1 The young person *must participate in or lead* (based on age) the decision-making process about when they should move to the next section.
- 7.2 Leaders must discuss the transition with parents/caregivers. Agree on a plan and timeline with them and their child. What would make the transition easier for all?
- 7.3 Parents often plan activities for their children at the beginning of the year, so it is important to work with them well ahead of time, particularly as a transition to a new section is likely to result in a different meeting time or day.
- 7.4 A Term 1 move might be best for one young person, but Term 3 might be better for another

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- 7.5 Discuss a young person's transition plan with the other leaders in your section and the leaders of the section the young person is transitioning to.
- 7.6 Share outcomes of discussions with the young person and their parents/caregiver to ensure the decision to transition is mutual, and the young person is always empowered in the decision-making process.
- 7.7 In some cases, a young person may wish or need to stay on longer in a section, perhaps due to health or learning difficulties, or access to peer support. Transitioning more than six months after their birthday can be an option in these cases. This would require a discussion with the young person, their parents/caregiver and other leaders. Remember, as a leader you are empowered to make the best decision, but it is essential to place young people at the centre of any decision-making process.
- 7.8 Holding back a young person from transitioning as a punitive measure due to disruptive behaviour is never acceptable. This kind of behaviour could indicate that a young person is bored and under/over stimulated in that section. Not transitioning them to the next section because they have been 'naughty' as a punitive approach goes against our values and good practice.
- 7.9 Make the transition an 'event'. This is a special time for the young person (especially the younger ones) so mark it well and celebrate their achievement with their family and peers.

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*"We regularly have Keas and Cubs events, so transitioning is easier because they have a better understanding of what and who is ahead of them."*

*- Kea Leader, 2017*

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## APPENDIX 1: FLOWCHART FOR TRANSITIONS – EXAMPLE FOR A KEA MOVING TO CUB SECTION

### Transition Ceremony:

- Conduct a ceremony that celebrates the transition of the young person and what they have achieved so far
- Parents/caregivers are present
- Young people have great memories of their transition



### Joint Section Activities:

- Over a period of 4-6 weeks, provide opportunities for the young person (and perhaps their family) to meet with the Cub Pack and take part in activities
- Kea/Cub link camps are an ideal opportunity to bring the two sections together, making the transition easier for young people



### Consult and Plan:

- Ask the young person if they want to move up to Cubs; consider whether they could benefit from moving up with a cohort of others
- Discuss with parents/caregivers if a transition is appropriate, inform them of the process, and make a plan with them
- Check in with other Kea and Cub leaders and plan the transition



### If a Kea has some of the following characteristics:

- Is approximately 7½ years old
- Exhibits signs of boredom/disinterest in the activities
- Distracts others or sabotaging the session
- Is a fast learner who grasps concepts quickly

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## 8 GUIDELINES

- 8.1 Young people can find transitioning to be a scary experience. Meeting new leaders and young people, adapting to a new programme, and not knowing what to expect can all be daunting.
- 8.2 In order to ensure that we run the most 'young person friendly' and effective process possible, this section contains some recommendations that are relevant to most sections. Please read these guidelines in conjunction with the wider principles of the Youth Development Policy.

### Connections:

- Provide the opportunity for your section to mix with the other sections throughout the year. This gives a good platform for creating positive connections, building new relationships, and offering some insight into the section that the young people will move into.
- Run a joint event (such as a link camp) for both sections. This is a great opportunity for both sections' members and leaders to connect and feel more comfortable in a different space with different people. Consider inviting parents/caregivers along too, to strengthen connections with family/whānau.
- Regularly connect with family/whānau. A relationship with them can make your life easier and help to support the development of young people and the wider section. It is important to remember that young people often have multiple extra-curricular activities and parents need to plan their terms or years ahead of time. Planning transitions in advance helps families to adapt their schedules.
- Attend Scouting meetings, events and trainings when possible. It will give you the opportunity to meet other leaders, to feel more connected, and to gain additional information and guidance about organising transitions.

### Processes:

- Enable any interested young people to experience your section over a couple of weeks, before they choose to formally join.
- Consider recruitment throughout the year.
- Your Zone Team can provide guidance when you are helping young people to transition.
- Remember to update OSM with the young person's details once any section transition has taken place.
- Keep your Group Leader updated on which members are getting ready to move on, with details of your plan and the process you will follow.

### Support:

- If a young person needs some encouragement to participate, set them some challenges around engaging with others e.g. a game like seeking the name and some fun information about the next section's leader and three other young people.
- Your recruitment and retention rates can often be reflective of your leadership. Remember to remain open, upbeat, engaging, empowering and inspiring throughout the transition process.
- Does your section have a buddy system in place? This is a great way to help new members to feel less isolated. It is also good for giving other older members some responsibility as a buddy.
- Use the buddy system to share the expectations of the section/group and introduce them to the Code of Conduct.
- If you've got any queries or need more information, talk to your Group Leader or Zone Section Leader.

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*"Your group/section is a reflection on you, so to be inclusive, act in an inclusive manner to all."*

*- Parent of a Kea and Scout, 2017*

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## 9 TOOLS

- 9.1 To support you and your section with the transition process, the appendices feature a guide with indicative behavioural and developmental guides for each section (excluding Rovers). This is a learning tool to help form thinking and should not be treated as a checklist. All young people are different and we should never attempt to fit them into a 'labelled box'.

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