

Troop 188



Parents Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Troop 188! As a new member of Troop 188, you are joining a group of boys who share your interests in the outdoors, adventure, and learning. As a Scout you will get the opportunity to learn new skills, and you will be recognized and rewarded for what you have accomplished. You will have the opportunity to learn leadership, organizational and other skills that will help you later in life.

But what should a new (or prospective) scout and parent know about the troop, and what should he do first? What is the role of parents in Boy Scouting and how is the troop run? The "Troop 188 Parents Handbook" is intended to provide answers to these questions, quickly. For additional information talk with the Scoutmaster or any of the adult leaders as well as visiting the Troop web site.

Background

Troop 188 has been in existence for more than 48 years in Ankeny. We are in the Hawkeye district, which is part of the Mid-Iowa Council. Our charter organization is Cornerstone Baptist Church (where we hold our meetings), but the Troop has no specific religious affiliation. It is a relatively large troop resulting in a wide variety of activities for almost every scouting interest, and a substantial amount of adult support. In addition to hikes, service projects, campouts, canoeing and ski trips, the troop also spends one full week each summer at Camp Mitigwa near Boone, Iowa.

Current Leaders Troop Committee Chair (**CC**): Randy Murphy, Scoutmaster (**SM**): Dan Koenigsfeld; Senior Patrol Leader (**SPL**): Logan Powers

Joining

Any boy who has completed at least the 5th grade or is at least 11 years old or has earned the Arrow of Light Award is eligible to join the Boy Scouts. There is no need to have been in Cub Scouts, but all cubs are certainly encouraged to continue on into Boy Scouts. Simply fill out the BSA YOUTH APPLICATION form (available at any troop meeting). Bring the completed, signed application form to a meeting with a \$1 one time transfer fee, and the Recharter fee of \$30 (this covers cost of neckerchief, slide, epaulets, nametag, Troop unit number, and equipment).

What Should a Scout's Parents Do?

Encourage your Scout. Get a uniform and a handbook and help your scout sew on badges, as explained below in the Uniforms and Equipment section. Get your scout to meetings; perhaps stay but certainly come back at 8:20 for the closing and announcements and distribution activity information. Encourage him to look at his scout handbook to prepare for advancement. Go on some outings, and if at all possible, your son's first overnight. As time and interest permit, attend troop committee meetings and get into the life of troop. Try to go to summer camp. Help run trips, bring new ideas for outings, and bring you expertise in offering Merit Badges in a field of interest. You may have skills, resources or contacts the troop needs.

Structure Troop 188 is run by the Senior Patrol Leader (**SPL**), and is divided into several small groups called patrols. The troop meets as a whole almost every Monday evening, 7:00-8:30. As necessary for activities, projects and camping, scouts sometimes work in patrols of 4-8 scouts. A senior scout acts as a patrol leader and there are one or more patrols composed of only senior scouts. A patrol leader and troop guide will be provided for the new scouts for the first 6 months, after which they will elect their own patrol leader.

The troop meetings and much of the administrative work is handled by the Senior Patrol Leader (**SPL**). Scouts also serve as librarian, quartermaster, chaplain aide, scribe, instructor, troop guide, and historian whom all report to the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (**ASPL**).

The troop is guided by the Scoutmaster (**SM**), and his Assistant Scoutmasters (**ASM**). The leaders are lead by a Committee Chair (**CC**). Troop 188's committee meets once each month. The committee is in charge of insuring safety, communication with parents, financial discussions, etc. Troop 188 is a "**BOY RUN TROOP**". This means the Troop Committee does not set the program, that's left up to the Patrol Leaders Council, which is explained in the next paragraph. Within the troop we follow the Patrol method which is described more in detail in the "Patrols" and "Camping" sections.

The Patrol Leaders Council (**PLC**) meets twice each month to plan upcoming meetings and activities. The PLC is made up of the youth leadership consisting of the Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Troop scribe, Patrol Leaders, and Troop Guides. The Scoutmaster and other adult leaders are advisors to the PLC.

Patrols

Within Troop 188, your son will be a member of a small team of 6-8 boys called a patrol. There your son will learn to relate to others, discover common goals, make decisions, carry out group plans, grow with peer leadership, and meet Scouting's aims of fitness, character, and leadership development. The patrol works together as a unit on everything. The patrol has its own equipment for each campout assigned to them when the patrol is formed. The "**Patrol Method**" is used to give real responsibility to as many boys as possible in an environment of fun, learning, and companionship. One or two Assistant Scoutmasters serve as advisors to each new scout patrol, but intervene only when needed.

Organization

The Troop Committee, composed of interested parents, meets monthly and is headed by the Committee Chair (**CC**). All parents are encouraged to attend and assist. Communications, safety, advancement, and financial matters are discussed. The **SPL** also attends, giving the troop committee an update of what was discussed in the **PLC** meetings. The Scoutmaster and other adult leaders meet with the patrol leaders and scouts holding offices twice each month to plan meetings and activities. Each Troop outing is coordinated by both adults and scouts.

Troop Meetings

The troop meets in Cornerstone Baptist Church almost every Monday evening from 7:00-8:30. All Scouts are expected to attend every Troop meeting. Experience has shown the more involved a parent is, the better their son's progress. Meetings are led by the Senior Patrol Leader (**SPL**) and start with a flag ceremony, some announcements, and then a program or theme.

Assistant Scoutmasters (**ASM**) and some parents stay through the meeting, but generally don't directly participate. Many/most parents come near the end of the meeting when the troop does the closing and announcements are made. Scouts (and parents) abide by the basic social convention that when the "Scout Sign" is raised (3 fingers up); everyone quiets down and raises the sign.

The boys are expected to wear their class "A" uniform to all meetings and events unless otherwise instructed. Troop 188s' class "A" uniform includes a scout shirt with all appropriate insignia, the troop scarf and a neckerchief slide, nice jeans or shorts. Scout pants/shorts, socks, hat etc. are optional but encouraged. Boys are expected to come prepared and already in uniform to meetings with their scout handbook, and all other items detailed in the "Required Scout gear" document included in this packet. A class "B" uniform is any scouting related T-shirt, or a plain white T-shirt without logos.

Scoutmaster Conferences and Boards of review are held as necessary during the regular meeting time. Scouts that need a conference or board or review for rank advancement should put their name on the sign up sheet. These are explained below in the "**Advancement**" section.

Uniforms and Equipment

Merit badge sashes are worn to the periodic Courts of Honor. The uniform and required patches are all available at the Mid-Iowa Scout Office and Store on Euclid Ave, in Des Moines. They're open Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30-5:30, Tuesday and Thursday 8:30-7 and Saturdays until 3. The troop provides each new scout with a troop neckerchief, slide, epaulettes, troop number, and Mr. Rope. As a scout advances and gets merit badges, a merit badge sash is used to display them. The troop provides merit badges and rank advancement patches as scouts earn them.

Each new scout should buy the current edition of the Boy Scout Handbook and carefully label it. It is used throughout their entire career in scouting, to record all advancement, and all scout activities should be noted in it as well (service, trips, etc). Most scouts (and fathers) buy some of their own camping gear eventually, but initially borrowing or even renting can be useful. The troop also has some gear available.

Placement of Patches, Badges, etc: Refer to the Scout Handbook for placement of the council patch and the Troop number (188 of course). An American flag is pre-sewn on the right. Green "ribbons" are placed on each epaulet. Earned ranks (scout, tenderfoot, first class, etc.) go on the left pocket body (each replacing the previous rank's badge). See the Boy Scout handbook for more information.

Advancement

There are seven Boy Scout ranks that are achieved via work effort, service, and length of time; none are tied to grade or age. After completing the requirements for a rank, the Scout should sign up for a Scoutmaster conference and a Board of Review.

At the Scoutmaster conference, the scout meets with the **SM** or **ASM** to discuss his progress in the troop. In order to conduct a Board of Review, parents may be asked to attend specific meetings. At the Board of Review, the Board is typically made up of 2-3 adults/parents from the troop, but not the SM or ASM, nor the parent of the scout taking part in the Review. The Board will question the Scout on achievements required for this and prior advancements. A convenient list of questions will be provided to the adults conducting the Review in order for them to better understand what the Scout should know for the rank they are being reviewed for. The Scout is required to be in a class "A" uniform and have all necessary equipment with him, including his Scout handbook and Mr. Rope.

NOTE Dues need to be current and their uniform updated before your son will be given a Scoutmaster conference or Board of Review for rank advancement.

Requirements for each rank involve completing tasks listed in the handbook or merit badge books. Through First Class, all the requirements are in the handbook. Scouts do the required activities on their own, on a camp out, at the beginning or end of meetings, or during advancement meetings or outings. They are signed off on by an adult leader. **You cannot sign off on your own son's requirements.** If a scout has already started a merit badge with a counselor, the scout can complete requirements on a family outing such as a requirement for a hike. The Scout just needs to document exactly what they did and be prepared to explain what they did to fulfill the requirement. Merit Badges are directed by adults certified for that badge and scouts work with them on the requirements.

If a Scout would like to do a merit badge, he just needs 2 additional Scouts to join him. He needs to then find (adult leaders can help finding a counselor), and contact a merit badge counselor to teach the merit badge and sign off on the requirements. This may seem scary to a scout having to contact an adult but it is all part of developing leadership, and taking responsibility. **Scouts can not start and work on a merit badge by themselves**, but they can work independently on a merit badge they may have started with a counselor at summer camp or elsewhere.

Courts of Honor

Courts of Honor are held 4-5 times each year to formalize rank advancements and publicly recognize scouts for their achievements. All parents and scouts are expected to attend Courts of Honor and share in the boys' accomplishments. Even if your scout is not receiving a rank advancement or any merit badges, you should still attend in support of your fellow Scouts. All family members are welcome to attend these meetings.

Eagle Scout Courts of Honor are the highest recognition given to scouts. A separate Eagle Court of Honor is held for each scout who achieves this esteemed level of scouting. All scouts are encouraged to attend these special meetings, along with their families. Attendance at an Eagle Court of Honor is one of the best ways to understand and appreciate the significance of this rank, and is a real encouragement for scouts to "stick with it" until they reach Eagle rank.

Merit Badges

Scouts at the higher levels (First Class, Star and Life) need to earn merit badges in order to advance. Accomplishments toward earning each merit badge are recorded on a "**blue card**". There is an example of a blue card included in this packet. Scouts and their parents should be aware of the importance of keeping blue cards up to date. When authorized adult leaders ("merit badge counselors") have signed-off on each requirement for a merit badge, it is the scout's responsibility to turn the blue card in to the troop's Advancement Chairman so that it can be recorded. The blue card eventually goes to the regional BSA headquarters and becomes part of each scout's permanent file.

Many parents, teachers and other qualified adult leaders have volunteered to serve the troop as a Merit Badge Counselor for one or more merit badges. The troop maintains a list of these counselors. Scouts should contact a merit badge counselor before beginning work on a badge. Merit badge Counselors can advise the scout on the best way to proceed on each merit badge and advise them throughout the process. Ultimately, this merit badge counselor will have to sign off on all work toward the badge. The advancement chair or Scoutmaster can also sign off requirements in the event the Merit Badge Counselor is not available.

In Boy Scouts, we use Merit Badge Counselors to formally teach our badges. While parts of a badge may be required to be worked on outside the troop setting, the badge (as a whole) is required to be worked on as a group. Even though a Merit Badge Counselor might be a parent, they need to teach badge work as a class, not just 1 on 1 situation and they need to be registered with the Council as a counselor. Both of these requirements are in place in order to ensure Youth Protection for our scouts.

Summer camp and Merit Badge Conclaves provide great opportunities to earn merit badges. Merit Badge Conclaves are one or two-day sessions held to help scouts to earn several merit badges in a concentrated time period. Scouts are advised of upcoming Merit Badge Conclaves at troop meetings. Especially for younger scouts, it is encouraged that parents review with your scout, the merit badges that he is interested in taking at these events as some may be preferred in order to meet the prerequisites for rank advancement and other merit badges, for instance: First Aid and Swimming. Please ask the assistant scoutmaster assigned to your son's patrol if there are any questions.

Fund Raising

The major fund raising event for the troop is the popcorn sale in November. Additional fund raisers such as pizza sales and car washes are also scheduled throughout the year. Scouts can earn money towards summer camp during the popcorn fundraiser and certain other designated fundraisers throughout the year. 75% of funds received by fund raising are for the entire troops, 25% goes to the Scouts that work the fundraiser. This money is in their "Scout account" and can be used toward any scouting activity, campout, summer camp, or to purchase scouting related items at the Scout shop. Financial assistance is available and the Chairman of the troop committee should be contacted confidentially if need be.

Service

Service to the community, to the troop, and to others is an important part of scouting. Scouts are expected to participate in such activities as helping other scouts with Eagle projects, and on clean up projects to thank the Church for use of their facility. Service hours are a requirement for promotion in most ranks and the key part of earning the Eagle rank. Service hours are recorded by the Advancement Chair, but it is the responsibility of the Scout to ensure the accuracy of this information as this information is needed for certain rank advancements. There is an area in the hand book to track outings the scout attends. This information is required for certain rank advancement and is the responsibility of the scout to keep accurate.

Campouts

The PLC plans a troop outing in almost every month. In Troop 188 we require at least 4 adult leaders to go on any campout. If we do not have enough adults, the campout or outing will have to be canceled. One of the adult leaders must be "Trained". This means they have Complete the SM Fast Start, Youth Protection, and Basic Indoor/Outdoor leader training at the council level.

Campouts are an important part of the scouting experience. Campouts are usually announced far in advance at the scout meetings and are listed on monthly calendar on the troop website. If a scout is interested in a campout, he should be sure to attend meetings or contact his Patrol Leader so that he does not miss the sign-up dates and the planning of activities.

Information about specific campouts will be given to the scouts at the meetings before the campout. Meals on camping trips are planned (with approval of and adult leader), purchased and cooked by patrols. Each scout is expected to participate with meal planning and preparation; this also meets several rank advancement requirements particularly for newer scouts. An adult leader will assist (particularly with the younger scouts) in the planning and preparation, but this is designed to be a scout-run process with minimal supervision. Scouts will not eat with adults. Adult leaders plan, prepare, cook, and eat as a separate patrol.

Each member of the patrol shares in the cost of food. The Patrol Leader assigns duties such as cooking and clean up, and selects one or two scouts to be the **Grubmasters**. They will go to the grocery store (with a parent and possibly an experienced scout) to purchase the food. **There should never be any deviation in the menu that the scouts have planned.** The only exception to this is if some item on the grocery list is not available then a substitution can be made. Because money is collected and food purchased several days before a camping trip, a scout who cancels after that time cannot expect to get his money back. If, after purchasing the food, the amount spent at the grocery store was below the amount collected from all Scouts who attended the event within the patrol, a refund will be provided by the Grubmasters. Leftover food that has been unopened belongs to the Grubmaster, and should also be taken off of the total and refunded to attending Scouts of that patrol. If your son has any special dietary needs, discuss them with the Assistant Scoutmaster who is assigned to your son's patrol.

Campouts (cont.)

The Scout Handbook and the Troop website contain equipment lists. A “**Personal camping gear checklist**” is included in this packet. These will be useful as the scout prepares for a trip. Clothing for special types of outings, for example Summer Camp (warm/wet weather, week long stay) and Klondike Derby (cold weather, 2-night stay), is often discussed and demonstrated at troop meetings. In addition to bringing personal supplies, each scout is responsible for a share of the patrol effort. **All electronics such as cell phones, digital music players, radios, games, etc. should be left at home.** If there is a question about what may or may not be brought, please feel free to ask for guidance. The adult leaders carry cell phones on all outings in case of emergencies.

Other items that are prohibited to be in a scouts possession include: sheath knives, any type of gun (including paint-ball, BB, Airsoft or any likeness thereof), or anything considered a weapon. Some scouting events will offer the proper training in the use of firearms and archery equipment in a safe environment for the enjoyment of the scout and to meet requirements. **No scout should carry a knife until they have been trained and have earned and are carrying their “Totin’ Chip”.** This certification grants a Scout the right to carry and use woods tools. This training is provided soon after the Scout joins the troop on a campout or at summer camp.

Patrols arrange for their camping equipment such as tents and cooking equipment for each trip. The troop owns a supply of tents and cooking equipment. Troop equipment is available for checkout by a patrol for any troop-sponsored event. Troop equipment is stored in the Troop trailer, and in the Troop room at Cornerstone Baptist Church. Any equipment must be checked in and out through the troop’s Quartermaster.

All parents are expected to share in the responsibility of providing transportation. The scout arranging the outing generally arranges transportation at the troop level. Parents have a standing invitation to come along for the fun.

In some instances, depending on where the activity/campout is, there may be a fuel charge for each scout. We will always try to fill all seats in a vehicle to minimize the cost. If you choose to drive by yourself and you do not have a full vehicle, you cannot expect to be reimbursed for your fuel. The amount reimbursed is dependant on how far we travel, and is decided upon by the PLC and troop committee. Any parent volunteering to pull the troop trailer will be compensated accordingly.

We go to Camp Mitigwa, near Boone, IA, each year for a week of summer camp. We highly encourage your son to go to camp his first year. Scouts have to opportunity to earn merit badges, participate in camp wide activities, and just have plain fun.

Activities

As noted, scouts can participate in a wide range of activities including day hikes, service projects, campouts, canoeing and skiing. Scouts (and their parents) choose which activities to participate in – no scout is expected to or even could participate in all. Parental participation ranges from extensive to only occasional depending on the age, tastes, and other factors.

High Adventure. Scouts and parents have the opportunity to enjoy a week of rustic camping in early summer. Some past trips include canoeing in the Boundary Waters in Northern Minnesota, hiking in the mountains in Colorado or the Black Hills of South Dakota. This is a low-cost, fun way for scouts to advance rapidly, and have a memorable lifelong experience. It's also a great way for a parent to share in their son's experience. All high adventure trips are reserved for boys 14 and older and who have achieved the First Class rank or higher. Additional merit badge requirements and training may apply.

Dues and Fees

Re-charter fees for the Troop are collected once a year and cost about \$42 (\$30 re-charter fee and \$12 for Boy's Life); this money goes to offset equipment and gear, and to renew your Boy's Life subscription)

Dues are \$1/week (\$52 annually) and are collected by the Troop Scribe. You may pay in advance if you prefer. (This money is used to purchase merit badges, advancement patches, merit badge cards, supplies, and some camp fees).

NOTE Dues need to be current before your son will be given a Scoutmaster conference or Board of Review for rank advancement.

Youth Protection

The Youth Protection program is a set of standards, guidelines and training developed by the Boy Scouts of America to eliminate opportunities for the abuse of youth members. When properly implemented, the program also helps to protect adult leaders from any accusations of impropriety. First there is a section in the front of the Scout Handbook, which you should read over and discuss with your scout. Shortly after joining our troop, our youth protection chair will conduct the youth protection program. You will be asked to attend this meeting with your scout(s). During this meeting there will be a video shown, and some discussions by our youth protection chair. This is a requirement established by the Boy Scouts of America. There is a separate youth protection program strictly for adults that can be done online, or conducted by a district official. Please visit myscouting.scouting.org to take the adult online youth protection training. Troop 188 requires any adult leader or parent that will be interacting directly with Scouts, or going on any outing, complete the Adult Youth protection program. When finished you can print out your certificate and please present this to the Scoutmaster. Training is good for 2 years.

Youth Protection (cont.)

BSA adopted the following policies to provide additional barriers to child abuse within Scouting. These policies are primarily for the protection of its youth members; however, they also serve to protect its adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

Youth Protection Guidelines

- **Two-deep leadership.** Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. (Troop 188 requires at least four adult leaders, one of which must be trained.) The "two-deep" policy requires that a minimum of two adults be present during all activities to minimize the potential for clandestine abuse. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
- **No one-on-one contact.** One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.
- **Respect of privacy.** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- **Separate accommodations.** When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.
- **Proper preparation for high-adventure activities.** Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, supervision, and safety measures.
- **No secret organizations.** The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.
- **Appropriate attire.** Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping, or not wearing a shirt is not appropriate as part of Scouting.
- **Constructive discipline.** Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- **Hazing prohibited.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.
- **Youth leadership training and supervision.** Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

Information Resources

Other resources available to you are on the troop website @ <http://www.orgsites.com/ia/troop188/>. You will find forms, schedules, troop calendar, information on upcoming campouts and events, as well as links to the council website and other scouting websites.

Terminology / [Acronyms]

APL – Assistant Patrol Leader – fills in for Patrol Leader in the event they are unable to attend the PLC

ASPL – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader – fills in for SPL when absent. Manages the Troop officers and ensures they are doing their jobs. The positions include Historian, Librarian, Scribe, Troop Guides, Chaplain Aide, Quartermaster, and Medic.

ASM – Assistant Scoutmaster – helps the SM guide the troop

Blue Card – This is the only official record of completed merit badge requirements. Scouts receive one for each merit badge that is started from their counselor. It is an actual blue card. There is a sample blue card in your packet.

CC – Committee Chair – Leads the adults that sit on the troop committee, Troop Committee is made up of interested parents, and all are welcome.

Council – The council is a group of districts that provide leadership, training, programs and resources to districts. Hawkeye District is one of seven within the Mid-Iowa Council.

District – The district is a group of towns/cities in an area (typically 1 or more counties) that work together to provide leadership, training and programs for scouts and scouters. Ankeny falls within the Hawkeye District.

Grubmaster – A Scout(s) within a patrol, that is responsible for purchasing and bringing food for the entire patrol on a campout. Menus are planned during a regular meeting at least 2 weeks in advance of a campout. Menus must be approved by an adult leader.

Merit Badge Counselor – An adult that is registered with the council that has a particular interest or expertise in the merit badge subject matter. Anyone can be a merit badge counselor, they just have to have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter and be registered.

OA – Order of the Arrow – An honor camper's society for Boy Scouts, new OA members are elected by OA members and non-members. This is reserved for scouts 1st Class and above.

PL – Patrol Leader – Leads the patrol

PLC – Patrol Leaders Council – made up of PL's, SPL, and other Troop office holders; plan and run Troop activities, usually meets twice a month

Quartermaster – in charge of all Troop gear

Roundtable – Monthly meetings held by the council with information about upcoming council / district activities. The CC sets a monthly schedule, and rotates parents through it. More information is on the troop website.

Scribe – Serves as secretary at all PLC's and also collects dues and tracks attendance

SM - Scoutmaster – Guides the Troop SPL –

Senior Patrol Leader – leads the PLC and troop meetings; does not lead a specific patrol

Totin' Chip - This certification grants a Scout the right to carry and use woods tools. At completion of the Scouts training, they will be issued a "Totin' Chip" wallet card. This must be in their position at all times to use any wood tools, including pocket knives.