

BOY SCOUT TROOP 956

GUIDEBOOK



Table of Contents

JOINING TROOP 956	1
NEW SCOUTS	2
OVERVIEW OF BOY SCOUTING	2
THE BOY SCOUT PROGRAM AIMS	3
THE BOY SCOUT PROGRAM METHODS	4
IDEALS	4
UNIFORM	4
PATROL METHOD	5
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	6
ASSOCIATION WITH ADULTS	7
OUTDOOR PROGRAM	8
PERSONAL GROWTH	11
ADVANCEMENT	13
PARENT PARTICIPATION	17
TROOP FINANCES	18
COMMUNICATION	18
TROOP CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY POLICY	19
A FINAL NOTE	21
REFERENCES	22



Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 956!



The following Troop 956 Guidebook has been developed for use by the scouts and parents who are members of Troop 956. Both the Scout and his parents should read the Guidebook in its entirety as it contains useful and interesting information that is designed to make your Scouting experience more meaningful and enjoyable. Our Troop is organized in accordance with the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America. The Troop and its members will follow and incorporate all the policies, rules, procedures and bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America in the implementation of our Scouting program. By joining this troop, you are becoming part of one of the nation's most successful youth movements.

This Guidebook is sponsored by the Committee of Troop 956 to help each member of the partnership understand the scouting program along with his responsibilities. Nothing presented herein is intended to conflict with the policies and practices of the Boy Scouts of America or the National Capital Area Council. This guidebook is not intended to replace any official publications of the Boy Scouts of America. Scouts should refer to the current edition of the Boy Scout Handbook for a thorough explanation of all rank and advancement requirements. Additional guidance is available from the Scoutmaster Handbook, Guide to Safe Scouting, BSA Insignia Guide, and current versions of the various Merit Badge Booklets, among other official BSA publications.



These guidelines are directed toward the following:

1. Ensuring an organized program;
2. Developing Scout skills while having fun;
3. Helping each Scout to progress in rank;
4. Helping the Scout develop leadership skills; and
5. Providing a basis for fair treatment of all involved.

Joining Troop 956

Before a boy can enter a Scout Troop, he must meet the Boy Scouts of America requirements:

- Be a boy who has completed 5th grade; or
- Be 10 ½ years old and earned the Arrow of Light Award; or
- Be 11 years of age but not yet 18

The New Scout packet is designed to give a new Scout and his parents details about Scouting and Troop 956. The packet includes the following:

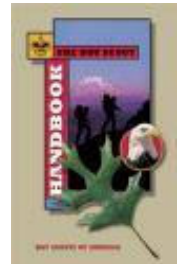
- BSA applications (both boy and adult)
- Troop 956 Guidebook
- BSA Medical Release Form - Class 1 (parents authorization for emergency treatment)
- Driver/Vehicle Information Form
- Troop Resource Survey (parents, please give some serious thought to signing up to help)
- Annual Calendar
- Roster of troop members

You will become a member of the troop once you submit a completed Boy Scout application and health/permission form signed by your parent or guardian along with the annual Troop Dues. This fee covers the cost of providing initial or transfer registration, insurance, Boys' Life subscription, uniform items such as Troop numerals, red shoulder loops, neckerchief, Patrol patch, and other program costs.

New Scouts

Sometime during the February - March time frame, many boys cross over from their Webelos Cub Scouting programs to join Boy Scouts. Boys that are new to scouting and transferring Boy Scouts may join the troop at any time. All new candidates are placed in a New Scout Patrol under the direction of several members of the Adult Staff and Troop Guides. Through this program, the new Scout receives an orientation to Boy Scouts of America and specifically learns the operation of Troop 956 during his next four to five months. The new Scout participates in many of the regular Troop programs and outings, yet has his own activities where he learns basic personal and patrol scout skills and responsibilities which will prepare him for entry into the Troop structure.

Every Scout will need to purchase the ***Boy Scout Handbook***, the official guide to Boy Scouting. The Handbook can be purchased at the Council Scout Shop or local Hobby Shops. This Handbook will serve as a guide through the entire Scout's years of Scouting and will serve as the record for the Scout's advancement. Unlike the handbooks used at the different levels of Cub Scouting, a Scout will need to hold onto his *Boy Scout Handbook* for all his years in Scouting. The *Boy Scout Handbook* along with a notebook and pencil should be brought to all meetings.



A Scout candidate will also need an **official Boy Scout uniform** with all of the appropriate insignia. Our troop maintains a Uniform Locker, where you might find what your scout needs for in the way of gently-used uniform items. The complete details of uniform needs and requirements are covered in the Scout Uniform section of this guide.

The Scout candidate's first requirement under the guidance of their parent or guardian is to complete the exercises in the pamphlet *How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*. The Boy Scouts of America takes youth safety very seriously. Parents, please take a few minutes to also read Chapter 1 of your son's *Boy Scout Handbook*.

The Scout candidate's next goal will be to meet all the requirements for the Scout rank in the *Boy Scout Handbook*. After completing these requirements, the Scout candidate will request a Scoutmaster conference with the Scoutmaster. The purpose of this talk is to make sure every Scout candidate knows what it means to be a Scout. When this requirement is completed, the Scout candidate is officially a Boy Scout. After the new Scout has completed all the requirements, he will be officially inducted into the Troop within the next few meetings, and will receive the Scout Badge and the Scout Rank record card.

Overview of Boy Scouting

Boy Scouts of America

Since 1910, Boy Scouting has been taught in an atmosphere of recreation and fun which allows young people to develop self confidence, leadership and moral character. More and more men trained as Scouts are taking their places in today's world as responsible adult leaders. Men who have earned badges as Scouts sit on the Supreme Court and in the chambers of Congress. Others hold important offices in our government, business and industry. Most of the members of congress were Scouts, as well as most of the astronauts who have walked on the moon.

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest youth oriented organization in the United States. More than 4 million boys and leaders are currently registered in the Boy Scouts of America. Unlike Cub Scouting which many of you are familiar with, Boy Scouting is a youth-led organization. The boys learn how to organize and lead the Troop. After training and with supervision from the adult leaders, the boys run the show. The boys in the Troop will be working towards their 1st class and then Star, Life and Eagle ranks. As they travel on their trail to Eagle they will not only learn how to lead a team to a goal, but they will actually lead teams of scouts in a number of situations.

Troop History



History

In 1975, the Boy Scouts of America granted the American Legion Post 150 in Sterling VA a charter to operate a Boy Scout troop, Troop 956. The Troop is re-chartered in December of each year. Troop 956 has served boys in the Sterling and Potomac Falls area for over thirty years.

BSA and the National Capital Area Council agree to make training courses available to the Troop leaders, provide local camping facilities, make program materials available, maintain basic Troop records, and provide programs and services. Troop 956 is organized into several operating units, including the Patrols, the PLC (Youth Leadership Staff), the Adult Leader Staff and the Troop Committee.

Troop Meetings

The Troop meets Tuesday evenings in the Galilee United Methodist Church. There are normally no Troop meetings on school holidays. Troop meetings start promptly at 7:30 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. Meetings center around a program, skills, and activities related to Scouting. A portion of the Troop meeting is allocated to patrol meetings.

Scouts should be on time and in **Class A uniform**. They should be prepared for the meeting and have their Boy Scout Handbook, a small notebook, and a pencil. Parents and guests are always welcome at Troop 956 meetings. Scouts are also encouraged to bring prospective members at any time.

All parents should be prompt in picking up their sons after meetings. Troop policy dictates that no Scout will be left at the church unattended. A late pickup means that at least two adult leaders will be delayed in getting home to their families.

The Boy Scout Program Aims and Methods

The Boy Scout program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the **Aims of Scouting**. They are:

Character Development

This aim is to build self-reliance, self-discipline, self-confidence, and self-respect. The scout understands and improves himself: his personal qualities, his values, his outlook on life.

Citizenship Training

This aim is to nurture respect of, participation in, and caring for community, nation, and world while fostering a commitment of service to others and an understanding of local, state, and national government. Citizenship refers to the scout's relationship to others - his obligations to other people, to the society he lives in, and to the government of his society.

Personal Fitness

This aim is to develop life-long physical, mental, emotional, and moral fitness. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), and the emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect).

There are eight **Methods of Scouting** by which these aims are achieved. The eight methods, listed below in random order to emphasize the equal importance of each, are explained further in the following sections of the Troop 956 Guidebook:

Ideals	Uniform	Patrol Method	Leadership Development
Association with Adults	Outdoor Program	Personal Growth	Advancement

Ideals

The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.

In these few words are captured the essential elements of a successful, moral and personally rewarding life. If we live by them and encourage others to live by them, our homes, communities, and nation will be better places in which to live. All scouts who join Troop 956 are expected to know and live by these ideals.

Each Scout is expected to conduct himself by the code of conduct contained in the principles of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law both in their everyday lives and at Troop activities. Parents are encouraged to remind their Scout that his behavior during scouting activities will reflect on his Patrol, Troop, family and all who contribute their time and attention in support of the Troop. If a Scout finds himself unable to obey the Scout Law during troop meetings and activities, his parents will be notified and his opportunities to participate in future activities may be restricted. Any inappropriate behavior (including acts of disrespect, disobedience, harmful abuse or dangerous behavior) is subject to counseling and disciplinary action either by the Youth Leaders, Scoutmaster, or the Troop Committee. The disciplinary process is an opportunity for our Youth Leaders to use their leadership skills under the Scoutmaster's direction.

The Troop Committee will provide support to the Scoutmaster in these matters as needed. If after repeated counseling the scout's behavior does not change, and or for the most serious offenses, the Scoutmaster will report the incidents for review by the Troop Committee. The Troop Committee will take action by reviewing the circumstance and the disciplinary action as recommended.

The Troop Disciplinary Policy is included at the end of this Guidebook.

Uniform

The uniform makes the Boy Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouts is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

Troop 956's uniform policy is consistent with the national BSA policy. All scouts are expected to wear a complete, regulation BSA uniform at all events, unless other dress is specified due to the nature of an event. Uniforms may be borrowed from the troop Uniform Locker or purchased at the Scout Shop. As your son outgrows his uniform parts, please donate them to Troop 956 Uniform Locker, for other Scouts to use them. Likewise, as your son grows, he may be able to find uniform items in the Locker that he can use.

Troop 956 encourages every Scout, Adult staff, and Troop Committee member to wear their full uniform proudly. It is a symbol that marks him as belonging to a select group of young men. The uniform tells the world what that Scout believes in and lives by. It and the person who wears it are respected in the community.

The “**Class A**” is the main uniform for Boy Scouts and is to be worn at all Scout meetings, whenever traveling with the Troop and for other designated occasions. The uniform consists of:

- Boy Scout shirt (tan with all appropriate insignia)
- Boy Scout shorts or pants (green)
- Boy Scout belt (green) with buckle
- Boy Scout socks (green with red bands)
- Shoes (closed toes, no sandals)

The “**Class A Ceremonial**” uniform is the above listed items along with the Troop 956 neckerchief with slide and the Merit Badge sash which is worn over the right shoulder. The OA sash is only worn for OA events. This uniform is worn for any Scoutmaster conferences, Boards of Review, Courts of Honor and Scout Sunday.



The “**Class B**” uniform is worn during campouts (but never to or from campouts) and on designated Scout activities. The uniform consists of many of the same pieces as above:

- Scout hat or large brimmed hat for sun protection
- Troop 956 T-shirt (purchased from Troop) or any other scout T-shirt
- Boy Scout shorts or pants (green)
- Boy Scout belt (green) with buckle
- Boy Scout socks (green with red bands)
- Hiking Boots (suitable to the activity, closed toes, no sandals)

Only authorized BSA insignia are to be worn on the uniform. See inside covers of Scout Handbook for correct placement of insignia. Only temporary patches may be sewn on the right breast pocket or worn in a plastic holder.

Patrol Method

Every Boy Scout Troop is made up of **Patrols** — groupings of six to ten Scouts — that work together as a team. The Patrol Method gives Boy Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The Patrol Method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where members can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through elected representatives, the **Patrol Leaders**. Every Scout has an opportunity to get a job and a chance to learn and practice responsibility. It provides real experience in the democratic way of doing things. Patrols can also have their own meetings and plan and carry out their own patrol activities. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, said this about patrols: *“It’s the only way to run a Troop”*.

The **Patrol Leader Council (PLC)** is composed of the following voting members: Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide and Patrol Leaders. The Patrol Leader Council, not the adult leaders, is responsible for planning and conducting the Troop’s activities. Other Troop officers participate (ie Scribe, Quartermaster) but do not vote.

The Troop’s activities are selected and planned at the annual program planning conference. Patrols are to submit suggested activities to the PLC through their respective Patrol Leader. The Troop’s yearly plan is then submitted to the Troop Committee for approval. The Troop Committee either approves the plan or makes alternative suggestions for the PLC to consider. Periodic adjustments are, of course, made to the plan as needed. At its meetings, the PLC organizes and assigns activity responsibilities for the weekly Troop meetings. The Troop Committee interacts with the PLC through the Scoutmaster.

Leadership Development

The Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership role of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.



Unlike Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting is a youth-led movement. The boys learn how to organize and lead their patrol and troop. The troop will be led by senior Boy Scouts. The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) will provide overall leadership to the troop and assist the Patrol Leaders in leading their individual patrols. Other scouts may serve in other Troop Leadership roles. Boys of all ages will gain experience in leadership and responsibility by fulfilling these roles. Troop leadership responsibilities are as follows:

- **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL):** Plans and runs all Troop meetings, events, activities, annual program planning conference, and Patrol Leaders' Council meetings. He also appoints Troop Junior Leaders and assists in their training and assignment of duties.
- **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL):** Helps the Senior Patrol Leader run all Troop activities. In the absence of the SPL, the Assistant takes over. He helps train and supervises the Troop Scribe, Quartermaster, Historian, Librarian, and Chaplain Aide.
- **Patrol Leader (PL):** Guides and represents the Patrol on the Patrol Leaders' Council and on all Patrol activities. Knows the advancement needs and outing interests of all Scouts and works to satisfy those needs and interests.
- **Assistant Patrol Leader (APL):** Fills in for the Patrol Leader in his absence.
- **Troop Guide (TG):** Trains, guides, and monitors new scouts progress through their first Scouting year. He supervises and assists the new Scout Patrol Leader in making Patrol decisions. Helps new Scouts earn First Class in their first year.
- **Scribe:** Attends and keeps logs on the Patrol Leader's Council meetings, records attendance and advancement records, and collects permission slips and money.
- **Quartermaster (QM):** Maintains records on Troop and Patrol equipment. Oversees the maintenance of the Troop Equipment Garage. Issues all equipment needed for weekend outings.
- **Historian:** Gathers pictures and facts about past Troop activities and keeps them in a historical scrapbook.
- **Librarian:** Sets up and maintains the Troop library. Oversees the loan out process of Troop literature and makes suggestions on material to be purchased.
- **Chaplain Aide:** Plans and leads non-denominational services at Troop outings. Encourages all Scouts to take part in the religious emblems program.
- **Den Chief:** Assists Den/Webelos Leaders with their Cub Scout Dens. Position is appointed by the Scoutmaster on request of any scout desiring the position and requested by a Cub Scout Pack. Must be 1st Class or above and attend District Den Chief Training. The Den Chief serves his den for the duration of the school year.

The "chain of command" revolves around the SPL and the ASPL, who lead the youth staff in conducting the program. The ASPL will serve as the channel of communication between the youth leaders and the SPL. The SPL then serves as the main channel of communication to the adult staff. Scouts with questions or needing assistance or guidance, should go first to their patrol leader, who in turn should go to the SPL or ASPL, who then should go to the Scoutmaster or other member of the adult staff. The success of the program is dependent upon the effectiveness of the patrol, youth and adult leadership.

Adults provide training and supervision, but the boys run the show. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters instruct and guide the boys to follow the program set out by the Troop Committee. The Troop and Patrol Leaders work together in the PLC to organize and run meetings and activities according to the policies of the troop. The adult leaders are present primarily to advise, guide, and to protect the well-being of the boys.

Association with Adults

Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. The Troop must rely upon parental volunteer support to sustain the program. The active support of parents and families for all scouts is important. This support extends from service on the Troop Committee or as a Scout leader, to driving Scouts to and from activities, to assisting in fund raising, as well as to attending Troop Courts of Honor and Parents' Meetings. Scout leaders must be positive role models for the members of the troop. In many cases a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound positive difference in their lives.

The **Troop Committee** is a group of men and women who serve as the troop's Board of Directors and helps the troop in a support capacity. The primary responsibilities are overseeing the general program, help to insure that BSA guidelines and safety procedures are utilized, assuring adequate and trained adult leaders, keeping records, assisting with advancement and conducting Boards of Review. It must also handle the Troop's finances, raise funds for the troop, approve major expenditures, work with parents, and provide whatever assistance is necessary for the effective operation of the troop. The Troop Committee's main job is to support the Scoutmaster and help him run a good Troop. The Committee is responsible for providing the resources needed to run the Troop's Scout program. The troop committee positions include Committee Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Outdoor/Activities Coordinator, Advancement Chair, Chaplain, Training Coordinator, and Quartermaster (see *Troop Committee Guidebook* for further information). The Committee Chair may assign other positions as needed (e.g., fund raising coordinator).



The uniformed adult leadership is comprised of adults, 18 years or older, whose function is to guide the Scouts in the execution of the program, especially with regard to the main concerns of Scouting: character building, citizenship and physical fitness. The **Scoutmaster** trains his youth leaders to plan and run the Troop. He helps Scouts to grow by encouraging them to learn for themselves. He conducts a Scoutmaster conference after the Scout has completed all other requirements for advancement and before the Board of Review. Also, he monitors and provides advice during the Patrol Leader Council (PLC) meetings.



The **Assistant Scoutmasters** (ASMs) support the Scoutmaster. They may be assigned specific program responsibilities, such as Patrol Advisors, Trail to First Class, Life to Eagle Coordinator, Quartermaster and Cooking.

While Boy Scouting is a boy-led program, it still requires the involvement of adults to be both productive and safe. We would like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all **parents** to become actively involved in our Troop family. Experience has shown that the Scouts who have the best and most successful Scouting experience have parents who are involved in some way with their son's Scouting adventure. We are a busy, active organization and it takes many adults behind the scenes and some in uniform to provide the framework and appropriate supervision to allow the boys to "run" the Troop. The level of involvement, however, is much less than that required in Cub Scouting. Troop 956 asks every family to designate one adult member to serve as an adult leader either as part of the Troop Committee, as part of the Scoutmaster corps or assist in some way. Adults who regularly attend activities such as campouts are encouraged to be registered leaders. The troop committee will pay registration and training fees.

All adults who regularly attend activities are required to take the BSA Youth Protection Training, as well as training for their position offered through the District or Council. Only then can adult leaders wear the "Trained" patch on their shirtsleeve. Troop policy is all registered adults are trained within the first year of working with the scouts. Courses include:

- Youth Protection
- New Leader Essentials
- Leader Specific Training
- Outdoor Leader Skills

Parents are also welcome to participate in Scout Advancement Board of Reviews other than for their own son. These provide an excellent opportunity to talk with the scouts and find out how their lives have been influenced by the Troop and the Boy Scout program.

Outdoor Program

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. In the outdoors the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Boy Scouts gain an appreciation for the beauty of the world around us. The outdoors is the laboratory in which Boy Scouts learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

Scouting is effective whenever we take advantage of this truth: The place where Scouting works best is also the place where Scouts want most to be -- the outdoors. There are a number of good reasons why the outdoor program is so special:

1. The outdoors is the best place for learning outdoor skills. How could it be otherwise? A Scout who tried to boil a potato on the gymnasium floor would be in hot water for sure - not to mention the Scout who tried learning to swim by reading a book.
2. The outdoors is a great place for learning something about living with others. When Scouts walk on the same trail, cook and eat together, and share triumphs and troubles together, they are going to find out some important things about patience, respect for other points of view, doing their full share, making a friend more easily, and saying no without losing one. Skills like these are among the "personal growth" skills we want from every Scout. The outdoors is where they grow up best.
3. On the trail or in camp, the youth leaders will be challenged by the real thing - getting their Patrols fed and sheltered, keeping them warm and safe, solving the problems they can solve, and knowing how to get help for those they can't. It's a time when leadership skills can deepen, patrols grow closer, and the Troop grows stronger.
4. The outdoors is also a place where a Scout can get closer to and appreciate the natural world around him - the land, the forests and wildlife, the lakes and rivers, the mountains and the seas. Here, in the outdoors, he will learn of the "land ethic" - the understanding and respect for the environment we all share, and he will develop an active concern for its health and a willingness to work to keep it healthy.



Monthly Outings

Troop 956 conducts a full year-round program of outdoor activities. Outdoor activities are held approximately once a month (consult the current calendar for dates). Except for family campouts and special campouts, cooking is usually conducted using the "patrol method" where each patrol is responsible for their own menu and cooking. Outdoor activities feature competitive events in Scout skills, campfires, camp-wide games, advancements, church services, special activities, tours, and mostly a lot of fun.

These outdoor activities are held, rain or shine, hot or cold. A Scout should be prepared to adequately protect himself from the elements. He receives instruction in these methods by

regularly attending Scout meetings. Campouts are only called off in the event of severe weather, travel advisory or unsafe driving conditions. Part of the outdoor program is designed to teach young men how to deal with adversity, such as bad weather.

Summer Camp

A week-long **Summer Camp** is a great time for advancement and having fun. The Troop attends a Summer Camp every year. It is particularly important for the new Scouts to attend summer camp, although all Scouts will benefit. Many camps provide a “First Year Scout Program”, as well as offering water activities, shooting sports, high adventure treks and much more. Excellent facilities are provided for difficult-to-obtain merit badges such as Canoeing, Rowing, Life Saving, Environmental Science and several others. It also provides a necessary requirement for election into the Order of the Arrow. Attendance at summer camp may require additional or updated medical forms.

High Adventure Activities

The Boy Scouts of America (National) offers outstanding high adventure programs in which our Troop has participated. Our troop routinely attempts to organize trips for Scouts 14 years of age and older to Philmont, Sea Base, Northern Tier, and other programs. Additionally, other camping high adventures for the older Scouts may involve whitewater rafting, canoe trips or other incredible trips!!! The age minimum for these trips is generally 13 or 14. Troop 956 endeavors to engage in a variety of these programs every year. Attendance at high adventure camp may require new or additional medical forms.

Order of the Arrow

The **Order of the Arrow** (OA) is a national brotherhood of Scout honor campers, based on brotherhood with fellow Scouts and cheerful service to others. Its purpose is to:

- recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives;
- develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit;
- promote Scout camping;
- crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others

The Order of the Arrow program is conducted through the NCAC lodge, the Amangamek Wipit Lodge. Troop members are nominated and elected to membership by fellow Scouts during our troop elections. They must meet certain entry qualifications, which include: hold a rank of First Class or higher, and spend at least 15 days and nights of camping (5 of which must be at long term summer camp, and the remainder of which should be weekend trips). After election, the candidate is “tapped out” at a formal Order of the Arrow ceremony. For Troop 956, this occurs at the OA ceremony held in conjunction with the annual Spring Camp-o-ree. Once the tap-out ceremony has been performed, the candidate has one year to present himself for “Candidate Ordeal” or lose his chance for membership.

The induction ceremony, called the Ordeal, is conducted at an OA campout and is the first step toward full membership. After ten months of service and fulfilling certain requirements, a member may then take part in the Brotherhood ceremony, which places further emphasis on the ideals of Scouting and the Order. Completion of this ceremony signifies full membership in the OA. More information on the OA can be obtained by contacting the OA Troop Representative.



Overview of Requirements for Outdoor Program

According to the BSA Guide to Safe Scouting, there are basic requirements for all outdoor activities. These are formally stated as the “Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety,” which are:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) Qualified Supervision | 6) Personal Safety Equipment | 11) Communications |
| 2) Physical Fitness | 7) Safety Procedures and Policies | 12) Permits and Notices |
| 3) Buddy System | 8) Skill Level Limits | 13) First-aid Resources |
| 4) Safe Area or Course | 9) Weather Check | 14) Applicable Laws |
| 5) Equipment Selection and Maintenance | 10) Planning | 15) CPR Resource |
| | | 16) Discipline. |

Details may be found in the Guide to Safe Scouting. The requirements reflect good judgment and common sense, and are applicable to all activities.

Two-deep Leadership

Troop 956 follows the BSA Guide to Safe Scouting policies and guidelines for all activities. 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. One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted.

Permission Slips

Each Troop 956 outing requires that the Scout present a signed Parent Permission Slip before he is allowed to participate. Before each outing, every Scout is given a Permission and Waiver of Responsibility form that has been filled out with information you would need in the event of an emergency. We ask that you detail any medical restrictions on the form itself when you sign it. It is vital that this information is updated for each outing as conditions and medication may change over a period of time; the Adult Advisor in charge of the outing must know what the current health condition of a Scout is. Permission Slips and applicable fees are expected to be turned in at least one or two meetings prior to the activity.

Medical Forms

The BSA requires that each Scout have a medical form containing up to date medical information. The forms can be downloaded online from the Troop web site. There are three types:

Class I – This form is sufficient for the Scout to engage in normal troop meeting activities and, when supplemented by the information added by the currently signed parent permission slip, is adequate for the Scout to attend normal troop outings. Class I must be updated on an annual basis.

Class II – This form is required for prolonged and more arduous activities, i.e. most summer camps and troop hikes. It is good for three years after being filled out by the Scout's parent or guardian and by his physician. This form is also required for all adults under 40 years of age participating in summer camps.

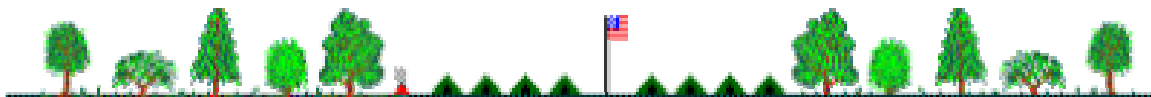
Class III – This form is required for some summer camp programs and for any high adventure activity. The form must be filled out by a physician once each year, preferably no sooner than three months before a high adventure activity. This form is also required for all adults 40 years of age or older participating in Summer Camps, or all adults, regardless of age, participating in High Adventures.

Troop Insurance

The Troop 956 insurance policy for all of its members is renewed each year at re-charter time. It automatically covers any Scout or Adult leader who transfers into our Troop or any new members when they are properly registered with the National Capitol Area Council office during the course of the year. More information on Troop insurance may be obtained from the council scout office.

Tour Permits / Transportation

The troop will provide transportation to and from Scouting events. When called upon each family is expected to help provide transportation. It is required that we provide the NCAC your vehicle insurance coverage and driver's license number; please fill out a Driver/Insurance Information Form for the troop records. Scouts are required to wear a safety belt whenever the vehicle is moving and must behave properly so as not to distract the driver.



What to Bring on a Campout:

The Boy Scout Handbook is an excellent tool and includes a good list of items to bring. Below are the basic items needed for a campout (pack according to the season):

Required

- Backpack or duffle
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad, foam or inflatable
- Sweater or coat (if needed)
- Clothes for the number of days
- Water Bottle
- Mess Kit or bowl, plate and cup
- Knife, fork and spoon
- Personal Hygiene items
- Towel and washcloth
- Scout Handbook, binder, pen
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Compass

Optional or Seasonal

- Sunscreen
- Rain gear: Rain jacket and pants
- Watch
- Personal ID
- Spending Money
- Sewing Kit
- Pillow
- Scout knife (with Totin' Chip)
- Matches (with Firem'n Chit)
- Thermal Underwear
- Stocking cap
- Playing cards and table games
- Tying Rope

Do Not Bring

- CD-player
- Radios
- Electronic Games

Prohibited

- Firearms
- Sling Shots
- Sheath knives
- Fireworks
- Alcohol or drugs

Personal Growth

As Boy Scouts learn scout skills, plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The “*Do A Good Turn Daily*” concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is as successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth and set goals for working toward the Aims of Scouting.

Scout Spirit

Starting with the rank of Tenderfoot, the Scout has a new requirement pertaining to each of the ranks on his trail to Eagle - “*Demonstrate Scout Spirit*”. This is perhaps the most important requirement a Scout must attain. It is Scout Spirit that compels a young person to step away from the crowd and stand up for what he knows is right rather than shrugging his shoulders and thinking “everyone else is doing it, so I can too...”. Scout Spirit is the temperament and attitude of a young person that defines that ability to lead and be led. It is the true measurement of a Scout. Scout Spirit is a feeling of pride in belonging to and carrying on the traditions of Scouting. This

pride shows itself in the actions that each Scout exhibits, both as an individual and as part of a group. Scout Spirit demonstrates to others through deeds and actions that one is proud to be a Boy Scout. While no one can know how a person feels inside about Scouting, there are certain actions that can be done to show others Scout Spirit. These things include:

- Trying your best to live the Scout Oath and Law.
- Always wearing your uniform correctly to all Scouting events. The uniform should be worn properly and proudly. It should be cared for properly, as well as be neat and clean. It has many years of tradition and heritage behind it.
- Helping out when asked to participate. It is far too common to sit there and say: "I don't know," "I can't do that," "I don't know how to do that," or "Why do I always have to help?" But it is a Scout with dedication and spirit that will earnestly try to carry out what he says and does. That is the Scout who is not afraid to think or act on what he has learned, or the Scout who will pick up his book and learn... a Scout with an "I can do it" attitude.
- Attending as many Scouting functions as possible. A Scout with spirit doesn't stay at home because the weather is bad or it doesn't sound like it will be fun; he helps make it fun no matter what.
- Volunteering for activities, such as skits or songs. Scouting can only be fun if a Scout participates.
- Being on one's best behavior at all times. How a Scout acts with the troop or on his own reflects on all Scouts everywhere.
- Having a positive attitude. The way a person feels and acts does rub off on the people around him. So make the best of all situations. Others will appreciate your positive attitude and want you around them.

In order to advance, Scouts are required to show Scout Spirit, both in their Scouting and daily lives. The Scoutmaster is the only leader who can sign this requirement in the Scout's Handbook.

Scout Spirit is easy - all you have to do is try!

Scout Participation

When a Scout joins Troop 956, he is expected to participate in as many Troop events as possible, and to attend his Patrol's meetings when they are called. Records are kept of his attendance at all meetings and activities. Scouts are asked to sign in for fundraisers, service projects, and other special events. It is recommended that scouts attend a minimum of 50% of all Troop meetings and 50% of all outings and activities between advancements as one of the means of demonstrating his "Scout Spirit". The Scoutmaster considers this information in his evaluation of Scout Spirit for rank advancement and for the participation requirement for a Scout to run for or receive leadership credit for certain youth Positions of Responsibility.

Scouts run the program of the Troop for the benefit of all wishing to participate. A high level of participation results in a quality program. Poor attendance, on the other hand, will result in a curtailed program and a waste of resources. Participation and contribution by each Scout is essential for the Troop to succeed in its aims. Regular meetings serve to prepare our Scouts for the outdoor activity or special event of the month through planning, instruction, and equipment readiness. Scouts who fail to participate in the regular meetings may not be prepared for the outdoor activity or special event.

Commitment

When a boy joins the Troop, we ask him to make a commitment to the Troop, the Scouting program, and to himself. Scouting must be a high priority in his life. Personal dedication, a commitment to excellence, a sense of duty, personal loyalty and responsibility produce a young man who not only is a successful Scout, but an asset to society.

Service Projects

Service projects, which include Troop projects, community projects and projects organized by Scouts who are working on their Eagle rank, are an integral part of the Scouting program designed to aid the development of character and citizenship. Service hours (outside Troop meetings) working on approved Troop and/or Eagle Scout projects are required for advancement to most ranks.

Eagle Projects

Once a scout earns Life rank, he will be presented with a copy of the **Goose Creek District Eagle Guide**. The key to the Eagle Scout service project is leadership. The Eagle candidate must demonstrate his leadership ability to select the project, plan the details, organize the work, collect materials, recruit the manpower, and direct the actual carrying out of the project. It is important that the Eagle service project plans be reviewed by the Troop Life to Eagle Advisor to ensure that current Goose Creek/NCAC Life to Eagle guidelines for districts and units have been followed and completed. The Scoutmaster and Troop Committee chair will review and sign the Eagle application, and then the Eagle candidate obtains the District Eagle Advancement Chair approval before starting any work on his Eagle project. Eagle candidates must coordinate with the PLC for any scout participation in their projects at least 30 days in advance. Announcements and sign-ups for service projects generally take place at Troop meetings.

Advancement

Boy Scouts provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in overcoming them through the advancement method. The Boy Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Scout grow in self-reliance, and in the ability to work with and help others. The troop leaders and committee shall follow the guidelines found in the BSA *Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures* booklet.

The Boy Scout advancement program provides a ladder of skills that the Scout climbs through at his own pace. As each Scout acquires these skills, they move up through the series of ranks, for which they are awarded badges. Scout ranks Tenderfoot, Second Class & First Class focus on basic scouting skills necessary to enable Scouts to camp, hike, swim, cook, tie knots, administer first aid, and perform other tasks in the outdoors and to work as a member of a team. Scout ranks from Star, Life & Eagle focus on developing leadership skills, performing service projects, earning merit badges, and using skills learned in earlier ranks. The higher the Scout climbs the more challenging his tasks.

Four Steps to Advancement

Step 1 – The Scout learns. Every Scout learns Scouting skills by taking an active, hands-on part in Troop and patrol meetings and outdoor programs. This learning is the natural outcome of participating in regular Scouting activities. The requirements are designed progressively so that when a Scout reaches First Class rank, he is a good outdoorsman, physically fit, active in his patrol and Troop, informed and active as a citizen, and he will have made the Scout Oath and Law a part of his daily life. As he learns, he grows in ability to do his part as a member of his Patrol and the Troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others. In this way, he develops leadership skills. Scouts are primarily taught by scouts.

It is each Scout's own responsibility to learn the advancement program. The Boy Scout Handbook is his primary source of information. Other sources include discussions with his patrol leader, members of the youth staff or adult leader staff.

It is the adult leaders' responsibility to provide a means for the Scout to set and accomplish his personal goals.

It is the parent's responsibility to help your Scout organize his advancement effort, and to guide him (at least initially) in how to go about each step in working on badges. The Patrol Advisor (ASM) will also assist in this effort.

The requirements for each rank can be found in the Boy Scout Handbook, which is the Scout's official record for advancement. Because it is the Scout's official record, you may wish to periodically make a copy of the advancement pages in case the book is lost or damaged beyond use.

Step 2 – The Scout is tested. When a Scout feels he has mastered or achieved any of the advancement requirements, he should contact a leader, Scout or adult. When a leader, Scout or adult, sees that the Scout has mastered a given skill and has satisfied a given requirement, they'll record his achievement. Don't forget, as a Scout, it is your responsibility to make sure that a leader knows when you have met any requirement for advancement.

Each of the six ranks in Scouting contains the requirement "participate in a Scoutmaster conference." The purpose of the 20-minute to one-hour conference in **Class A Ceremonial uniform** is to develop over a period of time an increased level of understanding between the Scout and the Scoutmaster. Once this relationship is established and begins to grow, the Scoutmaster can be increasingly effective in helping the Scout get the most from Scouting.

When the Scout completes all but the last requirements for a rank, he will be ready to ask the Scoutmaster for a "Scoutmaster Conference." The Scout will be given a date for the conference. The conference may be the same evening, so the Scout should dress appropriately.

Step 3 – The Scout is reviewed. After the Scout has had his Scoutmaster Conference, he will then contact the Advancement Chairman to request a Board of Review. The board is composed of three adult members of the Troop Committee and other parents who have agreed to participate in Boards of Review. You do not have to be a Troop Committee member to participate in a Board of Review. The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters or the parents of the scout do not participate in his Board of Review.

The purpose of the Board of Review is to make sure the Scout has met all the requirements for rank advancement, to chat with the Scout about how he feels he is getting along with the Troop and its program, and to encourage the Scout to keep advancing. The review will also include a discussion of ways in which the Scout sees himself living up to the Scout Oath and Law in his daily life. The intention of the board is not to retest the Scout on the skills and activities required for the rank. A Scout must be in **Class A Ceremonial uniform** to participate in a Board of Review.

Step 4 – The Scout is recognized. When the Board of Review certifies the Scout, his new rank is announced at the close of the meeting. His badge will be awarded to him as soon as possible within the next few meetings. The certificate for his next rank will be presented to him at the next Troop Court of Honor.

The **Court of Honor** is a formal ceremony generally held four times a year, followed by refreshments and a time to chat with one another. All Scouts attend the Court of Honor in **Class A Ceremonial uniform**. Each family should plan to bring drinks, a plate of cookies to share or a dish for potluck dinners held occasionally. At that time all Scouts who have advanced or earned merit badges since the last court will be recognized before an audience of families, friends, Troop leaders and fellow Scouts. The Scout who has advanced in rank will receive his badge (if he does not have it already), the official advancement record card and will have the opportunity to present his mother or guardian with a Mother's pin to recognize parental participation and support

in his efforts. The record cards are very important and should be saved. When a Scout is applying for the rank of Eagle Scout, having these official cards simplifies the process.



Merit Badges

As a vital part of the advancement plan, the merit badge program is one of Scouting's basic character-building tools. Through participation in the program (which may begin immediately upon registration in a troop), each Scout acquires the kind of self-confidence that comes only from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. Instruction is offered in everything from animal science and public speaking to swimming and communications, providing a Scout with invaluable career, physical, and interpersonal skills.

Each merit badge subject is outlined and explained in a pamphlet that contains short, introductory information written for Boy Scouts by recognized authorities. These pamphlets can be obtained from the Troop's Merit Badge Library or Scout Shop. Simply talk to the Troop Librarian after a meeting and, if available, he will check out the merit badge pamphlet you need. Please get these pamphlets back to the library as soon as possible since others may also have a need to use them. (If you have any old merit badge books which you no longer need, please donate them to the Troop so that other Scouts may use them)

The parents and friends of the Troop who are knowledgeable of the various merit badge subjects may make themselves available to counsel the Scouts on particular merit badges. Register your commitment with the Troop Committee Chairman. The Chairman will provide the instructions on how to become a registered Merit Badge Counselor, the procedures required to make sure the Scout is approved to work on the badge, and how his progress is recorded.

The merit badge program is designed to encourage Scouts to seek information from new people who are experts in their respective fields. The Scoutmaster assigns a Merit Badge Counselor for each badge that a scout requests to work on. The Scoutmaster will avoid assigning a parent as the counselor for their son if at all possible. If the parent is the only counselor for a merit badge, then an exception may be made.

When a Scout shows an interest in earning a particular merit badge, he obtains his Scoutmaster's approval, and identifies another Scout with similar interests to become his partner. If a Scout can't find a partner, he must have an appropriate "buddy" (see the next paragraph) to attend any meeting with him and his merit badge counselor.

Note to Scouts and Merit Badge Counselors: *It is a Boy Scouts of America policy that adults do not meet with Scouts in a one-on-one situation. This is not a Troop 956 policy, but a national policy. It has been instituted to protect the rights of the Scouts as well as the adults.*

The BSA Youth Protection policy reads:

A Scout must have a "buddy" with him at each meeting with a merit badge counselor. A Scout's "buddy" could be another Scout, a parent or guardian, brother or sister, other relative or friend.

Boy Scouts are always tested individually. The Scout is expected to meet the current requirements, neither more or less. Occasionally the question arises as to whether it is permissible to have Scouts earn merit badges in a group. Many subjects may be presented to

groups of Scouts without defeating one of the purposes of the merit badge plan. Although the presentation of the material may be made to a group of Scouts, a qualified counselor must perform the examination for the merit badge on an individual basis.

10 Easy Steps to earn Merit Badges

1. Read the requirements of the merit badges you think might interest you, go to www.meritbadge.com. Pick one to earn. Ask a **Scout Buddy** to earn this badge with you because...You must have another person (could also be parent) with you at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
2. See the Advancement Chair to request a merit badge application or “**blue card**”.
3. Talk to your **Scoutmaster** about your interest in the badge; ask him to sign your blue card to approve the badge. Keep your blue card* in a SAFE place!!
4. Your Scoutmaster will assign you the name and number of a **Merit Badge Counselor**.
5. Obtain and read the entire **Merit Badge pamphlet**.
6. Before you begin requirements, **call the Merit Badge Counselor** and tell him or her that you want to earn the merit badge. The counselor may ask you & your buddy to come and see him so he can explain what he expects and start helping you meet the requirements.
7. When you know what is expected, start to **learn and do** the things required. Ask your counselor if you need help to learn the things you need to know or do.
8. When you are ready to get requirements signed off, call the counselor again to make an appointment to review your work. When you go, take along the things you have made to meet the requirements, as well as your blue card. When he or she is satisfied that you have met each requirement, the **counselor will sign your blue card application** to indicate the requirements that have been met so far. Repeat steps 7 and 8 until all requirements have been completed and signed off by your counselor. Keep your blue card* in a SAFE place!!
9. Show the signed application to your Scoutmaster for the **final SM signature**.
10. Your Scoutmaster will turn your blue card in to the Advancement Chair, who then logs the Merit Badge Award on the Troop Advancement Report. The Scout will be **awarded the merit badge and advancement card** at the next quarterly Court of Honor.

*Just as with rank advancement record cards, merit badge applications or “blue cards” are very important and should be saved. Information from these cards is required for advancement to Star, Life and Eagle ranks.

- FOR THE PARENTS -

Parent Participation

The Troop is sustained by a group of adults that give their time generously to participate in the troop. Every parent's involvement is required to provide a top quality program for our boys. Your contribution will strengthen the troop and will be remembered by your son for years to come. It is also an opportunity for you to interact with other parents who care deeply about their sons and your son. Involvement in the troop can be as much fun for the adults as it is for the boys.

There are a number of ways for you to actively participate with the troop. You may wish to become a member of the Troop Committee, assist with Boards of Review, serve as an Assistant Scoutmaster, go on camp outs, help with a merit badge class or any of the many support jobs that need to be done. **A Troop needs the help of both men and women. Your contribution may be large or small, but it is vitally needed. Without each and every parent's help, the Troop's growth and learning will be hampered.** When parents are called upon to participate or to help fulfill the needs of the Troop, they should make every effort to do so. Everyone's time is precious, so if every family assists with needed tasks and chores the burden will not be onerous for a few. The Scoutmaster and his assistants are there to train and help your Scout grow into a mature and helpful young man. The role of the Troop Committee is to serve as the board of directors and support the troop program. For Troop 956 to have a successful program each family must do their part.

BASIC PARTICIPATION - Read and discuss "*A Parent's Guide*" as printed in the front of the Scout Handbook. Plan family events around the published Troop 956 schedule. Deliver your scout promptly at the designated times for meetings and activities. Parents must provide transportation to several activities throughout the year. The Outdoor/Activities Chair will contact you for this or you may sign up to drive on Permission forms. Encourage your son to participate and advance in rank. See that he has the proper uniform and has the appropriate funds in advance of scheduled activities. With other adult leaders, attend several overnight trips throughout the year and visit troop meetings. Give a presentation on a topic of interest to the boys or help plan one of the outings. Serve as an adult leader at summer camp. Sit in on Boards of Review to check the advancement of our scouts.

All parents are invited to take Boy Scout Fast Start and Troop Committee training (available online, see link on troop website) to learn more about the scouting program

TROOP LEADERSHIP – Become a trained Scouter/leader. The troop is always looking for anyone willing to commit to an adult leadership position with the troop. Dedicated Assistant Scoutmasters make for a strong troop organization and help the Scoutmaster focus on the needs of the scouts instead of the organizational demands of the troop. Serve as Advisors to a Patrol or a troop leadership position.

MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR - Review the merit badge list on the Troop Resource Survey. Get involved by teaching the boys one of your interests, hobbies, or vocations as a Merit Badge Counselor. The time commitment does not have to be large. You set the schedule, and you get to work with the youth as they learn important skills or issues for their future.

TROOP COMMITTEE - Adults serve as advisors for all aspects of the Scouting experience. You may participate in the committee to have your opinions heard, shape the future of the troop, or take on a significant role in the operation of the organization. Positions include Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Outdoor/Activity Coordinator, Religious Coordinator, Advancement, Merit Badges, New Scout Representative, Fund Raising, Quartermaster, Institutional Representative, Medical Records, Web Page Coordinator, Public Relations Liaison and Summer Camp Coordinator. More positions may be formed to meet the skills or desires of

ambitious volunteers. Additional help is always needed on special projects. Any and all parents are always welcome to attend Committee meetings which are held usually once a month and are on the troop calendar.

Troop 956 holds a **Court of Honor** four times during the year. The Court of Honor is a special ceremony that honors each Scout who has earned advancement or merit badges during the quarter. **Parents should make it a point to attend each Court of Honor, not only to see their Scout honored, but also to show their support of the whole Troop.** Check the troop calendar so you know what events call for your support and attendance.

Parents are encouraged to occasionally attend a regular scout meeting, even for a brief visit, to allow the Scouts to demonstrate the Scout program in action. Parents are also encouraged to come to any outdoor outing to observe and participate. Please give a week's notice so food may be purchased if you plan to attend.

Your interest and support are vital to a successful program!

Troop Finances

The troop raises money for operating expenses through yearly registration fees and the annual fundraiser. The money collected supports the purchase of necessary scouting supplies, merit badges, rank patches, equipment repair and replacement, Courts of Honor, recognition of adult leaders, and other special occasions and activities. It is one of our goals of this Troop to provide a positive Boy Scout experience for the boys; summer camp is one of these. If for some reason a family does not have the funds to send their scout to summer camp, a Camper-ship could be requested of the Troop Committee. The Troop will work with any family that may have a financial hardship with meeting the registration fee or cost of summer camp. Payment options may also be requested from the Committee. All requests for financial assistance should be directed to the Committee Chair. Discretion and confidentiality in these manners will be strictly honored.

Fundraising

The Troop's primary fundraiser is the Mulch sales conducted each fall. This event raises funds required to operate the Troop for the year, including program costs, awards, activity fees, repair and replacement of Troop equipment. This event is in September & October, and all scouts are expected to support this event!

Scout Accounts

The Treasurer will create a Scout Account for each Scout. Contributions to this Account will be made by funds from various Fundraising events that will be available for individual Scouts to participate in, such as Popcorn. The Treasurer will make Scout Account information available at the Parents Meeting and when requested to any parent/guardian. The Scout Account can be used to pay for Summer Camp, camping fees, outdoor gear or other scouting related expenses. Individual Scout Account money earned by any Scout not used by the time that Scout leaves the Troop shall be returned to the Troop General Fund.

Communication

Communication is important so that everyone is informed of the news and events of the Troop, as well as changes to the schedule. Information flows through several channels in Troop 956. This Troop Guidebook gives an overview of how Troop 956 is organized and how we deliver the scouting program as directed by the Boy Scout of America. The Troop's Annual Calendar and

Roster are distributed to families usually on an annual basis. All parents are welcome to attend any of the Committee, Troop (Scout) Meetings and/or Outings at any time; this is a great way to see firsthand how the troop functions, how the boys plan and lead in their troop, and how each of the leaders and committee members serve in their roles. The Troop website has the following features: the troop's calendar along with any necessary changes to the Annual Calendar, upcoming training dates, links to troop forms (permission, medical, financial etc.), and numerous links to helpful resources for all scouts, parents and leaders.



Scouts are responsible for listening to instructions and announcements at meetings, understanding and remembering or recording them. The scout's notebook and pencil will help this. The calendar and website should keep Scouts and adults apprised of the scouting activities for several months in advance. This may be supplemented by e-mails. When you provide your email address, be sure to let us know if you'd like to receive troop and/or patrol emails. From time to time, a directory of current Troop 956 membership will be issued. Keep it with the family phone book. If your address, phone number, email, etc. should change, please notify the Committee Chairman ASAP.

The Scoutmaster is responsible for communicating with the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Adult Leaders, and Troop Committee. The SPL is responsible for informing the Patrol Leaders and other youth. Patrol Leaders are responsible for informing their patrol members about Troop events and special requirements, instruction or equipment needs. Scouts are responsible for transmitting messages to their parents. The Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chairman, and officers of the Troop Committee may, on occasion, inform parents directly. The contact person for Troop 956 at the District level is the Unit Commissioner.

Troop Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

Every Troop Member, youth and adult, is expected to understand and comply with the Scout Oath, Scout Law and the Outdoor Code. This is their Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Troop Disciplinary Policy is to ensure that everyone has fun, in a safe environment, while achieving the objectives of Scouting. Any Troop Member having difficulty following the Code of Conduct will be given an opportunity to correct their behavior. Scouts who demonstrate inappropriate behavior will be counseled based on the severity of their actions.

The adult leaders are to be trained for their position and are expected to follow all BSA policies and procedures. Adult leaders are responsible for monitoring the behavior of the scouts and will intercede when necessary. Disciplinary actions will be conducted in the appropriate environment, with "two deep adult leadership". Adult leaders will never use corporal (physical) punishment, nor subject a scout to ridicule or embarrassment in front of his peers. Youth Protection Guidelines will be followed. Troop adults are expected to enforce a fair and consistent disciplinary plan.

Scout misconduct will be dealt with immediately and with utmost confidentiality. Parents of scouts who misbehave may be asked for assistance in dealing with it. While general misconduct issues will not be communicated troop-wide, all parents will be made aware of more severe issues and the fact that they have been addressed. Any and all questions or concerns regarding the topic of scout misconduct or discipline are to be directed only to the Committee Chair or Scoutmaster. If a parent feels the need to take their concerns beyond the troop level, please contact the troop's Unit Commissioner.

The Counseling Procedures below are guidelines for leaders and scouts when disciplinary actions are necessary. The Counseling Levels are a guideline for how the counseling process is

escalated from scout leadership to the adult level as necessary. Disciplinary actions will be applied on a case by case basis. To avoid conflict of interest, parents or relatives of offending scouts will not participate in the disciplinary process except at levels 4 and 5 where parents are asked to be involved.

Any suspected abuse should be immediately reported to an adult leader who can take care of the immediate issue (e.g. separation). The issue should be reported in a manner consistent with BSA policy.

Counseling Procedures

Self-control and self-discipline are attributes expected from all Scouts and Scouters. In order to ensure the health and safety of Troop Members, youth and adult, and in order for the Troop to function effectively, counseling and disciplinary actions may be necessary. Any youth leader may counsel another Scout for misbehavior; but if the situation continues, becomes difficult, or if the infraction is severe enough, the youth leader will move the counseling level up the chain to seek adult leader assistance.

Counseling for conflict between two members of the Troop will include:

1. Scouts being consulted separately.
2. Good counseling techniques and procedures to gather the information necessary to resolve the issue.
3. If appropriate, the process should end with all parties talking face-to-face to agree on a course of action for issue resolution.

Counseling Levels

- 1st Level - The **Patrol Leader (PL)** will discuss the situation with the Scout, and attempt to solve the discipline problem. He should try to resolve the conflict by coaching or, if necessary, issuing a first verbal warning. If the offending scout is a Patrol Leader, the process will begin at Level 2.
- 2nd Level - If a verbal warning was given and the Scout fails to comply, the PL will notify **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL)** who will address the situation. The SPL or ASPL will try to resolve the problem by coaching or, if necessary, issue a second verbal warning.
- 3rd Level - If it is apparent to the SPL or ASPL that he cannot remedy the situation, he shall notify the **Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster** immediately that a discipline situation has arisen, and communicate his observations and actions. At this time, the SPL or ASPL may offer a plan to remedy the situation. The Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster will ensure the Scout understands the nature of his offense, discuss appropriate behavior, and with the Scout, seek ways to correct the issue that resulted from the Scout's action. The Scout will then be issued a warning in the presence of two adult leaders during a verbal counseling session. After the counseling session, the Scout may be temporarily removed from the activity if deemed necessary. This may include, but is not limited to being sent outside from a Troop meeting, to a tent on a campout, or sitting away from the rest of the Troop or Patrol.
- 4th Level - If the unsatisfactory behavior continues, a **meeting will be conducted** with the Scout, the Scoutmaster, and the SPL or ASPL. The Scoutmaster may request the

parents' cooperation in the matter and may offer to counsel with both the Scout and his parents.

- If the Scout's actions are continually disruptive to the operation of the Troop, or the violation is a more serious act of misconduct in the judgment of the Scoutmaster and an additional adult leader, **the Scout will be asked to leave the activity**. The parents will be called to immediately pick up the Scout. If a parent cannot be contacted, the Scout will sit out the activities under adult supervision until such time the parents can be contacted and the Scout sent home.
- 5th Level - For repeated misbehavior, or for the most serious acts of misconduct, the Scoutmaster will call for a **Disciplinary Hearing** which will consist of a **Scoutmaster Conference** between the Scout and Scoutmaster, including his parent(s) and representatives of the Troop Committee. A written letter of this meeting and any agreements reached will be forwarded to all parties at the conclusion. Any parent may appeal to the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee the decisions made at this level.

Disciplinary Actions

Additional actions assigned during a Disciplinary Hearing may include, but are not limited to:

- **Essay** - Require the Scout to write an essay reflecting on their behavior
- **Apology Letter** - Apology letter may be assigned when deemed appropriate.
- **Loss of leadership position** – for part or all of that term or a future term.
- **Probation** - A period of time may be given for the Scout to continue with Troop activities, and prove that the issue was isolated.
- **Suspension** – The scout is prohibited from participation in troop activities for a specified period of time.
- **Expulsion from Troop** (permanent) – The decision from the Chartering Organization would come at the recommendation of the Troop Committee; the Troop will notify Council of this decision.

A Final Note

We obviously cannot put down everything that you may need to know in this simple guidebook. Parents are always welcome at any time to contact the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair in person or by phone with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you may have. Please do not be shy; we were all new to this at one time or another. We remember questions we had when we started in Scouting, and sometimes we have to puzzle through issues together as a Troop. We cannot overemphasize how important it is to ask the question from one of the troop leaders directly rather than make guesses. We are usually available before and after each meeting, or we're simply a phone call away.

All of us are in Scouting together because... *"It's all about the Boys!"*

References

This Troop Guidebook is not intended as a replacement for BSA policies or guidelines. In any cases of conflict, BSA approved policies or guidelines shall be followed.

Please see the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair if you'd like to borrow any of the references listed here for further reading; there are links to some of these items on the Troop Website as well.

- The Boy Scout Handbook, #33105
- The Scoutmaster Handbook, #33009
- Guide to Safe Scouting, #34416B
- Troop Committee Guidebook, #34505B
- Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures, #33088C
- Patrol Leader Handbook, #33500A
- Senior Patrol Leader Handbook # WW32501
- Boy Scout Requirements, #33215D
- Insignia Guide # 33066A

