

Supporting the Scout

Parents play an important role in helping the scout be successful. Keeping up with the paperwork of scouting can be almost as challenging as learning the many new skills of scouting. Below are some suggestions to help the scout be organized and productive. Experienced scout parents are a valuable resource. They are usually available in the back of the room during meetings.

Scout Handbook Cover- The Scout Handbook is an important record of the many requirements the scout will achieve over the years in scouting. The handbook goes to camp and every meeting so it can suffer some hard times. A book cover can protect it to an extent, and best to have one with a zipper pocket for a pen and important notes. Sending it to camp in a ziplock bag may also help the book last the years. You will want to make frequent copies of your scout's Handbook. When a rank is earned photos of the rank pages with signatures should be uploaded to the rank on Scoutbook. Be sure to notify the Advancement Coordinator as well.

Notebook- many scouts use a small notebook to take notes at meetings and camps.

Three-ring Notebook and Clear Baseball Card Protectors- The card protectors are used to store the scout's Blue Cards, Merit Badge award cards, and Rank Advancement cards. The three-ring notebook is a good place to keep Merit Badge Workbooks, as well as a log sheet for service hours, camping days and nights, hiking miles, biking miles, and canoe miles. The log sheets in the back of the Handbook should also be kept up to date.

Work at home- It's a good idea to encourage the scout to set aside time each week to work on scouting. Setting a goal to accomplish a few rank requirements each week will keep the scout active and interested. After earning Scout Rank, scouts may work on the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class in any order.

The rank must be earned in order though. Scouts should also work on Merit Badges at home too. Motivated scouts are working on several Merit Badges at a time. Using the Merit Badge Worksheets and keeping the paperwork organized will help the scout be successful.

Troop Meetings- Before a troop meeting, sit down with your scout and go over the Handbook. Help figure out what rank requirements can be worked on at the meeting. During patrol corners, scouts are asked if they have anything they want to work on with a Troop Guide or have anything that needs to be signed off. Rank achievements may be signed off by scouts authorized to sign off or by an Assistant Scout Master (ASM).

Troop meetings should be fun and productive- Help your scout set goals for rank advancement. A great goal is to work towards earning First Class rank by the end of the first year in scouting. As scouts get older and more comfortable they will require less parent input. But scouts are more successful when the parent takes an active interest in what is being worked on, and helping review goals and time lines. The higher ranks require at least six months of holding a leadership position in the troop. Others require service hours and the earning of merit badges. While it is certainly your child's journey, scouts will benefit from being encouraged along the way.

Rank Advancements- The Scout Handbook holds the record of the requirements for rank advancement. They are found in the back pages of the Scout Handbook. The Scout Handbook should be read cover to cover. It holds answers to most of the rank advancement questions, as well as directions for important scouting skills. After the requirements for a rank are completed, the scout must ask the Scoutmaster for a conference. It is best to let the Scoutmaster know before the Troop Meeting so time can be scheduled. After the Scoutmaster Conference, the scout will need to find three adults to sit on a Board of Review. Here accomplishments and goals will be discussed. After successfully earning the rank, the scout needs to let the Scoutmaster know. Photos should be taken of the pages and uploaded to Scoutbook and the Advancement Coordinator should be notified. Your scout can work on rank advancements and merit badges simultaneously. Many merit badge requirements are also rank advancement skills.

Rank Advancement meetings- The New Scout Coordinator holds rank advancement meetings once a month. These meetings focus on whatever the scouts want to accomplish. ASMs and Troop Guides are there to teach and guide and sign off when a scout is ready. These meetings are very helpful for advancement in scouting.

Earning Merit Badges- Merit Badges are part of the core of scouting. They are more than a collection of colorful badges; they signify hard work, application of knowledge, skill development, and discipline. Once a

scout wants to begin work on a Merit Badge, they will need to get a blue card and a signature from their Scoutmaster. They will also be given a list a Merit Badge Counselors from which to choose. This is the first step to earning a merit badge and must be done by the scout, not the parent. The Blue Card is a small tri-fold card that logs the name of the scout, the Merit Badge name, Merit Badge Counselor name, and has places to sign off on Merit Badge requirements as they are accomplished. The scout should borrow a Merit Badge Book from our Troop Library, borrow one from the Public Library, or purchase one from the Scout Store. The Troop Library is always looking for donations of used Merit Badge Books. The scout may also want to print a Merit Badge Worksheet off the website <http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/list.asp> The **scout** will need to contact a Merit Badge Counselor with whom to work on the Merit Badge. Contacting the Counselor should be done before the Scout actually starts working on the requirements as the Counselor usually likes to go over a few details first. Merit Badge Counselors have training in working with scouts and have knowledge, passion, and experience related to the specific Merit Badge for which they Counsel. Some Troop adults are Merit Badge Counselors. After contacting the Merit Badge Counselor, the scout can start working through the requirements of the Merit Badge. Any interaction with the Merit Badge Counselor will require an adult or another scout to be present. Once the Merit Badge is completed, the Counselor will sign the Blue Card. One portion will be kept by the Counselor. The scout should show the blue card to their Scoutmaster for discussion and a signature. Then the card is given to the Advancement Coordinator as soon as possible. The Coordinator will give one portion of the Blue Card back to the Scout. This portion is an important document and the scout will need to keep it as proof of completing the Merit Badge. Merit Badges are presented to the scout at the next Court of Honor.

Medical Forms- BSA requires that their Medical Form Part A and B be completed and signed by the parent for all camps that are less than 72 hours. For camps longer than 72 hours, a physical is required and BSA Medical Form Part C must be completed and signed by a physician. Forms signed by a physician are current for one year unless there has been a change in health history. It may be used for multiple camps and activities. A copy of the insurance card is also required. The Troop Medical Coordinator holds the medical forms for the troop and gives them to camp leaders when required.

Permission Forms and Sign Ups- A Troop Permission Form is needed for every camp, event, and troop activity. The permission form can also be found in the Forms section of the troop website. It should be completed and given to the Event Coordinator. We have just implemented a digital Permission Form. This can be found on the Troop website. The password is troop49.

Payment- When payment is due, it can be made by withdrawal from the Individual Scout Account, or by payment to the Troop Treasurer. Sign up for camps and events takes place via RSVP on the Scoutbook Calendar. Once the deadline has passed, the Event Coordinator will contact all scouts who signed up and confirm registration. At this time, Permission Forms will be due, as well as payment. To fund an ISA, please write a check to Troop 49 and give it to the Troop Treasurer.

Court of Honor- The Court of Honor is a special meeting the Troop holds three times a year to award Merit Badges, Camp participation badges, and other awards. Scouts wear their full uniform, including neckerchief and Merit Badge Sash. It is important for the scouts and families to attend the Court of Honor to learn more about the Troop and support the efforts of the scouts. A Patrol will be assigned to coordinate the COH including a snacks. The Winter and Spring Courts of Honor are usually held on a Thursday night and start at 6:30. The Summer Court of Honor is held on a Sunday afternoon in August and usually includes a potluck meal.

Eagle Court of Honor- Achieving the rank of Eagle is an occasion celebrated with a special Eagle Court of Honor. The Eagle Scout family and Troop leaders plan a special ceremony, usually followed by a meal. Scouts come in full uniform and participate in the precession. Scouts and their families can learn about the Eagle Scout's journey through scouting, the camps and adventures, and the Eagle Project . This is truly a celebration – YES, you are invited- and should be attended whenever possible.

Boyscouting is an Adventure. It is Leadership Development. It is Character Building. Successful scouts learn about themselves by working, struggling, gaining confidence through challenges - even challenges that may seem simple like asking an older scout or adult for help, staying organized, failing, trying again. It should not always be a smooth journey, and it should be one that progressively becomes one's own journey. Parents play an important role, part of which is setting a foundation and eventually stepping back, allowing the scout to struggle and flourish, but keeping a watchful eye and continual engagement and support.