



## New Scout Parent Survival Guide

Your son is now a Boy Scout! As a Scout Parent, we expect that you have questions about how you can best support your scout and make him successful in Scouting. We hope that this list answers many of your questions and gives you an idea of the parent's role in Troop 479.

### How does a New Scout fit into a Patrol?

A new patrol is formed of all new scouts entering the troop. If there are more than 9 scouts, two patrols may be formed. An older, experienced scout will volunteer to be a 'Troop Guide' to show the patrol how things work, what is expected, and provide leadership for the first 6 months. The patrol will immediately elect a 'Patrol Leader' who will appoint an 'Assistant Patrol Leader'. These leadership roles usually have a term of 6 months, but in a New Scout Patrol, new leaders are elected each month to give each scout a taste of leadership. An important part of scouting is growing in leadership skills and scouts are expected to take on leadership positions to practice their skills.

The patrol will choose a patrol name, yell, and create a flag. This is an important step in setting their identity and becoming a team that can count on its members later when they are out in challenging situations.

The patrol works together, learns together and grows together. It supports and directs itself with guidance from the experienced scouts and adult leaders.

In addition to the monthly Troop meetings, your scout's patrol should plan monthly patrol meetings. The elected patrol leader is responsible for scheduling and planning these meetings with input from the rest of the patrol. A goal of these meetings is to learn skills that fulfill rank advancement requirements so the patrol members can reach 'First Class' scout rank in their first eighteen months or so in the troop.

The patrols are "Scout Led" so the patrol should take ownership of the scheduling, planning, and running of the patrol meetings. Each new scout patrol will also have an adult 'Assistant Scout Master' (ASM) assigned to it to be a resource for scouting rules, requirements, and regulations. If you notice that patrol meetings are not happening or have no substance, please make the Scoutmaster or the ASM aware of your concerns. The ASM advising the new patrol, along with the patrol's Troop Guide, will provide direction and help as needed.

Patrol meetings are great opportunities for the new patrol to become a unit. Depending on the agenda for the meeting, it may take place in a home or an outside location. An adult or experienced scout will often be used to present information for the new scouts to learn.

As with all BSA events, the "2 deep leadership" rules apply to patrol meetings.

### How can a Parent fit into the new Patrol?

In Boy Scouts, we do not have Den Leaders – there is no adult leader running a patrol or the troop.

Adult assistance comes from an Assistant Scout Master (ASM) who is a registered adult scouting volunteer that wears a Scout uniform. More ASMs means that adult participation in activities can be better distributed. If you would like to become an ASM, please let the Scoutmaster know since he appoints ASMs. Your help would be greatly appreciated!

Parents supporting the patrol have 3 main tasks:

- Provide a safe environment.
- Provide services. Driving is the main thing. Also, many activities require an adult 'in charge' for use of facilities.
- Monitor advancement. Help in tracking the requirements completed by the scouts.

**Any task that *can* be done by a Scout, *should* be done by a Scout.** ASMs are like chaperones at dances, except that we also get to participate and learn along with the scouts.

A difficult thing for a scouting parent is to *watch the Scouts fail* – but this is an extremely important thing to do. You are needed to make sure that they are failing safely. You are not there to fix it for them or to prevent them from failing. This robs them of a tremendous learning opportunity. What we typically think of as a failure is actually a growth opportunity. Because a scout burned some spaghetti, he did not fail – he learned to stir more and use a lower flame.

Another example is the Troop's first campout with a new scout patrol. The patrol has a Patrol Leader, has been given tents and a patrol box, has had the patrol method explained, and is now setting up their first campsite. Chances are good that every other patrol will have their tents up and be waiting for the new scout patrol to finish – even with their 'Troop Guide' offering direction. This was the most frustrating thing for me to watch as a new ASM. But, no one got hurt; nothing got destroyed; and most importantly, the patrol solved its own problem and accomplished its goal! The second time was less traumatic. After a while, this became routine for them.

### **How does a New Scout fit into the Troop?**

Each new scout has to find his niche in the troop. Some have a natural tendency to lead while others are content to follow. Each one has a lot to learn. An open, accepting attitude will help your scout become part of an existing group. There are also a handful of things for him to keep in mind to make the transition easier:

- Be Prepared. It's the Scout Motto, and it is very important. Always be in uniform, bring your scout book, dues, notebook, and pen to every meeting.
- Perform all of the tasks defined in the Troop's New Scout Guide as quickly and thoroughly as possible. These tasks start a solid foundation on which to expand and get the new scout on his way.

### **How can a Parent fit into the Troop?**

Troop 479 is "Scout Led" – that means, as an adult, you have very little say in how the troop operates, what they do for activities, and what mistakes they make. You provide safety and adult-only services. The Scoutmaster provides guidance and training as needed and members of the Troop Committee provide assistance in making the scouts' program happen, perform administrative duties, and assist in long-term direction.

At the Troop level, an ASM's role is to support the Scoutmaster and the scouts. These are traits you should develop in yourself:

- Be open to trying new things. For the first time in my life, I kayaked whitewater, climbed rocks, and snow camped.
- Be ready to fail at something new. A good way for a scout to learn how to deal with and grow from failure is to see it happen to a mature person.
- Make the best of challenging situations. If you are not enjoying yourself, the scouts will know. Keep a positive attitude.
- Support team rather than individual accomplishments. Each scout advances and grows individually, but the larger goal is to prepare him for a leadership role in society; which means leading a team of some size.
- Look for small positives in large negatives. An entire structure of lashings collapsed, except for one well-done square lashing – that knot was a success and it should be recognized.

### **What Else Can I Do?**

There are many roles you can play as adult. Here are some of them:

- Merit Badge Counselor Lead the scouts through the requirements to earn a merit badge. Look through the merit badge list and find some that interest you and you are qualified to teach. Ask any ASM or the SM how to sign up. There are BSA forms to fill out.
- Troop Committee Member We often need people to help conduct boards of review and fill committee positions such as activity coordinators, secretary, treasurer, fundraising coordinators, etc. The troop relies on a strong, supportive committee for its success.
- Attend some outings. We always need drivers. Not all outings involve camping. Get involved in those that interest you. Sign up to help organize an outing or two.
- Help plan courts of honor and special ceremonies.

### **Know the Lingo**

Your scout will be doing a lot of memorizing at the start. You can help him by showing your interest in what he is memorizing and helping him to apply the words in his everyday life. The Scout Oath and Law provide important rules to live by. Our goal is to help the scout build these character qualities into his value system so that they become part of who he is.

These are some of the important things that he will be expected to memorize:

- Scout Oath
- Scout Law
- Scout Motto
- Scout Slogan
- Scout Benediction
- Scout Vespers
- Outdoor Code

As an ASM, you should memorize these as well since we say them at troop meetings. They are a way to bind us together as a common group.

## Other Information to Know

Here are some helpful pointers about how Troop 479 is run.

1. Many Point Scout Camp  
The most important event of the first year is participation at Many Point. Your scout will spend a week camping with the troop and learning by immersion. He will also complete a large part of the advancement requirements for Tenderfoot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, and 1<sup>st</sup> Class ranks. If he misses this camp, it will require quite a bit of extra effort to complete the advancement requirements and the team building that occurs cannot be 'made up'.
2. Troop Meeting Format
  - a. Opening: Grouped by Patrols, Flag-in ceremony, Recite Scout Oath, Law, and Outdoor Code
  - b. Business: Collect Dues, Announcements
  - c. Skills Instruction
  - d. Patrol Meetings – plan menus and patrol events
  - e. Troop activities / games
  - f. Closing: Scout Vespers, Scout Benediction, Scoutmaster Minute, Flag-out ceremony
3. Meeting Schedules
  - a. The troop meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Eden Prairie Presbyterian Church (EPPC).
  - b. The Patrol Leaders Council (all troop leadership positions) meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at EPPC.
  - c. The troop committee (adults...all parents welcome) meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at 8:00 pm at EPPC to discuss troop operations and needs. Boards of Review for rank advancement are also typically conducted during this time.
4. Scouting Costs:
  - a. Registration - \$40 per year
  - b. Dues - \$2 per month.
  - c. Uniform – about \$80
  - d. Scout Handbook Cover – about \$8 (buy this NOW before the book gets trashed!!!)
  - e. Weekend Trips – from \$10 to \$40 each, depending on event
  - f. Summer Camp – about \$220
5. Fund Raising  
Many scouts pay their own way on the outings. This is difficult for them to do during the first summer but participation in our fund-raisers gives the Scout some money in his "scout account" to spend for outings. We sell food (popcorn, snow cones, and cookies) at Schooner Days. We also sell Christmas wreaths & popcorn in the fall. A portion of the money raised at these events goes to the troop for on-going operations but a large percentage is divided amongst the scouts to be used as they see fit for any of our outings. This money is managed by the troop treasurer. Money in a scout's account is to be used for scouting.
6. Advancement Record Keeping – get a three-ring binder with trading card holder sheets to hold advancement cards, merit badge cards, and training cards. This is invaluable for tracking advancement all the way up to Eagle Scout. The scout is responsible to make sure that his scout handbook is used to track his rank advancement and that he has obtained qualified signatures for each requirement as he completes it. He should have his book with him at all times to make it easy for him to get these signatures. The book has to last for several years (until he is 18 years old) so he must take good care of it. Parents do not sign off on requirements – only the SM, ASMs, or higher ranking scouts are qualified to sign off.  
  
In the back of the Scout Handbook, there are pages on which sign-offs of advancement occur. These pages often tend to rip out and are sometimes lost. As soon as the scout gets his book, he should reinforce each of those pages with clear packing tape to make sure they stay in place. If this advancement record is lost, it may be very difficult to complete an Eagle Board of Review 6 or 7 years from now.
7. Rank Advancement
  - a. Each boy is responsible for his own rank advancement. For each rank, he must contact the Scoutmaster to schedule a 'Scoutmaster Conference' (SMC). The conference usually takes between 15-30 minutes.
  - b. Once he has "passed" the SMC, he must then schedule a "Board of Review" by calling our advancement coordinator (Mark Weber).

8. How we run Camping Trips:
  - a. Drivers: we are always in need of more drivers. You do not need to commit to being an ASM in order to go on the outings. Costs for gas are reimbursed when receipts are submitted.
  - b. The Troop's Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) sets the calendar twice each year. Each month they meet and make sure preparations are under way for the next few months' outings and that this month's outing is ready
  - c. The cost for each outing and permission slips are sent via email or on the troop web site. A permission slip signed by a parent is required to attend any outing.
  - d. Meet at the church at the specified departure time for the outing. Bring the permission slip if it was not returned earlier.
  - e. Bring a snack for the drive and/or money to buy a snack at a gas stop. The permission slip will tell you when you need to bring extra money for "on-the-road" meals.
  - f. When returning from an outing, scouts are returned to Cedar Ridge School at the approximate return time. A phone answering machine is used to update our return time as we get closer so parents know when to arrive.
  - g. Each patrol plans its own meals. Typically, one scout in a patrol will be responsible for purchasing the food for his patrol for a trip. It is his responsibility to turn in receipts to the treasurer for reimbursement of expenses.
  
9. The Adult Patrol on Camping Trips:
  - a. All adults on an outing make up the Adult Patrol. We work together just like the scout patrols, pitching tents, preparing meals, and performing clean-up
  - b. When you go on a trip, you may be asked to plan a meal. You will determine the menu for that meal, purchase the food, and be the head cook preparing it. Costs for meals are reimbursed by the troop when you submit receipts.
  - c. Ask to see the Adult Menu document for ideas on meals.
  - d. The troop has a nice supply of high quality tents for adults to use. By using these, we maintain a consistent campsite so you do not need to bring your own tent. If you have special needs and require your own tent, we probably have enough but you can bring your own if you prefer. Female leaders will have separate tents from male leaders.

### **Things to Memorize:**

1. Outdoor Code
 

As an American, I will do my best to:  
 Be Clean in my outdoor manners,  
 Be Careful with fire,  
 Be Considerate in the outdoors,  
 Be Conservation-minded.
2. Scout Oath
 

On my honor, I will do my best  
 To do my duty to God and my country  
 And to obey the Scout Law;  
 To help other people at all times;  
 To keep myself physically strong,  
 mentally awake, and morally straight.
3. Scout Law
 

A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.
4. Scout Motto - Be Prepared
5. Scout Slogan - Do a Good Turn Daily
6. Scout Vespers (tune of "Oh, Christmas Tree")
 

Softly falls the light of day,  
 As our campfire fades away.  
 Silently each Scout should ask;  
 Have I done my daily task?  
 Have I kept my honor bright?  
 Can I guiltless sleep tonight?  
 Oh, have I done and have I dared,  
 Everything to be prepared?
7. Scout Benediction
 

And now, may the Great Master of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.