

# BOY SCOUT TROOP 33 PARENT'S HANDBOOK



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Boy Scouts of America and Troop 33. By becoming a parent of a Boy Scout you are starting your son out on the great adventure of Scouting. This is an important and rewarding endeavor that you will share with him.

We are one of about sixty-five units (Packs, Troops, Explorer Posts and Venture Crews) in the Watchung Mountain District. There are five other districts that make up the Patriots Path Council. In turn, a numerous Councils make up the Northeastern Region of the Boy Scouts of America. In all there are six regions and about 300 Councils.

Our sponsor, or Chartered Organization, is the Fanwood Presbyterian Church. Troop 33 is nondenominational and welcomes all in boys in Fanwood, Scotch Plains, and the surrounding area, ages 10½ to 18, to Scouting. A boy needs no prior experience to become a Boy Scout.

Troop 33 has four main goals for our Boy Scouts:

- Growth in moral strength and character
- Participating citizenship
- Development of physical, moral, and emotional fitness
- Be comfortable in and appreciate outdoor activities

Our program will make your son a better person and give him the fundamental tools to be successful in whatever path he chooses in life. These skills are learned by Scouts working together and actually doing things themselves. Last but not least, our goal is to have fun!

We have prepared this parent's handbook to answer many of your questions. The following pages describe the organization of our Troop and how it functions. We hope it helps you help your son.

## TROOP STRUCTURE

Boy Scout troops are organized using the patrol method. Each patrol consists of 4 to 8 scouts with one scout elected as a **patrol leader** and one as an **assistant patrol leader**. Patrol leaders learn how to manage troop activities by working under the direction of a **senior patrol leader** and **assistant senior patrol leader**. Older, experienced Scouts may serve as **troop guides**, to assist new Scouts in learning scout skills

Whenever the troop comes together for a meeting or an activity, the senior patrol leader is in charge. He also, in consultation with the scoutmaster, appoints other junior leaders and assigns specific responsibilities as needed. It is our goal (and the concept of Scouting since its inception) to have the boys run the troop with the adults acting as advisors.

## TROOP COMMITTEE

The responsibility of the Troop Committee is to support the Scoutmaster and the Troop leadership in running a successful, safe, and sound program. The committee aids the Scoutmaster in four areas, program planning, advancement, outdoor program and administration.

All parents can become a member of the committee by attending the meetings and registering as an adult member of the Boy Scouts. The intent of the committee is to spread the work of the troop around and not to burden a few adults with an impossible task. Please contact our Scoutmaster or Committee Chairman for an adult application.

Any parental concerns can be addressed at the committee meeting.

## ACTIVITIES

### TROOP MEETINGS

Troop 33 meets Monday evenings from 7:00 PM to 8:30PM in Westminster Hall, second floor in the Education Building of the Fanwood Presbyterian Church. Entrance and exit to meetings should be through the arcade doorway (not the fire escape entrance). We meet weekly from September through June *except when our school system is not in session.*

We ask the Scouts to arrive as close to 7:00 PM as possible to ensure that there is adult leadership present and that the church doors are unlocked. Meetings will begin promptly at 7:15 PM. Parents must make their own arrangements to pick up their scouts promptly.

Scouts are required to attend each meeting in their troop T-shirt and/or sweatshirt (Class "B" uniform) or regular scout shirt. The first meeting of every month there is uniform inspection and Scouts should wear their class "A" uniform.

There are three kinds of activities at weekly Troop meetings:

- Organizational/administrative (planning upcoming campouts, service projects, etc.)
- Educational (advancement skills or merit badge related)
- Fun (games)

### Patrol Leaders Council (sometimes referred to as Green Bar Meetings)

The Patrol Leaders' Council is made up of the senior patrol leader, who presides over the meetings; the assistant senior patrol leaders, all patrol leaders, and troop guides. It meets monthly to fine-tune the plans for the upcoming month. The Patrol Leaders' Council normally meets at 6:00 pm on the evening of the last troop meeting of each month.

### ANNUAL TROOP CALENDAR

In September each year, a calendar of events is distributed to Scouts and their families. It includes as much as is known up to that time about the coming years schedule regarding campouts, service events, Courts of Honor, etc. The calendar will be updated when necessary and updates will be posted on our troop website: <http://www.bsatroop33.com> & distributed to Scouts and their families. We regularly distribute information by e-mail so please make sure we have your e-mail address and remember to check your e-mail.

## GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply to all activities:

- No illegal drugs or alcohol
- No weapons, including fixed blade knives, bows and arrows, BB or paintball guns, sling shots or fireworks
- Scouts are not allowed to bring guests unless approved by the Scoutmaster
- No lighters
- No Radios, CD players, Tape players without headphones
- The use of foul and mean spirited language is prohibited

Parents will be required to sign a Permission Form for each separate Scout outing. The purpose of the Permission Form is to facilitate medical treatment and parental notification should a serious accident occur. It is important to write down the *phone number where a family member can be reached that weekend*, and to note any health or fitness restrictions that your son may have. Parents should inform Troop leadership of any medication your son may be taking. These medications should be turned over to the trip leader along with written dosage instructions prior to all trips.

**Permission forms also contain complete information on the outing.**

All activities must have at least two adult leaders. Additional adult leadership may be required based on such factors as size and skill level of the group and overall degree of challenge of the activity.

## ORDER AND DISCIPLINE

A safe and successful Scout program depends on our Scouts conducting themselves with the Scout Law and Oath in mind.

To outline some of the major points -

- We are guests of our charter organization, the Fanwood Presbyterian Church; all church property should be treated with respect. Kicking of balls in the auditorium is prohibited and nursery school vehicles are not to be used. Scouts should only be in the auditorium unless authorized by a Scout leader.
- When the Scout Sign is up – everyone is expected to be silent.
- Dangerous rough housing is not allowed i.e. tackling, tripping or careless ball throwing (broken windows are the responsibility of the thrower).

If a scout violates these rules he will be disciplined by the adult leadership in an appropriate manner. If a scout continues to have a problem following Troop guidelines a parent will be called to come and pick him up from the meeting. A

parent/leader meeting will be arranged to discuss any further action to be taken.

On weekend outings it is even more important that Troop and Scout guidelines be followed.

- Scouts will properly use and care for Troop equipment.
- Scouts will respect the property of other Scouts and the camp we are visiting
- See "General Rules" of prohibited items.
- Scouts will treat other Scouts and visitors with respect.
- Scouts will follow the instructions of the adult leadership.

If any scout has a problem adhering to these guidelines the Scoutmaster and his assistants may prohibit the scout from attending any further weekend outings without parental accompaniment.

### CAMPOUTS

Troop 33 has an active outdoor program and plans one weekend outing each month from September through June. During July we attend a weeklong summer camp. Older Scouts, who qualify, also have the opportunity to attend official Boy Scouts of America, High Adventure programs, such as Philmont in New Mexico and the National Sea Base in Florida. We participate in several of the events sponsored by our District and the Patriots' Path Council such as the Fall Camporee, the Klondike Derby in January and Whitewater Rafting in May. Several weeks prior to each activity we distribute trip information and Parental Permission forms for each activity so families can plan for them. The cost for most campouts is typically \$15-\$20 per scout, excluding special rental or event charges, such as canoe rentals.

**Scouts should be wearing their scout shirt Saturday morning for departure to our scheduled activity.**

Transportation to and from campouts is provided by parents, the Scoutmaster and his assistants and Troop Committee members, as coordinated by the Troop Committee. Parents who are interested in attending a campout should talk to the Scoutmaster.

### PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES ON CAMPOUTS

There are many opportunities for parents to accompany the troop on campouts. Unfortunately we can not accommodate siblings. The Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster in charge of the trip will consider all requests to the Troop. Parents who attend a campout are often confused as to their proper role. In general, that role is defined by the Scoutmaster in charge of the outing who will

assign any specific tasks that are necessary in fulfilling the week-ends program objectives. However there are certain elements common to all troop outings which parents should be aware.

Adults on campouts may offer Scouts advice and guidance, but *should not* actively assist the Scouts in performing their tasks such as, pitching tents, cooking meals, and working together as a patrol. In keeping with these goals, parents generally do not share a tent with their son. This is all significantly different from the Cub Scout program where parents have a more participatory role. Parents also help to assure that the campouts are safe, and that every Scout has an opportunity to enjoy his weekend. If a parent observes any dangerous or unscoutlike behavior he should immediately put a stop to it, and inform the Scoutmaster in charge at the first opportunity.

*Transportation to and from campouts and summer camp is often a problem and the Troop needs as much help as possible in transporting scouts. Parents who are either attending or not attending are encouraged to help. Please contact the Scoutmaster with your offer of assistance.*

**At the end of our campout, troop gear (tents and troop boxes) are assigned to your scout for drying and cleanup. Please make sure this is done in a thorough and prompt manner and that the items are returned at our Monday night meeting immediately following the campout.**

## SUMMER CAMP

Each July, Troop 33 spends one week at a Boy Scout Camp. The camp is owned and operated by the Boy Scouts of America. Participation by each Scout is strongly encouraged and has been found to be a necessity for advancement to Eagle Scout because so much merit badge work is completed in summer camp. While we favor participation with the Troop, Scouts can individually select to attend another Boy Scout Camp if desired.

The Summer Camp program revolves around merit badge and advancement related activities that include waterfront, scoutcraft, ecology, conservation, handcrafts, archery and riflery. The camp staff teaches the skills and each Scout makes his own schedule (with some help from the Scoutmaster) for the week. The Troop lives together at a campsite, in tents, owned by the camp. Meals are prepared by the camp staff and eaten in a dining hall where each Scout takes his turn being a waiter.

# ADVANCEMENT

## THE BOY SCOUT HANDBOOK

Both Scouts and parents should become familiar with the contents of the Official Boy Scout Handbook, as it will provide answers to many questions. Descriptions of the requirements for each Scout rank, Scout Skill Awards, and several key Merit Badges are covered in the book. As your son advances in rank Scout Leaders will date and sign off on the completion of each requirement in the handbook. Over time this book will become a valuable record of your son's achievements. First year Scouts should bring their books to each weekly meeting. We stress to the Scouts to take good care of their books as they have to last them a long time, and the records of achievement they contain are critical to each Scout's personal advancement through the ranks. The purchase of a protective cover is recommended.

## BOY SCOUT RANKS

Typically, boys enter Boy Scouts after earning their Arrow of Light or being 11 years old. Experience as a Cub Scout is not required. The first four ranks (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class) must be obtained in sequence, but may be worked on simultaneously. A detailed list of requirements is in the Official Boy Scout Handbook. Scouts work toward achieving the First Class rank by the end of their first year in Scouting. Our Scoutmaster and his Assistants follow a schedule to make this an achievable, realistic goal that can be accomplished by regular attendance and participation at weekly meetings, campouts, service projects, and other activities. The program is designed around the "average" Scout. During the first year scouts will learn basic skills but also learn to work together which is often more essential than rank advancement.

The Scout is also free to work on individual Merit Badges, which are required for the higher ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle. This freedom is particularly important for Scouts who plan to attend summer camp, when substantial progress can be made in various outdoor Merit Badge activities.

**Blue cards from merit badge work should be kept in a safe place for they are the definitive record for the rank of Eagle.**

Six Merit Badges are required for the rank of Star, five more for Life Scout and ten more for Eagle Scout for a total of 21. Each of these ranks also requires the scout to serve in leadership positions with progressively more responsibility, and to take part in a community service project. A major requirement for Eagle Scout is the planning and organizing of a significant service project, the recruiting of scouts to carry it out and the documentation of the outcome at the conclusion. All Merit Badges and other requirements for the Eagle Scout Award must be

accomplished before the scout's 18th birthday. In addition to the skills and Merit Badges required for each rank scouts must show *Scout Spirit*. **Scout Spirit includes a number of elements such as participation, contribution, leadership, and maturity relative to rank.**

### SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE/BOARD OF REVIEW

At the completion of each rank from Tenderfoot to Eagle, the Scout is required to participate in a conference with the Scoutmaster. This is to ensure that all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. When a scout has completed his requirements it is **his** responsibility to schedule his Scoutmaster's conference and Board of Review. The Board of Review is conducted by adult advisors and is required for all ranks. The Board of Review in the lower ranks may include general questions related to the skills he has learned, but **will not** be a re-test of those skills. As the Scout advances in rank these question will be more centered on leadership, citizenship, character.

**The scout should present himself to the Board in the full uniform he has at his rank. First Class Scouts and above are expected to have a full Class "A" uniform. The scout should also have his Scout Handbook.**

For Scouts below the rank of First Class, whenever a Class "A" uniform is warranted, the official BSA shirt & neckerchief should be worn along with dress pants that resemble the official BSA trousers (ex. Khakis or Dockers). Pants such as jeans, sweatpants or active-wear are not acceptable.

It is required that a representative from the Patriots Path Council attend an Eagle Board of Review. After successfully passing the Board of Review the scout has officially earned the appropriate rank and is ready to be recognized at a Court of Honor.

### COURT OF HONOR

The purpose of the Court of Honor is to recognize the ranks, merit badges and leadership roles earned by each scout since the last Court of Honor. They are usually are held 3 times a year. We ask families to bring a desert to serve 8. All family members are encouraged to attend but younger siblings must be supervised at all times and not left to roam the building. The Court of Honor starts at 7:30PM. The dates, times and locations of Troop 33's Courts of Honor are announced at the weekly meetings and will be noted on the Calendar of Events. We will also send out a special announcement via email.

## THE BOY SCOUT UNIFORM

The Scout uniform is the symbol of membership in and commitment to Scouting. It is the visible reminder of the spirit and ideals of Scouting and should be worn properly and neatly.

### REQUIREMENTS

Scout shirts with patches and red shoulder loops or our troop T shirt can be worn to Monday meetings **except for the first Monday of every month**. Scouts should wear their "Class A" uniform for Troop inspection on the first Monday

The "Class A" uniform consists of:

- Official BSA long or short sleeved shirt with red-colored shoulder loops
- Neckerchief and slide(not the Cub Scout slide)

New scouts receive neckerchiefs at Tenderfoot

- Official BSA trousers or shorts
- Official BSA olive-colored web belt with brass buckle
- Official BSA olive-colored socks with red stripe at the top
- Merit Badge sash (once Merit Badges are earned)
- Shoes must be neat and clean made of either leather or canvas

**The proper position of all badges and patches is found in the Boy Scout Handbook.**

### PURCHASING UNIFORMS

What to buy:

- Long or short sleeve Scout shirt
- Red shoulder loops
- Patches- Patriots Path Council, numeral "33", World crest
- Scout pants (long or short), belt and socks

Do not buy a neckerchief or any other patches. They will be provided by the Troop.

### WHERE TO BUY UNIFORMS

- Patriots Path Council, 1130 Route 22 West, Mountainside 908-654-9191 11
- Efinger Sporting Goods, 513 W. Union Avenue, Bound Brook 732-356-0604

If for any reason, a Scout needs assistance in acquiring a full Class "A" uniform, please do not hesitate to inform the Scoutmaster, Committee Treasurer, or Committee Chairman. There are also used uniforms available in the Troop uniform "Trading Post". Please donate used uniforms that are in good condition to the "Trading Post", so more boys can benefit from this service.

## EQUIPMENT

Buying Scouting/camping equipment for your Scout does not need to be an expensive proposition. If you do not have camping experience, do not let a sales person equip your scout for an assault on Mt Everest. Most of the camping Troop 33 does is relatively light. Before making any major purchases you are unsure of such as tents, backpacks, or sleeping bags, please consult with Troop leadership for some recommendations.

### REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

For Weekly Meetings

- Scout Uniform (Class "A" or Class "B")
- Scout Handbook

For Weekend Camping/ Summer Camp

- Sleeping bag rated to 20 degrees minimum (mummy type with stuff sack preferred)
- Foam pad for use under sleeping bag
- Raingear (the rain coat for school is usually sufficient)
- Shoes (hiking boots or work boots offer much more protection from the elements than sneakers)
- Flashlight
- Consult the Boy Scout Handbook for a list of personal items
- A duffel bag to hold all of the above

For summer camp or wilderness outings the Scoutmaster or trip leader will inform Scouts of equipment needed. Certain additional items may be needed for a particular Merit Badge your Scout may wish to pursue.

### DESIRABLE EQUIPMENT (NOT REQUIRED)

- Backpack- desirable for camping and most outings required for backpacking trips. Consult with troop leaders, especially if your Scout is small and growing rapidly.
- Folding Pocketknife (after Totem Chip Card is earned)- the Boy Scouts of America does not allow non-folding, sheath-type knives

**It is strongly advised that names be place on any item of clothing or personal gear. Our lost & found is growing by leaps and bounds.**

## ANNUAL DUES

Troop dues covers the Scout's Boy Scouts of America membership fee, Troop insurance, Troop chartering fees, badges, "Boy's Life" magazine, and equipment. Please make sure dues are paid by Oct 30 so we can meet our financial responsibilities and your son can participate in all Troop Activities. Dues are currently \$50. Make all checks payable to BSA Troop 33. They may be brought to the Troop meeting or mailed to our Treasurer, Larry Mattson.

## FUND RAISING

Troop 33 currently conducts one fund raising event each year. Popcorn is sold in the fall. The funds raised are used specifically for Troop 33 equipment expenses and advancement awards.

## RECYCLING

Troop 33 mans the Fanwood Recycling Center three times a year. Recycling serves two purposes: it gives the boy an opportunity to provide a service to the community and it provides the Troop with income that it is dependent on. Participation in recycling is expected and reflects Scout Spirit. Dates are on our troop calendar. Parental involvement is vital for us to perform this work properly.

## MEDICAL FORMS

In an effort to provide better care to those who may become ill or injured and to provide youth members and adult leaders a better understanding of their physical capabilities, the **Boy Scouts of America established minimum standards for providing medical information prior to participating in various activities.**

**They are classified as follows:**

**Class 1** - Includes any event that does not exceed 72 consecutive hours, where the level of activity is similar to that normally expended at home or at school, and where medical care is readily available. This is filled out by the adult volunteer, parent or guardian – it must be initialed annually to indicate accurate information.

**Class 2**- is designed primarily for resident Cub Scout and Boy Scout summer camp but could be used for any Class 2 activity. This must be signed by an MD.

**Class 3**- Includes any event involving strenuous activity such as backpacking, high altitude, extreme weather conditions, cold water, exposure, fatigue, athletic competition, adventure challenge, or remote conditions where readily available medical care cannot be assured.

If you or your son are scheduled for an Annual Physical, we highly recommend getting your Class 3 updated and on file with the troop to avoid an extra visit should a Class 3 opportunity arise.

**National High Adventure programs have their own specific form with strict guidelines regarding the timing of your physical. Please see your crew leader for specific guidelines.**

*These medicals can be used for other Class 3 activities.*

## WHAT TO DO IF . . . ???

Your Scout wakes up ill the morning of a campout or an event...

- Call the adult running the event or the Scoutmaster. If unable to reach either, go to the meeting place to inform them of the situation

Your Scout misses a weekly Troop meeting...

- He should call his Patrol Leader to get any information that he might have missed
- Check his email for any announcements

Your Scout brings home patches and you don't know where to sew them...

- Consult the Boy Scout Handbook or ask the Scoutmaster

Your Scout is unsure of the requirements for his next rank...

- The Scout should consult his Boy Scout Handbook or see the Scoutmaster

Your Scout earns a rank or Merit Badge...

- Attend all Courts of Honor to show your support for the Scouts and your pride in their achievements

Your Scout is injured on a weekend outing and required medical care.

- Contact Scott Berger, Troop Committee Chairman, to contact our council office and inform you of claim procedures

Your Scout has been bullied or in some way intimidated by another Scout.

- Please contact the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chairman. It is our utmost desire to have a safe enjoyable environment for all the boys. Hazing is not part of the Scouting program.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP**

- Help with our program on Monday Night
- Help plan or assist on a weekend outing
- Attend Committee Meetings
- Get Trained in Risk Zone, Safety Afloat, Leadership Essentials, Leader Specifics, Climb on Safely and Youth Protection
- Attend Summer Camp
- Help at recycling or with the popcorn sales
- Become a Merit Badge counselor
- Become an Assistant Scoutmaster