

Boy Scout Troop 23 Handbook



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I. PURPOSE

The Troop Handbook is provided for the parents and scouts of Troop 23. It has been prepared by the Troop Committee for use by all members of our Troop. This was done to remain consistent in all matters of operation, to assist the parents, and scouts and to reduce any confusion regarding established rules and guidelines.

Please take the time to review this material.

This handbook does not and is not intended to replace any policies or requirements defined in BSA national policies concerning troop operations or safe scouting. National Boy Scout policies shall always be referred to first for any policy. This handbook is to define specific procedures for troop operation as approved by the Troop Committee.

II. CHARTER ORGANIZATION

Discovery United Methodist Church is the sponsoring organization for Troop 23.

III. USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

Discovery UMC encourages the use of its facilities for scouting activities. Scout activities need to be scheduled on the church calendar. Please call the church (987-4000) to reserve meeting space.

The Scoutmaster or an adult appointed by the Scoutmaster is responsible for caring for the treatment, cleaning up and closing the building. This includes turning off lights, securing doors, returning equipment and chairs and cleaning the areas used.

Scouts may not be left unattended before, during or after functions. Safe Scouting policies shall always be followed. The Scoutmaster will ensure that adequate adult supervision is provided. The Scoutmaster with an adult, or two adults appointed by the Scoutmaster will remain until all scouts have been picked up.

IV. BASIC RULES

1. Scouts who have their Tote-N-Chip in their possession can carry pocketknives of a folding nature. Any abuse of knife or axe safety observed by a leader will be grounds for losing a corner. When all corners are gone, so is the Tote-N-Chip and so is the right to carry a knife.
2. Sheath knives are not permitted at any function.
3. Aerosol cans are not permitted in scout's possession at any function.
4. Handheld electronic devices (CD players, gameboys, etc.) are not permitted at Scout functions including meetings and campouts. These devices may be permitted when traveling to/from activities, but are to remain with the vehicle upon arrival.
5. Cell phones while camping shall be used in emergency situations only. We strongly discourage scouts to have cell phones in their possession while camping.
6. Fuel based lanterns or flames of any type are not allowed inside tents.
7. Fireworks of any kind are not permitted.
8. Firearms of any kind are not permitted.
9. Alcohol and drugs are not permitted.
10. Fires are to be built using guidelines in the Boy Scout Handbook.
11. All wood for fires shall be dead. Live trees shall not be cut. Deadfall is the only wood to be cut or used for fires.
12. All garbage, tin cans, bottles, etc., shall be packed out and/or disposed daily in appropriate containers.
13. Adult conversations at meetings shall be held outside the meeting area.
14. Scouts that sign up for activities will be responsible for the cost of the activity, unless cancellation is made before the activity deadline. Activity costs may include food and transportation as well as trip and camping fees.

V. PARTICIPATION

To get the most from the scouting experience, it is important for each scout to participate in as many activities as possible. If a scout does not participate in any scout activity for six months or the Christmas tree sale, the scout will be considered inactive and be dropped from the roster and will forfeit any funds in his account. A boy can rejoin scouting at any time when dues are paid up-to-date, but will not recover any forfeited funds.

Unfortunately, the only way we know when a scout is unhappy with the program is when he stops showing up. Any problems with the scouting program should be directed to a scout's Assistant Scout Master, the Troop Scout Master or the Troop Committee Chair.

VI. MEETINGS

Troop meetings are on the first and third Monday of each month. We meet at Discovery United Methodist Church. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and ends at 8:00 p.m. Please arrange to pick your son up promptly.

The scouts run troop meetings. The Patrol Leader's Council puts the troop meetings together. Merit Badges are worked on; a game played and plans for campouts are discussed. Please be patient with scouts as they are learning from doing.

Patrols – The scouts are divided into groups called patrols. Each patrol elects its own boy leader. The adult leadership reviews patrols periodically.

Troop Calendar - Meeting and campout dates are provided yearly for all scouts and parents. Additional copies of the calendar can be obtained from the Troop Committee Chairman.

Dues are collected yearly in October. Dues cover our registration with the National Boy Scout Office, Boys' Life magazine and advancements for the Troop.

Boards of Review are held on the first Sunday of each month. The scout should sign up at Troop Meetings when he has finished all requirements for rank advancement. The Scout should report in Class A uniform (page 8). Scouts need to bring their book so that advancement can be recorded.

Courts of Honor are held quarterly at regularly scheduled Troop Meetings. At the last Troop meeting of the quarter (March, June, Sept, Dec.) scouts will be recognized for their accomplishments. Parents are encouraged to attend Courts of Honor, so you can share in your sons' pride in earning advancement.

Eagle Courts of Honor are planned by the parents of the Eagle Scout to be recognized. Parent responsibilities include: Securing date and place for Court of Honor. Planning the program, postage for invitations, refreshments & paper goods, and decorations. The

troop will purchase the eagle kit and other items requested by the parents up to a total cost of \$100. The troop will only reimburse for active scouts. The cost of tickets for Scoutmaster and Parents to Eagle Banquet can be reimbursed by the troop

Summer Camp – The Troop will attend summer camp each year. All scouts are encouraged to attend. Summer camp provides wonderful opportunities for scout advancement.

Camping – Troop 23 camps once a month. In order to maintain a Quality Troop as set out by Boy Scouts of America troops camp on a regular basis. There are some trips that are held annually and the scouts decide on other trips.

Advancement & Merit Badges: Scouts entering Boys Scouts will advance through several ranks before they actually need to earn Merit Badges. Merit Badges are awarded for work done on a special subject: Lifesaving, First Aid, etc. There are some merit badges that are required to reach the rank of Eagle Scout; others are specialized for individual interest such as Coin Collecting, Skating, etc. Merit badges can be worked on at anytime. The scout can work on them individually. At other times the Troop may work on them as a group at a Troop Meeting. Merit Badge Days are offered throughout the Birmingham Area and any scout is welcome to attend. Notice of these Merit Badge days are published through the local scout service center. Detailed instructions on beginning Merit Badges and a Merit Badge Counselors are included in this handbook.

VII. SCOUT LEADERSHIP

Troop Leadership positions are voted upon by the Scouts. Voting occurs in August for Senior Patrol Leader which is a 1 year term. A scout can be Senior Patrol Leader for only one term. The Senior Patrol Leader must be at least a Star scout. The Senior Patrol Leader appoints the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.

Voting occurs in August and February for positions of Historian, Librarian, Chaplin Aid, Bugler, Quartermaster, Scribe, and Patrol positions. These positions are for terms of six months. Scouts must be at least the rank of 1st class to hold a troop leadership position.

The Scoutmaster may appoint leadership positions such as instructor and den chief.

Junior Leader Training is offered within the Troop.

Job Descriptions are included in the Jr. Leader Training Handbook.

The **Patrol Leaders Council** meets at various times as determined by the Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader or the Troop Committee. The time and place will be announced when meetings are planned. Scouts who attend the Patrol Leaders Council are those in Troop Leadership Positions, as well as Patrol leaders or their assistant. The PLC is open to all parents at all times. Suggestions are always welcome.

The **Patrol Leaders Council plans the calendar**. The calendar is planned for one year. This meeting is held annually in August.

VIII. ADULT LEADERSHIP

We always need adult leadership and parents are invited to attend any meeting or outing. We need your help and this will give each parent an opportunity to see first-hand, what our Boy Scout Program is all about.

In addition, we need help coordinating fund raising, summer camp, recharter, advancement, etc. Please volunteer. Remember, when a boy joins the Scouting program his family joins with him. He needs your support and so does the Troop.

The **Troop Committee** is open to all parents. Parents are encouraged to join the committee. The Troop Committee is the “board of directors” for the troop; they approve major expenditures, make long-range plans, and give overall guidance.

The Troop Committee is responsible for conducting “Board of Reviews” for scout advancement. Schedules are mailed to adults notifying them of their month to participate. Boards of Review guidelines are available in the scout files located at Discovery United Methodist Church.

Meetings are held quarterly, the fourth Monday of the first Month in each quarter. (January, April, July, October)

Adult Positions: (Job Descriptions available in Scout Leadership Book)

- Scoutmaster
- Assistant Scoutmasters
- Treasurer
- Chartered Organization Rep
- Advancements
- Tree Lot
- Grass Cutting
- Flags
- Transportation
- Summer Camp
- Newsletter

IX. UNIFORMS

Scouting is a uniform organization. Our policy is the same as any sports team your boy may be a member of. The following will describe the two types of uniforms the Troop wears. The only badges from Cub Scouts allowed are the Arrow of Light and a religious knot.

Class A (Special Events, Boards of Review and Courts of Honor)

Tan Boy Scout Shirt
 Merit Badge Sash
 Neckerchief/Slide
 Red Epilates (Shoulder Loops)
 Pants – olive green
 Boy Scout Socks
 Boy Scout Belt

Class B (Group Events & Camping)

Troop T-shirt
 Pants of Choice

Troop T-Shirts - We ask that each scout purchase activity shirts for use at outdoor events as the “Class B” uniform. Given the high cost of the uniform shirt and the very low price of the activity shirts we have found this to be popular with parents and leaders. As long as the shirts are in good condition they can be used year after year. The Troop places a T-shirt order in the spring. Additional shirts are available throughout the year. Contact the Troop Committee if you need additional shirts.

X. EQUIPMENT

The Troop maintains tents, dining flies, cooking equipment and other equipment for the scouts. Individual equipment needed includes:

1. Boy Scout Handbook – scout will keep records up-to-date in this book. It also covers Merit Badges and Scout Rank Advancements.
2. Sleeping Bag – Troop 23 camps all year. Be sure your bag is warm enough for winter camping. It should also be lightweight for easy backpacking.
3. Sleeping Pad – Comfortable and lightweight. Unless you sleep comfortably, camping is not much fun.
4. Eating equipment – Mess Kit, eating utensils and a cup. Please mark all pieces with scout name.
5. Canteen or Water Bottle
6. Rain Gear – A good quality poncho or rain suit. Regardless of forecast always pack rain gear.
7. Flashlight with batteries.
8. Footwear – good socks and lightweight hiking boots.
9. Boy Scout Shirt and Troop T-Shirts

XI. MERIT BADGES

A scout may start merit badges at any time. The merit badge does not have to be offered as a class at a merit badge camp or workshop in order for the scout to earn the badge. The procedure for earning a merit badge outside of a merit badge camp or class is as follows:

1. **Obtain a signed blue card from your scoutmaster.** The blue card is the authorization for you to begin work on the merit badge. Obtain the name of the merit badge counselor for the troop. If a counselor is not listed for that merit badge the scoutmaster will assist with finding a counselor. Scouts should avoid, if possible, having their parent as the merit badge counselor.
2. **Contact the merit badge counselor.** Tell them your name and the badge that you would like for them to help you with. Please remember to be polite in all dealings with your counselor. They are generous to give their time and skill in order to help you advance. They get no rewards or compensation for their time other than your thank you. The counselor will instruct you on how the requirements should be completed. You must always meet with the counselor with a buddy such as another scout, a parent or a friend. Never meet with the counselor without your buddy present.
3. **Give your counselor the signed blue card.** As you complete the requirements the counselor will initial and date the specific requirement to show that you have completed it. After all requirements have been completed, the counselor will sign off and retain a portion of the card for his/her records. A parent cannot sign the blue card for their son, without scoutmaster approval.
4. **Return the completed card to the scoutmaster or advancements leader.** It is your responsibility to make sure the blue card is completed and submitted. If you attend a merit badge camp, you must get the blue card from the instructor. **No** advancements will be awarded without a completed blue card.
5. **Your merit badge will be presented at the next troop meeting.**

Merit badges started at merit badge camps often must be completed at a later time. It is best to complete these requirements as soon as possible. You **MUST** provide proof that you finished the missing requirements. Simply telling the scoutmaster that you finished the badge requirement is not adequate. Documentation such as a note from your parent, teacher, or leader or a finished report must be provided.

XII. FUND RAISING

Troop 23 can participate in Troop Committee approved Fund Raising Events. The purpose of these events is to fund troop activities and to provide scouts that participate with funds for troop activities. Generally a minimum of 10% of funds raised will be placed in the troop general fund and the remainder placed in participating scout accounts. The Troop Committee will decide the percentage of funds divided between the troop general fund and the scout accounts based on participation. (See Scout Accounts)

Christmas Tree Sale – Troop 23 is a member of Mountain Scout Tree Sales. This group consists of ten troops in the Birmingham area. Together we combine resources to purchase and sell Christmas Trees. The sale begins Thanksgiving Day and concludes when all trees are sold. This is our annual fundraiser. Troop 23 scouts and their parents are ***required*** to participate in the specified number of shifts. Families who do not participate will be subject to a monetary penalty. Funds from the tree sales are used for the Troop operating budget. Once the needs of the Troop are met, a portion of the proceeds will be credited scouts' accounts. See Scout Accounts for guidelines regarding how your scout may use this money.

Other Fund Raising - Depending upon the needs of the Troop, we will participate in additional fundraising throughout the year. In the past some fund raising events have included: Golf Tournaments, Garage Sales, Refreshments Sales, etc. All fund raising events must be approved by the District as outlined in the procedures manual.

XIII. SCOUT ACCOUNT

Troop 23 allows scouts to earn money through various fundraisers for their personal camping fund. The Troop Committee approves funding from Popcorn Sales, Christmas Tree Lot, Golf Tournament and other fund raising events. Certain portions of the money raised are placed in individual accounts for scouts. When the scout needs new equipment, camp fees, etc. he may use the money in this personal account.

The purpose of the camping account is to provide an opportunity for scouts to benefit directly from participating in fundraising activities and minimizes the money paid by parents for activities.

- The Troop Treasurer will maintain a detail of each Scout's account. The account balance maintained by the Treasurer will be the official amount. Amounts posted and maintained by the Treasurer will be final. Scouts shall monitor and communicate with the Treasurer to make sure allocations are correct. The Treasurer should periodically provide scouts with a detailed statement of their account.
- Funds are non-transferable and are intended for use by active Troop 23 scouts.
- If a scout discontinues participation with Troop 23, or becomes inactive, any funds in their individual account will be transferred to the Troop general fund.

The Troop Committee can make exceptions if a scout moves to another city and becomes active in another troop.

- Scouts that transfer to another troop in the immediate area will forfeit the funds and will be treated as discontinuing their participation with Troop 23.
- A scout may designate or donate individual funds to be used by the Troop or for a specific project or purpose but cannot be transferred directly to another scout.
- Funds may be used or donated for the use on any Eagle Project.
- The Troop Committee may approve, on a case-by-case basis other specific uses for the funds as requested by a scout.
- The monies are intended to be used for: annual dues and registration, camp fees, high adventure camps, transportation for high adventure camps, summer camp fees, troop activities that require a fee, personal camping equipment and scouting uniforms (including Troop T-Shirts).
- Food and incidental travel costs are not to be paid from scout camping accounts.
- Scouts shall request in advance permission from the Troop Committee for expenditures that are not specifically listed above.
- Scouts attending troop meetings that are not in proper uniform may prevent his patrol the opportunity to participate in certain events.

XIV. LIMITED SPACE EVENTS

On certain activities such as High Adventure Camps, there can be limitations put on the number of scouts that can participate. This policy outlines the priority for scouts to participate in these type activities.

Point System for Limited Space Events

A point system will be used when an event has limited space, such as Northern Tier, Philmont and Seabase. All boys within Troop 23 will have an opportunity to earn activity points. A beginning and ending date will be set for the event. A scout will be given one point for each event he attends. The events are described as:

1. Regular Troop Meetings
2. Campouts – 1 point per night camped up to 3 points
3. Fundraisers (Christmas Tree Lot counts as one point not the number of shifts)
4. Merit Badge Days
5. Troop Sponsored Work Days

These points will be totaled and the boys with the most points will be eligible for the slots in an event of limited space.

XV. TRANSPORTATION

Safety is the number one concern when arranging transportation for troop outings. To ensure proper insurance coverage, appropriate tour permits must be obtained from the District office for all out-of-town troop activities.

General guidelines:

- Seat belts are required for all occupants when equipped.
- All drivers must have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason.
- Drivers must be currently licensed and at least 21 years of age.
- Passenger cars, station wagons, or sport utility vehicles may be used for transporting passengers.
- Passengers may only ride in the cab of a pickup truck.
- All vehicles must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed requirements of the state in which the vehicle is licensed. It is recommended that coverage limits be at least \$50,000/\$100,000/\$50,000.
- Driving time is limited to 10 hours per day and must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and recreation stops.

The Church's bus transportation is available and should be used if available. Drivers of this bus must meet the requirements of the church's insurance policy and comply with the church's transportation policy.

XVI. MEDICAL FORMS

Medical forms are required for all scouts and adults. Doctors' signatures are required for summer camp. Each year in May, you will be asked to update your son's form.

Medical forms fall into the following categories:

Class I – filled out yearly by the parent, also yearly for adult leaders. Required for all campouts.

Class II – filled out by medical professional, good for three years for scouts and adults under the age of forty. This form is required for extended campouts such as summer camp.

Class III – Adults over 40 must have this form completed yearly in order to attend camp or high adventure bases.

If your son has a check-up scheduled, ask for a scout form and have it completed and signed at the same time.

XVII. OTHER FORMS

Troop Rosters – Published periodically to update all Troop Members. Copies are available at any time from the advancement chairman.

Consent for Minors - This form grants the adult scout leader permission to seek medical attention for your son if needed. If the situation allows, we will always attempt to contact you prior to any medical assistance. If we deem the circumstances to be an emergency this document, when presented to the hospital, will allow them to begin treatment.

Medicine – Scouts requiring medication shall turn it in to their patrol leader before campouts. This shall include a signed note from the parent concerning doses. Medicine for Summer Camp will be turned in to the Health Hut.

Personal Data Form - This form will allow us to add your scout to our computerized records. Please pay careful attention to completing the portion concerning any medical alert items, which we need to know about. Please do not rely on you son to tell us these things. Be sure to include any allergies that he might have or any special medication that he might need. The alternate contact is the individual we will contact if we cannot get in touch with you.

E-Mail – Troop 23 communicates messages for scouts through the E-mail system. Be sure to include your e-mail address on the Scout Personal Data Form. If your e-mail address changes please let the troop know.

T-shirt Order Form – Issued in the spring to scouts for the yearly order the Troop makes when Webelos Scouts crossover into Boy Scouts.

Campsite Inspection Form - Scoutmaster form used to inspect Patrol Campsites on Camping Trips.

Scout Account – Request for Reimbursement Form – Form used to request money from an individual scout account.

Troop Leadership Agreement Form – This is an agreement signed by a scout wishing to run for a troop position.