

Boy Scout Troop 23

Handbook for Scouts and Parents



Troop 23 is sponsored by and Chartered to
The Rotary Club of Great Barrington

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Dear Scouts and Parents,

Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 23! We are excited to have you joining us. Whether your son is moving up from Cub Scouts, transferring from another troop, or joining Boy Scouts for the first time, it is important to know that while the principles, values and ideals of Scouting remain constant, each troop is unique in terms of style and management. This handbook is intended to provide an orientation to Troop 23 and to serve as a guide to our policies, events and activities.

If you “crossed over” from Cub Scouts you may have already noticed some significant differences. Throughout Cub Scouts and Webelos, adult leaders planned every aspect of Pack activities and advancement. In Boy Scouts, however, the boys are responsible for almost everything. We encourage you to have your Scout ask the troop leadership, following the "chain of command" beginning with his Patrol Leader, for guidance in any questions he or you might have. This is a very important part of building self-confidence and teamwork!

Hundreds of boys throughout the history of Troop 23 have contributed to our reputation as a fun, hardworking and award-winning troop. One of the major factors contributing to our continued success is the active cooperation and participation of Scouts and parents like you.

When a boy joins the troop, his parents join the troop as well. Experience has taught us that your son's interest and accomplishments will be in direct proportion to your participation with him. You will find that time spent in Scouting is quality time between parent and son. We encourage you to become involved in the troop in a leadership or support role.

This handbook is meant to smooth your transition into Boy Scouting and Troop 23. The following pages will answer many questions you may have. Please review this handbook together and save it as a reference during your son's scouting career.

This handbook is not a replacement for the official Boy Scout Handbook. Most national policies are not covered here. The information in this handbook is meant to supplement the Boy Scout Handbook and to provide specific information on our troop. Every Scout who joins Troop 23 will get a copy of this Troop Handbook and will be expected to know what it says. If you don't understand something, ask.

Feel free to call me or one of our Assistant Scoutmasters any time you have questions.

Welcome to Troop 23! We are glad you're joining us!

Hunter McCormick,
Troop 23 Scoutmaster

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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.

Scout Law

A Scout is:
TRUSTWORTHY
LOYAL
HELPFUL
FRIENDLY
COURTEOUS
KIND
OBEDIENT
CHEERFUL
THRIFTY
BRAVE
CLEAN
REVERENT

Scout Motto

Be Prepared

Scout Slogan

Do a good turn daily

Rules of Conduct

Troop 23 Boy Scout Pledge of Behavior

- As Boy Scouts, we will be guided by the Scout Oath and Law and to strive by them, keeping the Scout Motto and Slogan in mind.
- We will conduct ourselves according to the Scout Oath and Law at all times.
- We will at all times strive to be a credit to our Community, the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 23 and the Rotary Club of Great Barrington. We are responsible for the conduct of all troop members. Un-scout like conduct will not be tolerated.
- We will respect others. We will not participate in bullying or tolerate it in others.
- We will maintain high standards of cleanliness and order. We will maintain a clean environment. All facilities and campsites will be left in better condition than we found them.
- We will observe safety rules for using knives and axes and starting fires at all times. Scouts must pass a woods tools training class before being permitted to carry a woods tool and use them (**TOTIN' CHIP**) and a fire training class before being permitted to light campfires (**FIREM'N CHIT**).
- We will respect the property of others and will NOT trespass. A Scout will not use or remove the property of another individual without their permission.

By following the Scout Oath and Laws and subscribing to the Troop 23 Pledge of Behavior, a lengthy list of rules is unnecessary. If disciplinary action becomes necessary, the Scoutmaster and his assistants will take action as they deem appropriate.

Troop Organization

Boy Scouts are the reason Troop 23 exists, and we strive to keep the outing in Scouting; in other words, getting into the outdoors. Exploring new places will be some of the best experiences your son will have in Scouting. It takes many involved Scouts and adults in leadership positions to form a Troop that provides these great Scouting experiences.

Scouts fill a number of positions, including Senior Patrol leader, Patrol Leader, Quartermaster and many others. Some positions are elected and some appointed.

Troop 23 is a boy led troop. This is done through the Troop Leaders Council (the youth leaders of the troop) with the assistance and guidance of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters.

The Troop Committee manages the affairs of the troop, and approves all adult leaders.

Organizations that sponsor units of the Boy Scouts of America (Troops, Packs, Crews, etc.) are called Chartering Organizations. In our case, the Rotary Club of Great Barrington is our Chartering Organization.

Troop Meetings

The troop meets every Wednesday (from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm) when the Berkshires Hills School District is in session. If classes are cancelled for weather or other reasons, there will be no troop meeting. The Troop does not meet during summer vacation. In other words; No School. No Scouts.

Meetings begin with a short opening ceremony, typically the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and/or Law.

The troop then breaks into groups. Often younger Scouts will work on advancement, First Class/Star Scouts will work on merit badges or help other Scouts while Life Scouts will meet to discuss their progress toward Eagle, work on merit badge classes or help other Scouts. Eagle Scouts will work on Palms and assist the adult leadership as needed.

Scouts usually will gather near the end of the meeting for games or other activities.

At the end of the meeting are announcements with the Scoutmaster's Minute.

Scouts are expected to stay in the meeting hall at all times, unless they are involved in an approved activity and are not to wander around the building.

Visitor Guidelines For Troop 23 Meetings

The purpose of Scouting is to encourage the physical, mental and social development of young people. This is achieved in Troop 23 by the example and guidance of dedicated men and women who help Scouts in the fulfillment of the Scout Oath and Law, so they become constructive and responsible citizens. These guidelines are to help our visitors and parents meet these goals and it is expected that all adults, Leaders, Committee Members and parents and/or legal guardians will follow these guidelines when visiting Troop 23.

When visiting Troop 23 you will lead by example by:

- Participating in Opening and Closing Ceremonies. Please stand and participate by either saying the Pledge of Allegiance along with the Scouts or standing respectfully with your hand over your heart during the pledge. When the Scouts repeat the Scout Oath and/or Law please stand quietly. It IS appropriate for visitors to participate in the Oath and Law particularly if you have ever been a Scout. If you do not wish to participate in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies you may wait in another room like the Sewing Room (the room next to the kitchen).
- Being quiet during the meeting. Please, excessive talking is distracting to both the Scouts and the adult leaders. If you want to talk during the meeting, please do so in an adjoining room!
- Observing and upholding the traditions of Scouting and Troop 23. One of the most common of these traditions is the “signs up” tradition. This silent signal is a time honored tradition in Scouting and is a way for a leader, youth or adult, to get the attention of everyone. The signal is the raising of the Scout Sign and waiting for everyone to acknowledge the signal by also raising their hand with the Scout Sign (occasionally someone will actually say “signs up”). You are expected to stop what you are doing (conversation, reading, etc.) and raise your hand giving the Scout Sign and becoming quiet.

Please follow these simple guidelines while in the room where the Scout meeting is taking place. If you do not wish to participate in the opening or closing, please go into an adjoining room or outside.

Bottom line is that while the leadership of the Troop welcomes parents to meetings, the expectation is that they will not be disruptive. If you wish to carry on a conversation with another person, please go into an adjoining room or outside. If you are being disruptive, expect one of the leaders (youth or adult) to ask you to move to leave the meeting room.

Troop Leaders Conference - TLC

All Scouts who are elected or appointed into leadership positions meet each month to plan meetings and discuss other issues.

Weekend and Day Activities

Troop 23 has a strong tradition of monthly outdoor activities. These activities give Scouts a variety of fun and challenging experiences as well as advancement opportunities. These activities can range from a daylong event to a weekend overnighiter. Some of these activities will be for our Scouts only while others such as Camporees and MBU will involve Scouts from other Troops. Some of these trips will require special permission slips. Please be responsive to requests for paperwork.

This is an excellent opportunity for parent and guardian involvement. Even if you can't attend, there are often transportation needs that you can help with. Feel free to offer your help to the Scoutmasters! They appreciate it.

Summer Camps

Troop 23 attends summer camp each year (usually Moses Scout Reservation, our Council camp). This is a Great opportunity for younger Scouts to get a jump start on their Boy Scouting skills! Webelos cross overs and other first year Scouts are strongly urged to attend camp! It is a very important week that goes a long way toward insuring their success in Boy Scouts!

Camp is a weeklong experience, with activities throughout the week focusing on Scout skills and advancements.

High Adventure Camps

Older Scouts can attend a High Adventure activity during the summer either at our local camp or at a camp in another Council. Scouts interested in pursuing this type of opportunity should talk with the Scoutmaster.

Attendance Expectations

Scouts are expected to regularly attend troop meetings, participate in outings (at least two per semester), and participate in all fundraising activities.

A Scout should call his Patrol Leader if he is unable to attend a Troop meeting.

Service projects are also offered during the year, fulfilling advancement requirements. Often these are projects designed by fellow Scouts as their Eagle Service Project.

Uniform Requirements

Scouts are expected to be in full uniform at Troop meetings and Courts of Honor.

A Scout should be in his full uniform for his Boards of Review.

The Troop t-shirt is the appropriate uniform for most outings and for Swim Nights. Although not an "Official" BSA designation, the term "Class B Uniform or Class B's" is often used to describe this Activity Uniform.

Uniform inspections are scheduled periodically for Troop meetings.

Scout Advancement

The Scout Handbook is the source for advancement requirements, and the book should be brought to all Troop meetings. From Scout through First Class, requirements are often accomplished at Troop meetings and are signed off by leaders.

When a Scout has accomplished all requirements for a rank, he should ask the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. He will then attend a Board of Review (BOR) before he can earn the rank. Boards of Review are scheduled as soon as reasonably possible after a Scout has completed the requirements for a rank. A Board of Review may also be scheduled to determine why a Scout is not advancing at an acceptable rate.

The troop maintains records for Scouts on Troopmaster software. Printouts of a Scout's advancement may be requested to check, but the Scout is responsible for keeping his records of dates of rank and merit badges earned. An easy approach is to use a three-ring binder and trading card pages. When he comes home with an advancement card, a completed merit badge card, or other award card, have him place the cards he received in the binder.

Merit Badges

A Scout may earn merit badges from the day he becomes a Scout. Although he should initially concentrate on advancement toward First Class, merit badge opportunities will arise and he should take advantage as they present themselves. It is recommended that a parent not act as his or her own son's merit badge counselor except when the entire Troop is working on the badge as a group.

In addition to opportunities during Troop meetings, other opportunities exist to help Scouts earn merit badges:

- TROOP ACTIVITIES - Merit badges are often pursued on Troop outings.
- MBU – Merit Badge University is an opportunity offered at UMASS Amherst.
- SUMMER CAMP - Many merit badge classes are offered at Moses Scout Reservation.
- PERSONAL INITIATIVE - There is the old standby of doing it on your own. Just remember that Scouts are not to be put in a situation where they are alone with an adult not their own parent. Merit Badge Counselors MUST be registered. Ask them to contact the Scoutmaster for information.

Court of Honor and Recognition Dinner

Troop 23 holds an annual Court of Honor and Recognition Dinner in the spring, usually in April. The purpose is to provide an opportunity to recognize our Scouts and Leaders for their achievements during the previous year. Scouts are typically given their specific badge or award as soon as possible after they have earned it. The annual Court of Honor is a chance to recognize everyone at one time for all of their hard work.

Parents, guardians, extended family and friends encouraged to attend this important event.

End of Year Picnic

It is a Troop 23 tradition to have an end of the year picnic on the last meeting of the school year. This is a cook out style picnic with our Chartering Organization, the Rotary Club of Great Barrington, providing hotdogs and hamburgers and doing the cooking for us. It's a fun afternoon with games and swimming! Families may attend with their Scout and are encouraged to do so.

Fundraising

Fundraising is a joint effort between the Scouts, Scoutmasters, The Troop Committee, and Parents! It takes EVERYONE working together to make a successful fundraiser.

All fundraisers will be performed in accordance with BSA policies, including prior approval requirements.

Our generally recurring fundraisers:

- Popcorn – Every year
- Blandford Fair – We do this by invitation and in cooperation with another Troop
- Christmas Tree Recycling – As much a public service as a fundraiser
- Camp Cards – Every year and requires little effort
- Pasta or Pancake Dinner – A fundraiser in conjunction with the Rotary Club
- Other – Other fundraisers may be held as need or opportunity arises
- Activity-Specific Fundraisers – The Troop Committee must approve all fundraisers. For fundraisers developed specifically for a particular activity (such as National Jamboree, Philmont, etc.), the total income will be apportioned equally to all participating Scouts, the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters and other registered adults who are activity participants and who participate in the fundraiser. Credit will be proportional to number of hours contributed.

Scout Accounts

A Fundraising/Activity Account will be established for each Scout. Funds in individuals' accounts will continue through their period of continuous Troop registration. Amounts in accounts will not be transferred to individuals outside the immediate family. A designated adult will maintain records of accounts, which will be available for review by the individual member and his parents.

Applying Scout Account Credits

- Summer Camp Fees (including NYLT)
- NOAC fees
- Any Scout Merchandise
- Any Scout Shop Expense
- Troop Outing Fees
- Eagle Project Expenses
- Eagle COH Expenses
- National High Adventure Fees (Sea Base, N. Tier, Philmont, Jamboree)
- A scout can transfer any balances to a sibling in Troop 23 (a Scout in the same immediate family).
- Every year scouts leave the Troop and the scouting program. This may be because they age out, or they are no longer active. If a Scout still has funds in their "Scout Account" and is no longer in the scouting program then the Troop will transfer any remaining balance to the Troop 23 general fund. It is the responsibility of the Scout to use up all of their funds to pay for scouting expenses prior to leaving the Troop.

Appendix

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviations serve the purpose of brevity; they are not always conducive to clarity. Here are some of the more common abbreviations and acronyms that you may run into.

- ACM - assistant Cubmaster
- ADL - assistant den leader
- APL - assistant patrol leader
- APO - Alpha Phi Omega
- ASE - assistant Scout executive
- ASPL - assistant senior patrol leader
- BP - Baden-Powell
- BOR - Board of Review
- BSA - Boy Scouts of America
- CC - Committee Chair
- CM - Cubmaster
- COPE - Project COPE (Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience)
- COR - chartered organization representative
- CSR - Chesterfield Scout Reservation
- DCAD - distinguished citizen award dinner
- DCAR - distinguished citizen award reception
- DCS - director of camping service
- DE - district executive
- DL - den leader
- DiD - district director
- EBOR - Eagle Board of Review
- FOS - Friends of Scouting
- G2SS (or GTSS) - Guide to Safe Scouting
- HAMSRS - Horace A Moses Scout Reservation
- JASM - junior assistant Scoutmaster
- JOTA - Jamboree-on-the-Air
- LFL - Learning for Life, the BSA subsidiary that includes career oriented Exploring
- LNT - Leave No Trace
- MB - Merit Badge
- MBC - Merit Badge Counselor
- NDC - National Distribution Center
- NESAS - National Eagle Scout Association
- NOAC - National Order of the Arrow Conference
- NYLT - National Youth Leadership Training
- OA - Order of the Arrow
- P.R.A.Y. - Programs of Religious Activities With Youth
- PD - program director
- PL - patrol leader
- PLC - patrol leaders' council
- PTC - Philmont Training Center

- SA (ASM) - assistant Scoutmaster
- SDE - senior district executive
- SE - Scout executive
- SM - Scoutmaster
- SPL - senior patrol leader
- TLC – troop leaders’ council
- WDL - Webelos den leader
- WOSM - World Organization of the Scout Movement