

Troop 398 (Boys) Troop 3982 (Girls)

Welcome Packet and New Parents' Guide



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Welcome to Troop 398 and 3982!

We know that when you first join an organization, you need to know a lot of information right away. Think of this as your reference guide for Troop information, such as parent participation, uniform requirements, equipment, advancement, and dues.

As parents of current and past Scouts, we know the importance of your participation in the program. Scouting is a journey, not a destination. The journey is filled with adventure and learning. Shared with other adults in the Troop, it can be one of the most treasured experiences you will have.

The Difference Between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts

A key difference between Scouts BSA and Cub Scouts/Webelos is youth leadership. Look for the word "leader" in a Scout's job description, and you will begin to appreciate the difference. The responsible person for a Cub/Webelos den is the adult Den Leader. The responsible person for a Scout patrol is the youth Patrol Leader.

This isn't token leadership. Youth leaders have genuine responsibilities. Much of the success, safety, and happiness of several other Scouts depends directly on the youth leadership (e.g., Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Patrol Leaders, etc.)

Scouting teaches leadership - and scouts learn leadership by practicing it, not by watching adults lead. So what do we adults do, now that we've surrendered so much direct authority to Scouts? Well, we have a really good time and still stay busy.

The underlying principle is worth repeating: never do anything for a Scout that they can do for themselves. We allow Scouts to grow by practicing leadership and by learning from mistakes. And, while Scout skills are an important part of the program, what ultimately matters when our Scouts become adults is not how well they remember to use a map & compass, but whether or not they know how to offer leadership to others in tough situations; and that they live by a code of conduct that centers on honest, honorable and ethical behavior.

At Troops 398 and 3982, the Scouts plan and decide on the program, run the meetings, manage the equipment, plan and execute the trips, and become self-motivated to advance. Your Scout will, at times, have specific responsibilities to the Troop and his/her patrol. He or she may be a Patrol Leader or hold some other Troop position of responsibility, such as Historian or Quartermaster. Troop youth leadership elections are held every six months. As a parent, be aware and encourage this role.

Your Role as a Parent of a Scout: Stay Informed

We are a very active Troop. Most young Scouts cannot hope to keep track of all the events going on. We recommend that parents:

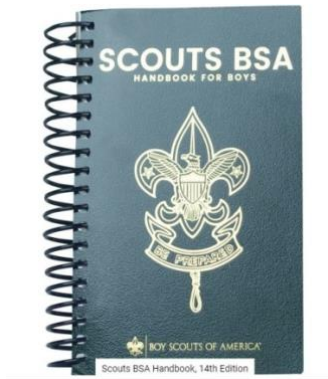
- Meet and converse with other parents and leaders.
- Check/read all 398/3982 emails, check our Troop website frequently and/or attend the end of the Troop meetings when announcements are made.
- Consider joining Scouts BSA by:
 - becoming member of the Troop Committee.
 - becoming a Merit Badge Counselor, and
 - attending Troop Courts of Honor.

Online Youth Protection Training is required for all adult positions with direct youth contact before the Troop can submit your signed application. An adult may also volunteer to be a registered adult leader in a variety of positions throughout the troops; these positions may have specific requirements to complete.

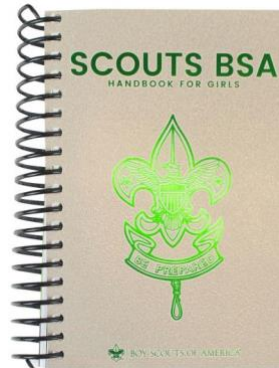
Things Your Scout Needs: What to Buy

Your Scout will need to acquire a few items upon joining the troop. Some items may be provided by the Troop, while other items may be purchased from the Musselman Scout Shop, 2226 NW Military Highway, San Antonio, TX 78213, or purchased from the Troop's good used uniform bags. See the below for options.

- **Scout Handbook** — These are available at the Musselman Scout Shop (see address above). The Handbook is used as a resource for the Scout but is also used to document the rank advancement progress (signatures). (Note: There are different Handbooks for Boys and Girls (see below). It is also recommended that the Scout have a cover to protect the Scout Handbook from the weather/elements and to reduce the risk of the Handbook falling apart.



Scouts BSA Handbook (Boys)



Scouts BSA Handbook (Girls)



Scouts BSA Handbook Cover

- **Scout Uniform** — These are available at the Scout Shop or the Troop’s good used uniform bags. The Troop has several bags of gently used Scout uniforms that are much cheaper than the Scout Shop (Pants/Shorts = \$5, Field Uniform Shirts = \$10, Activity Uniform Shirts = \$1, Scout Socks and Belt = \$1). Since most Scouts grow out of the uniforms, the Troops’ used uniforms are a good place to shop. The Troop also buys uniforms back at the same price to help minimize costs. The Scout uniform includes the following:
 - Scout uniform (Field and Activity) includes shirts, pants, and/or shorts, Scout belt, and Scout socks. See the below illustration.
 - Council strip, Arrow of Light and Religious knot (if the Scout has earned these) can be worn on Scout shirt.
 - Troop 398 or 3982 numerals (as applicable) and green shoulder loops (epaulets) are supplied by the Troop when the Scout joins.
 - Troop 398 or 3982 neckerchief (as applicable) and neckerchief slide, will also be supplied by the Troop. Replacements are available at a minimal cost.
 - Activity (Troop or other Scout related) T-shirts and hats can be purchased at a nominal cost (\$1) from the Troop Treasurer from the Scout uniform bags. The Troop typically orders new T-shirts each year from an outside vendor; an email/order form will be provided, if you’d like to order additional shirts. These vary in color, cost, and material based on the vendor. They are sold at near to cost.

Troop Uniform Guide (New Scout)

#	Descriptions
1	Scout Uniform Shirt (includes Scout crest, flag, and Alamo Area Council patches)
2	Scout Belt
3	Scout Shorts or Pants
4	Scout Socks (Low Cut, Calf, etc.)
5	Patrol Patch and Shoulder Loops (Provided by the Troop)
6	Troop Numbers (Provided by the Troop)
7	Troop Neckerchief and Slide (Provided by the Troop) (Note: These are worn during special occasions/ceremonies (e.g., Court of Honor).
8	Religious Knot and Arrow of Light Award (if earned); Note: these are the only two awards that can be transferred from the Cub Scout uniform to the Scouts BSA uniform. Once a new Scout earns his/her first rank (Scout rank), the rank patch will be provided by the Troop.
9	Scout (Activity) Shirt (Note: A Scout related shirt should be worn under the Scout Uniform Shirt).

Troop Meetings: When to Attend

Scouts are encouraged to attend all Troop Meetings. These first-year meetings are structured around activities to attain the early ranks up to First Class. The Patrol Leaders' Council in coordination with the Scoutmasters will determine if additional meetings are needed other than the regular Tuesday night meetings. Field uniforms are the typical uniform while schools are in session and the Activity uniforms are the typical uniforms for the summer months. (Field uniforms are typically referred to as "Class A Uniforms" and Activity uniforms are typically referred to "Class B Uniforms.")

Troop meetings are held most Tuesday evenings 7:00pm – 8:30pm. The PLC (Patrol Leaders' Council) monthly planning session typically occurs the first Tuesday of the month. The Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Patrol Leaders, and other select Troop youth leadership should attend all PLC meetings. The dates and locations are on the Troop calendar and are updated (as needed) each annual planning cycle (every 6 months). The calendar can be found on the Troops' website at <https://troop398satx.org/calendar>

A Court of Honor is a special meeting held each quarter at Madison Hills Baptist Church where the Scouts are recognized for their achievements. It is very important for Scouts and parents to attend these as a sign of respect for the Scouts' hard work. For this reason, Field uniforms with neckerchief and slide are mandatory; merit badge sashes may be worn. Courts of Honor are held four times a year and dates are typically available a calendar year in advance.

Badges of Honor: Advancement

The youth leadership plays an active role in helping your Scout earn the early ranks of: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. The Troop plans most activities (outside of typical Troop meetings) on weekends. The Troop typically attends summer camp for a full week (usually in June), which helps attending Scouts attain these early ranks and earn merit badges. The youth leadership (First Class and above) sign off on rank requirements in the Scout Handbook, while only Council approved adult Merit Badge Counselors sign off on respective merit badge requirements.

After the requirements for a rank are attained, the Scout asks the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. After a successful Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout asks for a Board of Review (Tenderfoot rank and above). After a successful Board of Review, the Scout has earned the rank. The Scout will be presented with his or her new rank patch at the next Court of Honor.

The approach changes after First Class. The ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle require a Scout to be more self-motivated to earn merit badges, participate in service projects and show leadership skills including approved leadership positions in the Troop. A Scout may elect to independently pursue merit badges, or to take advantage of opportunities announced for group classes. Be advised attendance is not sufficient to attain a merit badge. (Note: all merit badges require individual work to complete; this is very different from Cub Scout group advancement/awards. Also note: ONLY Scouts BSA Council approved merit badge counselors can “sign-off” on requirements.)

A list of counselors is available from the Scoutmaster or Advancement Chairperson. The Scout can use a merit badge booklet to learn the requirements for the badge. These are available for loan from the Troop Librarian, or are available to buy from the Scout Shop. Merit Badge books and merit badge worksheets are also available via download from the Scouts BSA website. See the following link: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

If a Scout is given a “blue card” (electronically or actual), it is typically the proof of accomplishment required for receiving the merit badge and is to be obtained from and signed by the Scoutmaster before beginning work. A Scout may not work on a badge alone with a counselor; he or she must have another Scout, another adult leader, or a parent present for any counseling sessions.

Please note that a parent should not sign blue cards, rank requirements in the Scout Handbook or electronically in "Scoutbook" – these are entered by the Advancement Chair and/or the approved Merit Badge Counselor. Advancement can be tracked by the Scout or by Registered adults in Scoutbook - <https://scoutbook.scouting.org/>

Camping Year Round and Summer Camp: Outdoor Fun

There are three things required to have an enjoyable and safe outdoor experience:

- **The correct equipment** — Review the Scout Handbook and ask for a list from the Scoutmaster. Troop leadership checks equipment when safety is involved, such as for winter campouts, storms, etc.
 - Each Patrol will be provided patrol gear, which is stored in the Scout trailer or in the Scout shed. The Troop Quartermaster regularly inspects and maintains this equipment such as Troop tents, stoves, Dutch ovens, tarps, and folding tables. Scouts and Scout Patrols are responsible for treating this equipment with respect, cleaning it before it is returned, and indicating any damage that may have occurred.
- **The right training** — The Troop leadership may place training or advancement requirements as a prerequisite for deciding which Scouts may attend an activity, (e.g., taking the Scouts BSA swim check prior to attending a water activity). Getting the required training is also usually part of advancing through the ranks.
- **Scout Spirit** — This becomes a very real issue when dealing with a large group of young Scouts. Showing good Scout Spirit will make an outdoor experience fun and exciting for everyone!

Camping with the troop is more fun than you probably imagine and is something you should do if you can. The Troop leadership is made up of men and women (adult Scouters) who are committed to being a part of the troop and contributing to its health. Everyone pitches in and the workload is shared.

Money and Responsibility: Troop Dues

The Troop collects dues, which are generally paid on a quarterly basis (currently \$40 per quarter). When a Scout joins the Troop, they may register directly with council through <https://my.scouting.org/online-registration> or request assistance from the troop for registering. The scouting family will be responsible for any initial registration fees. The dues collected will cover the Scouts BSA re-charter fees, awards, and merit badges earned throughout the year. Payments are accepted by cash, check, Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal (with no fee if you link to your bank). Credit cards can be used through payment apps, but not recommended because any fees charged will reduce your payment amount.

Other types of payments include expenses for trips your Scout elects to attend (e.g., monthly campouts). Summer Camp and/or Winter Camp locations are decided in advance and a schedule of payments will be published on a summer camp or winter camp flyer. Scouts can use Troop fundraising activities to help pay part, or all, of these expenses.

Scouts and parents are highly encouraged to participate in the Troop fundraisers (traditionally popcorn, Battle of Flowers parade chairs, and camp discount cards). These are optional, but it does give the Scout an opportunity to put money into their Scout Account for future Summer Camps, Winter Camps, or other Scout-related trips.

All fundraisers are identified by the Fundraising Chair and discussed at the Troop Committee meetings.

Troop and Scouts BSA Policy and Procedures: Administrative and Health

Troop leadership makes every effort to balance Scout-led activities and safety. Our leaders must be registered with the Scouts BSA with background checks and training for the protection of our youth.

Individual trips have permission slips that must be signed in advance. These will outline any additional requirements and allow parents to indicate emergency phone numbers and authorize emergency procedures.

In addition, a current Scouts BSA health form (Parts A and B) is required for participation on all trips. These forms require medical disclosure. A doctor's signature (and a Part C) is required for longer trips such as Summer Camp and Winter Camp. We also require health insurance information. Scouts BSA Health Forms can be found at:

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/>

Troop and Scouts BSA Policy and Procedures: Conduct

The Troops' code of conduct is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts and adults should adhere to the Scout Oath and Law as well as the Scouts BSA rules and/or guidelines to help ensure a safe and meaningful Scouting program. If at any time you have a concern about these rules, the conduct of the Troop leadership, parents, or Scouts, please bring them to the attention of the Troop's Committee Chairman, Scoutmasters or Troop Charter Organization Representative. The Troop Charter Organization Representative is the 'go-between' for Troop 398 and 3982 and the Troop's charter organization (Madison Hills Baptist Church).

Troop and Scouts BSA Policy and Procedures: Camping Policy

What follows is a summary of our troop (and Scouts BSA) policies concerning camping.

Scout Tenting & Meals — Scouts tent with their respective Patrol and Troop separate from the adult leadership and other Troop (generally within the same area). Patrols generally plan their own menus and cook and eat together as a team. Whenever possible, Scouts share a tent with one other Scout within two years of age. Adults do not eat or tent with the Scout patrols. Troop tents (and other camping equipment) are available for Scouts to check out during each camp.)

Adult Tenting & Meals — Adults tent with other adults in a separate campsite from the youth patrols, but close enough to provide a safety oversight. The adults plan their own menu and cook and eat together as a team. The Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader from each Troop may eat with the adults during certain meals.

Adult/Youth Tenting — Scouts BSA youth protection policies forbid an adult and a youth (below age 18) sharing the same tent. While these youth protection policies allow a parent to tent with their scout (if no other Scout or adult shares the tent), it is troop guideline that Scouts tent with Scouts, and adults with adults. If a parent tents with their scout, it is our experience that the Scout will lose out on many opportunities to make decisions and be part of the patrol.

Smoking/Drinking — Drivers may not smoke while Scouts are in the car. Adults may not smoke or use tobacco products, nor drink alcoholic beverages during any Scout activity. Note: this is a Scouts BSA rule.

Scout Leadership — Youth leaders plan and lead the meetings and outings. It may look a little chaotic at times - they will make mistakes (but we all learn best from our mistakes). We'd encourage adults to step in only if it is a matter of immediate safety or if the mistake will be immediately costly.

Scout Growth — Never do anything for a Scout he or she can do for him/herself. Let him or her make decisions. Also, let him or her make non-injurious mistakes so he or she can learn from them. Be willing to help Scouts learn and teach without criticism.

Adult Training & Resources — Scouts BSA provides handbooks for adults and excellent training courses to help us understand the goals of Scouting and how to attain them. The adult manual is called the Scoutmaster's Handbook, and it's worth your time to become familiar with it. Mandatory adult training for individuals who will be active with youth is offered in our area several times a year (as well as online). It's also a great investment of your time.

Troop and Scouts BSA Policy and Procedures: The “Why”

Scout camping activities are based on what the Scouts BSA calls the patrol method, where Scouts learn teamwork, leadership, and most camping skills from their peers. It is important that adults not be in the middle of patrol activities such as site selection, tent pitching, meal preparation, and anything else where Scouts get to practice decision-making. Scoutmasters work with the Senior Patrol Leaders (and the PLC) to give guidance, as needed. The Troops, however, need adults in regular attendance and to help as troop leaders. Without your help the Scouting program would not be possible! We welcome parents/troop leaders to come camp with us!

Parents attending campouts are required to be a registered adult prior to the campout, which includes being Youth Protection trained. Being part of this team has several benefits — really good food and camaraderie while providing an example the Scouts can follow without having to tell them what to do. The adults tent separate from the youth (usually the next campsite over) ... that way they aren't right next to a Scout patrol where our mere presence could disrupt the learning process.

If you go camping with us, we hope you will visit the patrol sites, talk to your Scout and the other Scouts, ask what's going on and how things are going. Asking the Scouts questions is an excellent teaching tool. Remember to give them room to grow while you enjoy the view.

Don't hesitate to show a Scout how to do something, just don't do it for him or her. Don't jump in just to prevent a simple mistake from happening (unless there is a safety concern). Encourage Scouts to make their own decisions ... ask them what they think should be done or how THEY are going to solve a problem. We all learn best from our mistakes and a big part of our job as adults in the troop is to provide them with a SAFE environment in which they can make mistakes.

And above all, remember to let the youth leaders lead. That's their job.