



New Scout Parent Guide

Troop 629

Visit www.Troop629.org for more information on the Troop, events, and outings.



Welcome to Troop 629!

This guide was put together to help you, the parent of a new scout, with your family’s transition from Cub Scouts to Boy Scouts (or just straight into Boy Scouts if you were not involved in Cub Scouts). It is a general overview into Troop 629’s organization and structure, meetings, advancement, activities and additional information that can help you and your son get the most out of Boy Scouts in Troop 629.

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Please remember that this document’s purpose is a general (not detailed) overview, trying to keep things simple. So if you need additional information or clarification on any topic, please see the Scoutmaster or any other adult involved in Troop 629. Hopefully this guide will serve as a great introduction to Boy Scouts and to Troop 629.

Some additional Welcome and Overview of Troop 629 can also be found on the [Troop 629 website](#) under the “About Us” menu item, then note the “Section Navigation” menu on the right.



ORGANIZATION / STRUCTURE

Cub Scouts begins in first grade (Tiger Cub) and continues through the fifth grade (Webelos II) until a boy crosses over into Boy Scouts. A Cub Scout Pack is typically made up of boys from a school (or two) or from a church, all within that first through fifth grade age. A boy crosses over into Boy Scouts in the fifth grade (or when he's 11) and can continue until he turns 18. A Boy Scout Troop is organized similar to a Cub Scout Pack, however, a Troop will draw boys from multiple schools and multiple churches (much more of a "geographic region") and there are some key differences in who fills the positions and the "reporting structure" within a Troop.

Patrol – First, your son will be placed in a Patrol. This is similar to a Den within a Pack, however, the scouts' ages differ – they are not placed by age or grade (some Troops have age/grade-based patrols, Troop 629 does not). So patrols can have boys ranging in age from 11 to 17 (although Troop 629 Patrols tend to be age range 11 – 15 with a "Venture Patrol" only for 15 – 17 year old boys). In Troop 629 they can change patrols every 6 months in May and November. So while he will be placed in a patrol when he first joins the Troop (typically at a March Cub Scout "crossover" ceremony) and may not have all of his best buddies in his Patrol – don't worry, they will change and get to choose their Patrol soon after. All of the boys in the patrol are led by their Patrol Leader.

Patrol Leader (PL) – Each Patrol is led by one Patrol Leader. This is equivalent to an adult Den Leader in a Cub Scout Pack. But in the Troop environment, it's an older boy who was elected by the other boys to be a Patrol Leader. In Troop 629, a boy must be 13, be at least First Class Rank, and have attended NYLT (one week training course) in order to be a Patrol Leader. This ensures that patrols are led by boys that have been in the Troop, have proper training, and can and will help the boys in the Patrol succeed. Each Patrol Leader can also have an Assistant Patrol Leader to help him. Any questions a scout has should first be asked of their Patrol Leader (as you'll often hear adults say "Have you asked your Patrol Leader?"). Patrol Leaders are led by the Senior Patrol Leader.

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) – All Patrol Leaders report to a single Senior Patrol Leader in the Troop. This is equivalent, in many aspects, to the Cubmaster in a Cub Scout Pack. The Senior Patrol Leader will run (or at least coordinate) each week's Troop Meeting and will help coordinate the Troop outings. In Troop 629, a boy must be 14, be at least First Class Rank, and have attended and staffed NYLT (one week training course) in order to be the Senior Patrol Leader. The Senior Patrol Leader can also have an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader to help him.

Additional Leadership Positions – There are numerous other boy-led positions in the Troop beyond Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, and their assistants. These include: Scribe, Librarian, Historian, Quartermaster, Chaplain Aide, Den Chief, Bugler, and Webmaster to name a few. Boys may also hold more than one position. Please see the [Troop 629 website](#) for the list of Additional Leadership Positions along with more detailed descriptions, including those for SPL and PL as well. Click on the two green-bars  from the home page.

Patrol Leader Council (PLC) – The Senior Patrol Leader, Patrol Leaders, and all other boys with leadership positions in the Troop form the Patrol Leader Council (PLC). The PLC meets monthly in order to plan the upcoming Troop meetings and outings. This is equivalent to Leaders Meetings in a Cub Scout Pack. The



Scoutmaster of the Troop and additional adult leaders are present at this monthly meeting to offer guidance to the PLC – guidance only, as the PLC actually decides on what activities and outings the Troop will undertake. The Senior Patrol Leader runs the monthly PLC meetings.

Troop – the Troop is of course made up of all boys in all of the Patrols. It is equivalent to the Cub Scout Pack, which is made up of Dens. By reading the above you can see the big difference in the leadership of the Troop vs. a Cub Scout Pack. The Troop is led by the boys within the Troop, hence the term you will often hear about Boy Scout Troops: boy-run or boy-led. There are, of course, numerous adults behind-the-scenes to aid in running the Troop.

Adults – There are numerous ways to be involved in the Troop for adults and it is highly encourages to support your son's growth. Beyond the Scoutmaster (SM), adults can be registered Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM) or Committee Members. There are a few very key Committee Member positions such as the Committee Chair and Advancement Chair. There are also numerous non-registered ways to assist the Troop – please see the **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT** section for more detail.

MEETINGS

Cub Scouts typically meet once a month for a Den Meeting and once a Month for a Pack Meeting. There are other outings (such as Camping, Pinewood Derby, etc) – but this section is comparing the Den/Pack meetings to those in Boy Scouts. In the Troop, there are typically no Patrol Meetings outside of the Weekly Troop Meetings (they can meet if they choose). There is occasionally a Patrol outing, but the Patrols don't routinely meet except during the Weekly Troop Meetings.

Weekly Troop Meetings – Troop 629 holds weekly Troop Meetings on Monday evenings from 7:15pm – 8:45pm (on non-Holidays). A typical meeting follows:

- Opening Flag Ceremony with the Boy Scout Promise and Law
- Announcements such as upcoming outings, service projects, etc.
- Patrol Time – this is essentially the Patrol Meeting (like a Cub Scout Den Meeting). This key time is for the Patrol Leader to touch bases with each Patrol member and monitor / check off Rank advancement items (more on that in the **ADVANCEMENT** section).
- Instruction / Competition – some meetings will have an instruction period, typically an introduction to a Merit Badge. These instruction periods are designed and run by the boys. Some meetings will have a Patrol Competition instead – which are typically some type of contest where patrols will go head-to-head in competitive type games (like knot tying, or building the tallest structure, etc.).
- Games / Social – organized games for the Troop, and of course the social aspect of just being able to hang out and talk. This is the only time in a Troop Meeting where scouts can meet with a Merit Badge counselor to “sign off” on Merit Badges (more on that in the **ADVANCEMENT** section).
- Recognition – boys will be recognized for any merit badge completions and any rank advancement (the actual completion of a rank, not completion of some of the steps within the rank). Any associated patches will be given out.
- Closing comments, usually re-iterating the earlier announcements.
- Finally, a Scoutmaster's minute by the Scoutmaster.



In the summer months (usually June through August - coincides with the start of school), the meetings are much more relaxed and are typically all games / social with the opportunity for merit badge help / sign-off.

Court of Honor – Three or Four times a year a Weekly Troop Meeting is replaced with a Court of Honor. This meeting is to recognize the scouts for their achievements since the last Court of Honor. All Rank advancements and Merit Badge completions will be recognized. All family members are encouraged to attend – particularly if the scout has advanced rank – as a special part of the rank ceremony will include the parents. Please check the calendar on the [Troop 629 website](#) for the Court of Honor dates, which are typically in January, May, and August/September.

Merit Badge Help Night – on the 2nd Tuesday of every month from 6-7pm an additional Merit Badge Help Night is offered. The purpose of this is to meet with the Scoutmaster (SM) or Merit Badge Counselors to “sign off” on a Merit Badge. See the **ADVANCEMENT** section of this document for more information on Merit Badge “sign off” and as always, check the calendar on the [Troop 629 website](#) to ensure it hasn’t changed for a given month.

Calendar – all meetings and outings are posted on the calendar on the [Troop 629 website](#).

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement in a Boy Scout Troop is very different than in Cub Scouts. Advancement can be broken down into two basic categories: Rank and Merit Badges. The official records for these are maintained by the Troop Advancement Chair with your son providing them the final completion info (not a web-driven system like ScoutTrack that many Packs use).

Rank: General Info – Rank advancement is not done by grade/age as in Cub Scouts. The boys will advance at their own pace through the ranks. Typically if a boy attends meetings and outings regularly and puts forth some effort, he will advance. It may not be as fast as the parent would like or expect, but he will advance through the ranks. Your son will have until his 18th birthday to advance to the rank of Eagle:

1. Scout
2. Tenderfoot
3. Second Class
4. First Class (ideal if reached within 1 to 1.5 years of joining)
5. Star
6. Life
7. Eagle

Please see the Boy Scout Handbook for more detailed information on the requirements for each rank. But note: most boys who were in Cub Scouts and in particularly those that earned the Arrow of Light should be able to obtain the Scout rank within a couple of Troop Meetings. The other ranks will take longer.

Rank: Signing Off on Requirements – Most requirements for rank advancement will be signed off in the boy’s Boy Scout Handbook by his Patrol Leader. This is drastically different than the adult-driven signoff in Cub Scouts. The Patrol Leaders are older boys in the Troop and are properly trained – so they understand the requirements. As mentioned in the **MEETINGS** section, there is Patrol Time at each Weekly Patrol



Meeting for advancement – that is when the scout and Patrol Leader should be looking at rank advancement and signing off requirements.

If your son's Patrol Leader is not present at a Weekly Troop Meeting, any Patrol Leader, the SPL, or any Life or Eagle Scout in the Troop can sign off on Rank requirements.

After all Patrol Leader requirements are signed off, your son will get the final rank requirements signed off by the Scoutmaster, including (1) Demonstrate Scout Spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your everyday life, and (2) Participate in a Scoutmaster conference (see below).

After all of the requirements are met and signed off by his Patrol Leader and the Scoutmaster, the final step for all ranks (other than Scout) is to complete a Board of Review (see below).

Rank: Leadership Requirements - Requirements for a leadership position within the Troop are not needed until the Star rank, which is typically not until after your scout has been in the Troop for 1 to 1.5 years or more. With each leadership position some training is required. Also, all leadership accomplishments must be documented every 2 months and approved by the Scoutmaster to receive credit. There is a checklist / guide on the website to assist with this. Click on the two green-bars  from the home page to get to the leadership section. Since this guide is intended for new scouts, this guide will not get into deeper leadership discussions.

Rank: Service Hours Requirements - Requirements for service hours are needed for the Second Class rank (1 hour) and then Star rank and above. There are many service hour opportunities almost from day one in the Troop (including assisting with Eagle projects) and they are announced at Troop Meetings. Participating in service projects outside of the Troop can qualify – but need pre-approval by the Scoutmaster. A couple of key points about service projects and hours:

- Must be pre-approved by the Scoutmaster
- Hours must be turned into the Troop Advancement Chair. If your son doesn't know who that is, he should ask his Patrol Leader.

Rank: Attendance & Participation Requirements – For Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks there are participation requirements for X number of activities (1, 5, and 10), and a certain number of those activities have to be overnight camping trips. For these ranks, it's pretty clear – your scout simply counts up the number of activities he has attended and writes them in his Boy Scout Handbook where his Patrol Leader will sign them off.

The Star rank and above, however, require a scout to be "active in your troop and patrol" for a specific number of months while he is the previous rank. Troop 629's PLC defines active participation as:

- Attending 75% of the Weekly Troop Meetings in a month, so generally 3 of the 4 weeks in a month.
- Attending 50% of the Troop Outings, so generally 1 of the 2 outings across 2 months.

Since this requirement is not needed until a scout is First Class and working on Star, it's nothing to worry about in the beginning. But as your son progresses, there will need to be a balance between Scouts and other non-Scout activities. Note that specific number of months for a rank is not "consecutive months".



So while a scout may need 4 months of active participation, it may take him 5, 6, 8, 10 months or even more to meet that with his additional non-Scout activities. Not having to be consecutive months greatly eases the 75% / 50% numbers for meetings and outings.

Rank: Scoutmasters Conference - After all requirements for a rank have been completed, your scout must schedule a Scoutmasters Conference with the Scoutmaster. He simply needs to ask for one at any Weekly Troop Meeting. Depending on what is happening, it may not happen that night, but your scout and the Scoutmaster will work out a time that is soon. The Scoutmaster will sign off this requirement and the "Scout Oath and Law" requirement mentioned above.

Rank: Board of Review - After all requirements for a rank have been completed and a Scoutmasters Conference has been completed, a Board of Review is the next and final step for Rank advancement (however, a Board of Review is not required for the Scout rank). Your scout will need to schedule a Board of Review with the Troop Advancement Chair (If your son doesn't know who that is, he should ask his Patrol Leader). Boards of Reviews are scheduled for one of the Weekly Troop meetings per month – please see the [Troop 629 website](http://www.troop629.com) for the exact date. A scout must be in full Class-A uniform with their Boy Scout Handbook for the Board of Review. A good description of the Board of Review can be found at <http://www.boyscouttrail.com/boardofreview.asp>.

Merit Badges: General Info – In Cub Scouts, the scouts can earn different Sports and Academic Beltloops and Pins and for the Webelos rank they earn Webelos Activity Pins. They are generally simple and require anywhere from 3 (beltloops) to 7+ (pins) simple requirements to be met. The equivalent in Boy Scouts is Merit Badges, however, they are much more difficult to obtain. Each Merit Badge has its own book, typically 30-40 pages, with the requirements and detail in it. A scout must read the Merit Badge book, complete all requirements, and then have them "signed off" by a Merit Badge counselor within the Troop.

Note: Merit Badges are not needed until the Star rank, which is typically not until after your scout has been in the Troop for 1 to 1.5 years or more. However, many scouts start working on them early on – particularly at Summer Camp. They do not have to wait until a particular rank to start / earn them.

Merit Badges: Process – Troop 629 policy is that all scouts must read the merit badge book – even if the scout does a merit badge at summer camp or a "merit badge clinic". The process is generally:

- The scout obtains permission from the Scoutmaster (SM) to start the merit badge. This is done for multiple reasons, including to make sure the scout is not "over his head" on a merit badge and that he meets the minimum requirements. He will obtain a "blue card" signed by the SM to show that he has permission to work on the merit badge.
- The scout reads the book (this will often times happen after the event if he attends summer camp or a merit badge clinic to work on the merit badge).
- The scout performs the requirements at summer camp, a merit badge clinic, on his own, with his family, etc.
- It is strongly suggested that the scout takes notes on all requirements and/or writes the answers down as he will have to explain / demonstrate them to a merit badge counselor.
- Only after completing the above, the scout will review the requirements with a merit badge counselor by sitting down with the counselor and explaining, showing or completing the requirements as detailed. A merit badge counselor is assigned by the Scoutmaster to work with



the scout. This can be done at a Weekly Troop Meeting during game time only or at a Merit Badge Help night. The counselor will sign off on the “blue card”.

- The scout turns the “blue card” into the Troop Advancement Chair. If your son doesn’t know who that is, he should ask his Patrol Leader.
- The scout will be given the merit badge patch at that or the next Troop Meeting soon after and will also be recognized at the next Court of Honor.

Important Note: The review of the requirements with a merit badge counselor is not a memory test; it is about comprehension and covering the material as stated. The scout will demonstrate to the counselor that the requirements were met and that the book was read. This is why it is strongly suggested that notes / answers of the requirements be taken – as they can be used in reviewing the merit badge with the counselor. An excellent resource guide, with a “blank” requirements printout, can be found at <http://www.meritbadge.org>.

Merit Badges: Books – Merit Badge books can be purchased online or at the Scout Shop. However, the Troop maintains a library of all books for the scouts to use. A \$5.00 deposit is required to check out the book, and that deposit is returned when the book is returned. No more than two books at one time can be checked out. Your son should see the Troop Librarian to check out a book. If he doesn’t know who that is, he should ask his Patrol Leader.

Merit Badges: Eagle Required – To obtain the Rank of Eagle, there are 21 Merit Badges required: 12 Eagle specific + 9 chosen by the scout. Not what you need to worry about at the beginning of your son’s Boy Scouting career, but it is good to know. The 12 Eagle required ones are:

1. Camping
2. Citizenship in the Community
3. Citizenship in the Nation
4. Citizenship in the World
5. Communications
6. Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving
7. Environmental Science
8. Family Life
9. First Aid
10. Personal Fitness
11. Personal Management
12. Swimming or Hiking or Cycling

Merit Badges: Camping – The Camping Merit badge requires 20 nights of camping, and the question “what qualifies as a night of camping?” often comes up. This chart lists some of the more common outings that Troop 629 participates in and which count as tent camping nights for the Camping Merit badge:

Outing	Yes/No	Comment
Outings in tents the boys pitch	Yes	each night
OA Ordeal	Yes	each night



Lock-In	No	not "under the stars"
USS Alabama	No	not "under the stars"
Perdido Key / Beach camping	Yes	each night
Ski Trips	No	not "under the stars"
Day Trips (Helen Tubing, Six Flags, etc.)	No	not "under the stars"
Summer Camp - Year 1	Yes	6 nights credit for 1st
Summer Camp - Subsequent years	No	N/A
NYLT, as participant	Maybe	only if no other long term
NYLT Staff	Maybe	only for weekend staff tent nights
High Adventure (Philmont, Northern Tier, Sea Base)	Maybe	Only if no other long term used. Might be better to use than summer camp if more nights under stars or tent but can only use as the one long term.
Other outings while a Boy Scout	Maybe	OA functions or other scouting events using tents

If you are not sure if an outing qualifies as a night of camping, please ask the Scoutmaster.

OUTINGS & ACTIVITIES

Scouting is just not scouting without the "outing". Troop 629 has at least one outing each month open to all scouts in the Troop and typically offers 3 or more "high adventure" outings per year for older scouts.

What Trip? – "What trip?" is a common question heard in the Troop, particularly with new scouts. This is a big difference in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. The Troop goes on at least one outing per month for all scouts – but it is up to your son to know the what/when about that trip and to sign up for it on-time. There is not mass email communication to the parents like in Cub Scouts. Trips are announced:

- At each Weekly Troop Meeting verbally by the SPL or PL running the meeting, typically at the beginning and the end of a meeting.
- At each Weekly Troop Meeting on the Bulletin Board. There is a bulletin board / table at the back of the room with flyers for upcoming trips. Your son should check that every Troop Meeting.
- On the [Troop 629 website](#).
- In the monthly Newsletter (see **COMMUNICATION** section below).

Flyer / Signup and Permission Slip – The Troop creates a flyer for every trip, and that flyer contains information about the trip such as the date/time leaving and returning, what we'll be doing, the cost, and it contains the required Permission Slip. For your son to attend any outing, he (you) must fill out and return a Permission Slip with any payment by the Monday prior to the trip (note: some trips require more advanced planning, but most are the Monday before the trip). Flyers / Permission Slips are on the [Troop 629 website](#) and on the Bulletin Board / Table in the back of the room. The signed Permission Slip and any payment should be placed on the bottom of the stack of flyers for that trip.



Trip Information and Packing List – All of the trip logistics and a packing list are listed on the flyer / Permission Slip as described in the above sections. Please be sure and review the flyer each trip for the packing list as it may vary due to the type of trip, location, time of year, etc.

Equipment / Lending Closet – Troop 629 maintains a lending closet with tents, tarps, backpacks, and additional items – so be sure and have your son ask his Patrol Leader about borrowing any equipment for an upcoming trip. Also, we encourage you to not go out right away and purchase this type of equipment – have your son go on a trip or two, talk to some of the more experienced boys about the type of equipment he needs and can use, and have him do a little research about what fits his needs.

Religious Emblems Program – *A Scout is reverent. He is reverent toward God. He is faithful in his religious duties and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion.* There is a religious emblems program for numerous faiths within Boy Scouts. Programs can be done on your own, often at or by your religious institution, and there are also some programs in the District/Council that are open to boys from any Troop – announcements will be made at the Troop Meetings and in the Monthly Newsletter for these District/Council programs. Please visit the following for more information:
<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards/ReligiousAwards.aspx>.

Scout Sunday / Scouting for Food – In early February, most religious-based charter organizations of Boy Scout Troops recognize Scout Sunday and our charter organization Mount Pisgah UMC fits into that category. This activity actually involves two Sundays: The Sunday prior to Scout Sunday our boys participate by handing out “Scouting for Food” grocery bags (like the Kroger / Publix plastic kind) and ask that members of the congregation bring back any non-perishable food items on the following Sunday, Scout Sunday. On Scout Sunday we collect all of the non-perishable food items before and after both services, and that afternoon sort and then deliver the donated items.

BSA Annual Health and Medical Record – Your son must have a [BSA Annual Health and Medical Record](#) on file with the Troop. Sections A and B along with C (medical physical) must be completed. This should have been requested at the first Troop Meeting your son attended. If you have not turned one in, please see any adult leaders about where to turn that in. Note: Per BSA policy, this is an ANNUAL form, so a new one – with all three A, B, and C parts – must be turned in yearly.

Rank Advancement – We have an entire section on **ADVANCEMENT** up above, why is it listed here again? There are numerous opportunities on outings for rank advancement – most notably the “grubmaster” role: purchase the food items for a patrol, and then on the outing help prepare/cook/clean 3 meals with additional scouts. In addition, the Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class requirements all require the scout to go on outings (they can’t meet those “outing” requirements at Troop Meetings). So outings are critical to rank advancement.

High Adventure – Troop 629 participates in all three BSA high adventure bases: Sea Base sailing (Key West the Bahamas, or St. Thomas), Northern Tier canoeing and Philmont backpacking. Each of these trips has requirements above and beyond normal Troop outings, including minimum age requirements of 13 or 14 (depending on which trip). The Troop typically attends 2 of the high adventure bases per year and is a scouting highlight for older boys. In addition to these BSA key-three, the Troop typically takes a high adventure ski trip in January of each year up to the Northeast.



Adult Attendance – Adults are welcome on all outings. However, let's break down adult attendance into two categories:

1. Drivers Only – the simplest way to “attend” a trip and to help is to be a driver. A driver does not have to be a registered adult with the Troop, as they are simply driving. A couple of points:
 - a. The Troop will reimburse for the cost of gas. Simply submit your receipts to the Troop Treasurer. It is easiest to fill up before you go, then fill up when you get back and submit that receipt.
 - b. Your vehicle must be registered with the Troop for the Tour Plan to be filed with BSA. We will need your vehicle make, model, and tag number. Some insurance information will also be needed. See the Scoutmaster or another adult to point you in the right direction – a week or two before the trip you wish to drive on.
 - c. You are a driver only. You cannot stay with the Troop overnight. That means you will need to have your own accommodations that night (if it's an overnight trip too far away from home) separate from the Troop.
2. Overnight – in general (as it depends on the trip), any adult can complete the following and not only travel with but also spend the night at the same place with the Troop:
 - a. You must be a registered adult with the Troop with BSA. That means a completed BSA application must be on file with BSA.
 - b. You have completed Youth Protection online training (required to file your registration), with the completed card given to the Troop Advancement Chair for tracking purposes.
 - c. You have completed Fast Start online training, with the completed card given to the Troop Advancement Chair for tracking purposes.
 - d. You have reviewed the Troop 629 Adult Guide under the “About Us” section on the [Troop 629 website](#).
 - e. You have a [BSA Annual Health and Medical Record](#) on file with the Troop. Sections A and B along with C (medical physical) must be completed.
 - f. High Adventure trips require additional training / certifications including but not limited to: SALT (Scoutmaster Assistant Scoutmaster Adult Leader Training), ITOLS (Introduction To Outdoor Leadership Skills), CPR, Wilderness First Aid, and others.

SUMMER CAMP

Summer Camp is a very important part of scouting, in particularly the first couple of years for a new scout. Most boys who stay in the scouting program will attend the first 3 or 4 or more summer camps, after that some of the high adventure trips may start to conflict.

There is an entire Summer Camp registration flyer with much more detailed information, and there is also a “New Scout Parent Summer Camp Orientation” Meeting, so this guide will just hit some highlights:

Importance – Straight from the Troop 629 Summer Camp flyer: You can't take the "Outing" out of Scouting. The outdoor program is a feature about Scouting that appeals to boys, and a week at summer camp is a mountaintop / lakefront experience. No young man has ever forgotten the experiences from summer camp. Consider also that a unit on its own can't duplicate the program, facilities, and equipment. Camp provides a variety of programs, a dining hall, a fully stocked trading post, and other facilities to



match your unit's needs and desires. First year scouts make lasting friendships with other boys in the Troop and learn a lot about Boy Scouts through the camp. The first year scouts also complete many Rank Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class.

Mountain Man / 1st Year Scouts – Troop 629 places all new / 1st year scouts in the Mountain Man program. This is a very comprehensive program where your son will have the opportunity to complete most of the Tenderfoot, Second Class & First Class requirements. This will occupy two hours every morning for your scout. The other 2 hours in the morning, your son will be placed in the Swimming Merit Badge. For more detailed explanations on this policy, please see the Troop 629 Summer Camp flyer or contact the Scoutmaster or Summer Camp Coordinator.

Merit Badge Selection – In year 2 and beyond, merit badge selection becomes critical. A scout can typically select 4-5 merit badges to work on at Summer Camp. Numerous Eagle rank merit badges are offered at Summer Camp, although not all Eagle required ones are offered. As mentioned in the above **ADVANCEMENT** section, 21 merit badges are needed for the rank of Eagle – so your son can complete most of those 21 merit badges after 4 or 5 Summer Camps with some additional work outside of Summer Camp. When you get to year 2 at Summer Camp, have your son talk with his Patrol Leader about merit badge selection. Or you, the adult, can talk with the Scoutmaster, Summer Camp coordinator, or any adult with an older scout in the program to help out.

Rank / Merit Badge Sign-off – As mentioned in the above **ADVANCEMENT** section, your son will need to meet with his Patrol Leader (for Rank items) or a Merit Badge counselor (for merit badges) to get his items from Summer Camp signed-off. At the Troop Meeting following Summer Camp, we will give your son a sheet listing all of the rank and merit badge requirements he completed at summer camp. This sheet can be used in place of the “blue card” for merit badges.

When and Where – Troop 629 generally goes to Woodruff Scout Reservation in Blairsville GA, and 2013 is no exception. You will need to drop off your son at Woodruff by 1pm on Sunday June 16th and can pick him up either Friday night June 21st or Saturday morning June 22nd – see the 2013 Summer Camp flyer for more information. Note: due to the high number of Troop 629 boys attending, and the amount of gear taking, this is the one trip where parents must take and pick up their son.

UNIFORM

A scout is clean. And a scout should represent scouting in a proper way – and the uniform is an important part of that. Here are some key items to the scout's uniform:

- The khaki shirt is the Class-A or Field Uniform and is required at Troop Meetings, for travel on all outings, and at Summer Camp. The exception is the Class-B shirt is allowed in the summer months at Troop Meetings (usually June through August - coincides with the start of school).
- The red shirt is the Class-B “t-shirt” and is worn underneath the Class-A uniform. Your son was / will be given one at one of his first Troop Meetings after registration has been turned in. He will also be given one at each Summer Camp he attends. There are also Class-B shirts custom-made for each High Adventure trip.
- Green scout pants / socks – these are not required items at Troop Meetings, but certainly preferred at a Board of Review. The green pants don't have to be “official” BSA pants, any green pants he has



will work. The exception is the Eagle Board of Review where a complete official uniform is expected.

- No neckerchief / scarf. Troop 629 does not have an official neckerchief to wear (and the boys say "yea!" and the parents say "yea I don't have to buy 100 neckerchief slides!").
- Scout Handbook. This is officially part of the Boy Scout Uniform and should be brought to each Troop Meeting. When you son meets with his Patrol Leader, the Patrol Leader will sign-off on rank requirements directly in his handbook. The handbook is typically not needed on outings.

Need part of the uniform? See the Scoutmaster for details about Troop 629's lending closet.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising continues in Boy Scouts just like in Cub Scouts, but there is a key difference to some events. While there are fundraising events for the Troop (to help pay for various troop operational costs and scholarships) and for the Council/National, most fund raisers are to help the boys earn money into their Troop-held "High Adventure Accounts". These funds raised can be used by the boys to help offset the costs of the sometimes costly high adventure trips. The Troop Treasurer maintains each scout's high adventure (HA) account and can provide you or your son the detail about its current status.

Popcorn – Just like in Cub Scouts, the boys can sell popcorn in Boy Scouts. While they can earn the same prizes as in Cub Scouts, the difference comes in the 35% of all sales paid back to the Unit (Pack or Troop). In Troop 629, a percentage (typically 25%) of the popcorn sold goes to your son's high adventure account. So if he sells \$1000 worth of popcorn, \$250 is placed into his high adventure account at the 25% rate. Popcorn sales are in the fall, starting in September and wrap up in October with distribution in November.

Friends of Scouting – This is BSA's annual fundraising event with 100% of the monies collecting going to BSA. There is no difference here in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, it's a BSA fundraiser that takes place in the early months of the year. All donations are 100% tax deductible.

Kroger Card – Perhaps the easiest fundraiser is the on-going monthly Kroger card program. By participating in this Kroger program, our Troop receives 5% of our total gift card orders each month and the scout receives 75% of those funds for their high adventure account. The gift cards can be used at any Kroger store or Kroger fuel center. During each use your purchase is deducted and when the amount of the card is depleted, it is kept by the cashier – new cards are issued each month and mailed to you. There is no service charge – if you order a \$50 Kroger gift card, you will receive a \$50 gift card! See the Troop Newsletter for more information on this program.

Camp Cards – In the last couple of years, the Atlanta Area Council has introduced Camp Cards. These are \$5 cards with one-time or multi-use coupons to local establishments (like \$5 off at Publix, a free menu item at Moe's, etc.). In the March timeframe, your son will have the opportunity to sell these cards for \$5 each. For each \$5 card he sells, \$2.50 goes into his high adventure (HA) account. See the Troop Newsletter (typically February and/or March) for more information on this program.

Christmas Tree Recycling – Troop 629 runs a Christmas Tree recycling program around the 1st of the year (exact date varies each year depending on the calendar). Essentially the boys pass fliers out to



surrounding neighborhoods and we have an email campaign as well. Customers can sign up online and donate monies (suggested \$10 donation per tree) to the Troop for picking up and recycling their tree. All monies are put into the boys high adventure accounts based on the amount of time they worked the recycling event. 2012 marked the 15th year for the Troop 629 Christmas Tree Recycling event.

Other Fundraising Events – Other fundraising events come around every so often. About every other year Troop 629 holds a garage sale and car wash. Other events in the past have also occurred like flower sales, donut sales, etc. Look for the monthly newsletter for announcements about any of these events.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There are numerous ways to help the Troop and be involved. One is of course to become a registered adult leader where you can fill an Assistant Scoutmaster or Committee Member roll and participate in outings if desired. However, there are numerous non-registered ways to help the Troop, with a few listed here:

- Be a driver for an outing; see the **OUTINGS** section above for more detail
- Help at a Court of Honor by providing refreshments, setting up, etc.
- Sit on a Board of Review as a board member – no experience necessary!
- Be a Merit badge counselor for your profession / interests
- Help with the annual Christmas tree recycling program
- Help out at the garage sale
- Help out at the car wash
- Help out with the Flower sales
- Help with the annual Popcorn sale
- Assist with the annual Friends of Scouting campaign
- Contribute with the monthly Newsletter
- Help organize / maintain the Uniform Closet
- Assist the numerous Religious emblems
- Help plan behind-the-scenes for a High Adventure trip (register to attend it!)
- Assist with Medical records keeping and Health/safety issues
- Coordinate for a Service project
- Assist the quarter-master with Equipment inventory
- Assist with an Eagle Ceremony (lots of pre-ceremony items to do)
- Be involved in adult training and recognition
- Be a Patrol Mentor to a Patrol Leader
- Help out with Membership
- Act as a Webelos Liaison to Cub Scout Packs
- Help out with Advancement

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the Troop, we encourage you to reach out to the Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, or any other adult you see hanging around the Troop meetings!



COMMUNICATION

Communication is key to knowing what's going on in the Troop. Generally it is your son's responsibility to know what's going on and what due-dates there are – but we are talking about 11-12+ year old boys. So there are numerous ways Troop 629 communicates with its scouts and families to make sure everyone knows what's going on.

Weekly Troop Meetings – as stated in the **MEETINGS** section above, all upcoming events and outings are announced at the weekly Troop Meetings, typically twice: at the beginning and end.

Newsletter – Troop 629 publishes a monthly newsletter via email and our website (via the “Newsletter” menu item). The newsletter contains information about the next two months meetings and outings, lists scouts who obtained their next rank, contains training information for scouts and adults, discusses Merit Badges, and additional information and reminders. Historical newsletters are maintained on the website in case you want to review older ones.

Email – Troop 629 limits the amount of emails when compared with most Cub Scout Packs. The monthly newsletter is emailed as stated above, but very few additional emails will go out. The other methods of communication in this section – in particular the website – are more favored over email.

Bulletin Board / Table at Troop Meetings – As explained in the **OUTINGS** section above in this document, at each Weekly Troop Meeting there is a bulletin board / table at the back of the room with flyers for upcoming outings. This is also where a scout will turn in his permission slip and any monies for an upcoming outing.

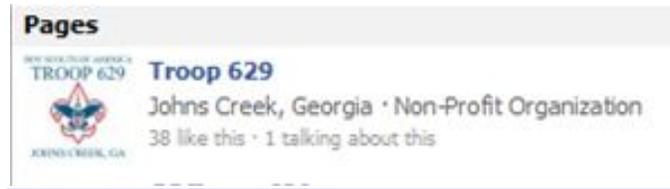
Website – If you've made it from top to bottom in this document, you've already seen how key a role our website plays in communication. Additionally, pictures from each trip are posted on the website. Curious about what a trip will be like? Pictures from a lot of the trips for the last 10+ years are on the website, so you can pull them up at anytime and get a better idea of what to expect.

For reference, you can find our Troop website along with the District and Council websites at the following:

Troop 629	www.troop629.org
Chattahoochee District	www.cdbsa.org
Atlanta Area Council	www.atlantabsa.org

Facebook – Troop 629 does maintain a Facebook presence. If you search for Troop 629 you will find and can “like” the Troop. Facebook is not the primary method of communication – the website is. However, upcoming due-dates / reminders for outings are often posted and limited pictures are sometimes posted during the outing itself so you can see what's going on!

Look for a page like this:



IN SUMMARY

We hope this document has answered a lot of your questions and will help get you up-to-speed in Boy Scouts and in Troop 629. Please feel free to ask the Scoutmaster or other adult leaders any questions. But there are two thoughts we'd like to leave you with, probably the two most important things you need to know at the beginning:

1. If you're not sure of a date, an outing, anything – please check the website. It is top-notch and you can find pretty much everything on it. So when in doubt, check the [Troop 629 website!](#)
2. If your son is unsure of anything, he should **ASK HIS PATROL LEADER!** The Patrol Leader's responsibility, their leadership position, is to help all of the boys in their Patrol and the Troop including your son. Remember also that it is a learning and leadership-gaining experience for the Patrol Leader as well. All part of being a boy-led Troop!

Welcome to the Troop...