

Handbook For Scouts and Parents



Troop 455
May 2007

TROOP 455 Handbook for Scouts and Parents

Welcome to the Boy Scouts of America! By joining Troop 455 you are setting out on the grand adventure of Scouting. The Promise of Scouting, written on page 1 of the Boy Scout Handbook, includes things like the great outdoors, friendship, personal development, goal setting, and life experiences. This is a tremendously important and rewarding endeavor that will turn into a life transforming adventure for you and your son.

The following pages are designed to help Scouts parents understand the basics of the Scouting program in Troop 455. Reading this will acquaint the families of new Scouts with the basic operations of our Troop. Members of the committee, the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters encourage you to discuss any questions or comments you might have with them. Contact, calendar and other information may be found at the Troop 455 website at <http://www.Troop455.com>

The Cub Scout to Boy Scout Transition

There are some fundamental differences between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. The biggest is perhaps personal accountability and independence. Whereas in Cub Scouts the den leader was accountable for providing learning experiences and advancement opportunities, in Boy Scouts that is largely left to the Scouts.

Troop Meetings

Troop 455 meets at Fairwood Community United Methodist Church at 7 p.m. on most Mondays. The address of the church is 15233 SE Fairwood Blvd in Renton, Washington.

Our troop maintains a 12 month calendar. We strive for monthly indoor and outdoor activities, as well as the quarterly Court of Honor - a formal award meeting. Activity schedules may be reduced in December for vacations and holidays. Details of the calendar for the year may be found at www.Troop455.com

Joining Troop 455

We invite parents and boys to visit Troop meetings and ask questions prior to committing to join the troop. To become a member of the troop, you need to turn in the following items to the Scoutmaster:

1. Completed BSA membership form with parent/guardian signature and completed health history on the back of the form
2. Annual dues: currently \$50.00 (includes Boy's Life Subscription)

For scouts to begin participating in outdoor activities, the troop must have these forms on file:

1. Completed BSA Class 1 Medical Form. Class 2 required for summer camp. Please note any medical issues and medications.
2. Release of Liability form signed before every event.

Parents must fill out transportation form prior to transporting any scout to an event.

Scout Handbook

The Boy Scout Handbook is essential to each scout's career. In addition to the valuable information it contains, it provides a means for tracking advancement progress. Requirements for rank advancement will be signed off on pages in the back of the handbook. Parents are required to read and discuss the attached pamphlet "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide." before the scout can begin rank advancement. Reminder - Scouts should bring his handbook to all meetings and camps.

Each scout will be provided with an advancement notebook (Trail to Eagle). The advancement notebook provides a place for the scout to keep track of requirements for all ranks, outings, camping events and activities, requirements for Eagle merit badges, holders for advancement cards, holders for the scout's portion of merit badge cards - everything in one place. Scouts should review the advancement requirements carefully with parents.

Uniforms

Troop 455 is a uniformed organization. The standard uniform (aka Class "A" uniform) is the official tan Boy Scout Shirt with red epaulets, Chief Seattle patch, rank patch, and troop position patch as required. The American Flag and Troop numbers 4 5 5 are attached to the sleeve. For proper placement of patches and insignia please see Boy Scout Handbook.

A scout belt and sash to display merit badges (once earned) is also worn. A troop neckerchief is given to all new scouts and secured with a neckerchief slide. Tan or Green "khakis" or cargo pants or shorts are acceptable substitutes for official Scout slacks or shorts. Shoes should be brown or black leather, casual dress or hiking style. Shower shoes, sandals or flip flops are not acceptable uniform attire. Closed toe athletic shoes are acceptable.

Formal events require full Class A uniform, including the neckerchief and merit badge sash.

Examples of formal events are:

- Court of Honor
- Scoutmaster Conference
- Board of Review
- Activities where we represent the Troop or Boy Scouts in a public setting.

The activity uniform (aka Class "B" uniform) consists of Troop 455 T-shirt (turquoise) and grey pullover sweatshirt. In general, this option may be worn for outdoor troop activities and for service projects.

Scouts should bring both uniform options to camping activities where other Troops will be present, including Camporee and Summer Camp.

Troop Organization

Troop 455 is part of the Green River District in the Chief Seattle Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The Troop is chartered by the Fairwood United Methodist Church. Under the rules of the chartering process, the charter organization effectively owns the Troop, and as such, must approve the selection of Scoutmaster and Troop Committee Chair. The charter organization shares liability for things that go on in the Troop.

The Boy-Led Troop

All troop meetings are chosen and planned by the Scouts. This means that the Scouts make the decisions on troop programs, are responsible for the implementation of those decisions. The adult leadership is there to support the Scout's efforts, provide guidance as appropriate, and ensure that the safety and well being of the Scouts is not compromised. As a chartered Boy Scout Troop, we adhere to the policies and procedures as set forth by the Boy Scouts of America and our local Boy Scout Council (Green River District).

Upon joining the troop Scouts will be assigned to a Patrol. Patrols contain 5-8 Scouts which work as a unit on campouts, in skills instruction, and in competition at some events. Patrol members choose a Patrol Leader who is responsible for coordinating (not doing) all the necessary plans for each outing, e.g. menus, food,

tents, transportation. The Scouts also elect an Assistant Patrol Leader who serves as Patrol Leader in the Patrol Leader's absence.

The organization of the boy-led troop begins with the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC). The Scouts select the Senior Patrol Leader. Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders are also selected. The Senior Patrol Leader leads recruiting of various leadership positions such as Historian, Scribe, Quartermaster, and Librarian. The PLC is comprised of the Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, and the various leadership positions. Under the direction of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, meetings are held to perform more detailed planning of upcoming activities, and to deal with general troop business. The Senior Patrol Leaders serves as a liaison with the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee members to ensure that appropriate adult support will be available and the policies of Boy Scouts are adhered.

Parent Participation

The assistance of parents is key to the success of any Boy Scout troop. The more a parent is involved, the more the Scout is likely to stay involved and advance in rank.

Parents support the troop by:

- Attending Parent Committee meetings
- Driving and/or participating in outings
- Helping with fund raising activities
- Assisting in planning for activities
- Serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster
- Serving on the Parent Committee
- Serving on Boards of Review to assist in rank advancement
- Being a merit badge counselor
- Becoming trained Scouters

Parents are recruited to help with special jobs. Training courses in different aspects of Scouting are offered through our Green River District and are open to all parents. **EVERY PARENT'S HELP IS NEEDED.**

Parents can assist their sons by:

1. Attend all troop and committee meetings.
2. Reading their Scout's handbook and understand the purpose and methods of Scouting. (Parents can familiarize themselves with the basics of scouting by borrowing the Boy Scout Fast Start video tape.)

3. Be aware of the troop program and annual calendar. Most troop activities are discussed at the meetings and a written calendar is provided as well as updates on the website.
4. Actively follow their Scout's progress (or lack thereof) and offer encouragement and a gentle "push" when needed to your son and other members of the troop.
5. Show support to your son and the Troop by attending every Court of Honor

Adult Leadership

Boy Scouts is a volunteer organization and Troop 455 does not pay for any of its adult support. The Boy Scouts do have paid professional Scouters at the local and national levels, as well as paid support staff. At the troop level, all adult participants are volunteers who are recruited from troop parents, and other interested parties.

In accordance with BSA guidelines and procedures, all adult volunteers must submit to a background check when registering as troop adult leaders.

The Troop will cover the expenses related to outings for adult leaders to the extent of troop committee policy. In the event multiple leaders would like to participate the leaders with the most training will be given funding priority.

The Scoutmaster

This is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the Troop. He works directly with the Assistant Scoutmasters and the Scouts. The importance of his job is reflected in the fact that the quality of his guidance will affect every youth and adult involved in the Troop. The Scoutmaster's duties include:

- Training and guiding boy leaders
- Working with other responsible adults to bring Scouting to boys.
- Utilizes the methods of Scouting to achieve the Aims of Scouting
- Meets regularly with the Patrol Leader's Council for training and coordination in planning Troop activities.
- Attends all troop meetings or arranges for a substitute
- Conducts Scoutmaster conferences for rank advancements
- Delegates responsibility to other adults and groups so that they have responsibility in troop operations.
- Attempts to plan for each Scout to experience at least 10 days and nights of camping/year.

To be successful, our Troop needs multiple Assistant Scoutmasters to increase the adult interaction and role modeling.

The Troop Parent Committee

The Troop Committee is organized under the leadership of the Troop Committee Chairman. He/She reports to the Fairwood Community Methodist Church, and to the BSA for the overall Troop 455 Scouting Program.

The troop committee is comprised of adults and is charged with the business aspects of running the troop. Responsibilities of the Troop Committee include:

- Finances
- Adequacy of troop equipment
- Recruiting adult leadership
- Maintaining official troop records
- Advising the Scoutmaster
- Ensuring adherence with BSA and Troop policies
- Providing adequate facilities for scouting programs

Membership in the troop committee or on various subcommittees is open to all parents and others with an interest in the scouting program.

Adult Leader Training

Studies consistently show that vibrant, successful troops have trained adult leaders. Troop 455 expects the "direct contact" leaders to attend Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster training and outdoor skills training. Committee members are also encouraged to take this training. These training events provide important information, skills and networking opportunities. It is a great opportunity to hear what fun things other Troops are doing.

Fundraising

Troop 455 limits fundraising to 2 activities per year. In March we host the Annual Pancake Breakfast at Fairwood Community Methodist Church. *All Scouts and families are EXPECTED to attend this function.* This is our primary money maker and is a successful event. Volunteer early to get the best jobs! Those who don't volunteer will be called and asked to help out. Each scout will be responsible for selling a specified number of tickets.

In December we participate in Christmas tree pick-up. Parent participation in these fundraising events is strongly encouraged as it shows a genuine interest in your son's Boy Scout experience

Rank Advancement: The Seven Levels of Scouting

1. Scout
2. Tenderfoot
3. Second Class
4. First Class
5. Star
6. Life
7. Eagle

The descriptions of each rank and their requirements are listed in the Boy Scout Handbook. These requirements may be updated between printings of the Scout Handbook. Refer to the current requirements guide (available on-line) for the latest requirements.

All Troop 455 Boys are given a notebook entitled, "Trail to Eagle" to document badge requirements and to track progress toward rank.

IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT SCOUTS KEEP A RECORD OF EACH THING HE DOES, INCLUDING SERVICE PROJECT HOURS AND DATES AS WELL AS CAMPOUTS.

Each Scout must provide documentation of:

- Requirements fulfilled for rank advancement
- All merit badges earned
- All service project participation
- Camping trips/Backpacking trips
- All troop activities
- Special training
- Positions of responsibility in the troop/patrol

Rank Advancement Guidelines

All scouts should participate in 70% of the troop meetings and 50% of the outings in order to advance to the next rank. The Scoutmaster and Advancement Chairman will determine if this requirement has been met. All scouts should be prepared to correctly repeat the Scout Oath and Law at each Board of Review.

Some requirements must be completed after earning the previous rank (for example, tenure and leadership). Except for those requirements, Scouts may work concurrently on the rank requirements.

All scouts advancing to the rank of Star, Life or Eagle must meet the leadership requirements as established by the Scoutmaster and Advancement Chairman. These leadership positions are available within the troop. All service projects (requirements for Star, Life and Eagle) must have the prior approval of the Scoutmaster.

Each rank includes a requirement to show Scout Spirit by living the Scout Oath and Law in daily life. Fulfilling this requirement is a subjective decision of the Scoutmaster and Board of Review (Committee). While the Scout cannot be evaluated round the clock, behavior and participation in Troop events is a good indicator.

The following represents the recommended advancement schedule:

Rank	Cumulative Years	Approximate Age
Scout	$\frac{1}{4}$	11
Tenderfoot	$\frac{1}{2}$	11 - $11\frac{1}{2}$
Second Class	1	$11\frac{1}{2}$ - 12
First Class	$1\frac{1}{2}$	12 - $12\frac{1}{2}$
Star	$2\frac{1}{2}$ - 3	13 - $13\frac{1}{2}$
Life	4	$14\frac{1}{2}$ - 15
Eagle	5	$15\frac{1}{2}$ - 18*

* A scout must complete the requirements for Eagle prior to his 18th birthday

Just about every endeavor has some recognition of elite status. Actors aspire to bring their characters to life - a small percentage are recognized with Oscars. Authors desire to create great literary works - a small percentage are recognized with Pulitzer prizes. Athletes strive to be the very best - a small percentage are elected to a Hall of Fame.

The rank of Eagle Scout is Scouting's highest recognition of elite status. And, like the examples given above, a small percentage of Scouts attain this level. Not

reaching this level doesn't equate to failure in Scouting, or by Scouting. Just as there are many fine actors, authors and athletes who don't achieve their highest honors, there are many fine Scouts who do not reach Eagle. The journey is just as important as the destination.

Merit Badges

The goal of the merit badge program is to expand a Scout's area of interest and to encourage the Scout to meet and work with adults in a chosen subject. Merit badges are earned by a Scout working with a registered merit badge counselor.

The steps in working on and earning a merit badge are as follows:

1. The first step in pursuing a merit badge is to find the requirements of the badge. These requirements can be found on-line
<http://usscouts.org/usscouts/meritbadges.asp>
<http://meritbadge.com>
or in the annual "requirements" book available through the scout store.
2. A Scout then requests a Blue Card and permission to work on a Merit Badge from his Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster will give the Scout the names and phone numbers of available merit badge counselors.
3. The Scout obtains and reads the merit badge pamphlet. He should try to understand all the requirements before working on the badge.
4. The Scout contacts the merit badge counselor to arrange for a time and place to meet and discuss the requirements for the badge.
5. The Scout begins working on the Merit Badge, keeping in regular contact with his counselor. The Scout learns from, and demonstrates his knowledge and understanding to the counselor. The counselor will test the Scout's knowledge and completion of the requirements.
6. Once the Scout completes the requirements the Merit Badge counselor will sign off the requirements on the Blue Card. The counselor will keep one portion of the blue card for his records.
7. The Scout then takes the Blue Card to the Scoutmaster for his signature. The Scout gives the signed blue card to the Advancement/Awards adult.
8. The Scout will receive the Merit Badge at the next Court of Honor.

Merit badges require independent work - homework. Scouts should not expect to complete all the requirements in the company of the Merit Badge Counselor.

Merit Badge Workshops are held throughout the year by the various districts. Information about upcoming opportunities to earn Merit Badges will be announced at Troop meetings. Scouts also have an opportunity to earn Merit Badges at Summer Camp and Winter Camp. *Blue cards, signed by the Scoutmaster are also needed for these events - be prepared!*

When earning Merit Badges at Camps or clinics, it is often the case that all the requirements cannot be completed during the event. The preferred option is to complete any prerequisites prior to the event. Otherwise the scout will have a "partial" sign-off on the blue card. The scout can then find and work with a merit badge counselor to complete the outstanding requirements. *It is very important to keep track of the blue card until it is fully signed off and turned into the Troop.*

All parents of Troop 455 Scouts are encouraged to become Merit Badge Counselors for any of the available merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts of America. Merit Badge Counselor training is available through the District. Meritbadge.com is an excellent resource for earning merit badges.

Court of Honor

These award and recognition ceremonies are held four times a year to award rank advancement, merit badges and special awards to those who have earned them. Scouts who have participated in a troop activity will also be recognized. All scouts, parents and siblings should attend! If your son has advanced a rank, parents will be called up to be recognized with their son. Mothers will receive a brag rag and rank pin for each rank her son achieves. Remember, behind every successful scout are caring and concerned parents.

Discipline

Youth enter scouting as boys. However, during the first few years of Boys Scouts, they develop into young men. Accordingly, they must learn to behave like young men.

The Troop 455 Code of Conduct is to:

Respect Others
Participate
Keep an Open Mind
Have Fun!

Troop 455 encourages an environment where every scout is respected for who he is and where every scout is encouraged to do his best to learn scouting skills at a pace appropriate to his background and ability. To ensure a safe environment where these ideals persist, Troop 455 does not tolerate overly aggressive or dangerous behavior, bad language, or disrespect for other scouts and adult leaders. Scouts will be asked to go home if disruptive.

See the Troop Behavior Code later in this document.

Youth Protection

Child abuse is a major problem affecting our society. Because of the significance of the social problem, the Boy Scouts of America has declared child abuse as one of the "unacceptables" to receive special attention by those involved in the Scouting program.

The BSA has developed a five-point plan to combat child abuse and improve the environment in which young people live. This is called "Youth Protection" and is a mandatory emphasis in scouting. The key elements of this strategy include:

1. Educating Scouting volunteers, parents and Scouts themselves to aid in the detection and prevention of child abuse.
2. Establishing leader-selection procedures to prevent individuals with a history of child abuse from entering the BSA leadership ranks.
3. Establishing policies that minimize the opportunities for child abuse to occur in the program of the Boy Scouts of America.
4. Encouraging Scouts to report improper behavior in order to identify offenders quickly.
5. Swiftly removing and reporting alleged offenders

The Youth Protection Program provides essential information to Scouts and their families. A detachable booklet in the front of the Boy Scout Handbook, "How To

Protect Your Child From Child Abuse and Drug Abuse: A Parent's Guide," provides information to help families to increase self-protection skills.

Our Troop holds mandatory Youth Protection Training for all parents and Scouts. Any suspected offenses of the Youth Protection program must be reported to the Troop Committee. All incidents will be reported to the Council. All reports are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken to ensure the safety of the youth.

Troop Outings and Activities

The troop conducts an outing or activity approximately once per month. The Troop Activity Calendar lists the activities planned for the year. Each scout must share in the costs of the outing he participates in. This will include food, transportation and any equipment rentals. Usually the boys will cook as a patrol. Troop dress will be determined for each outing.

Note: If a scout has signed up to attend an outing and cannot go, he may still be responsible for his share of the expenses, unless he is able to locate a replacement who will reimburse him accordingly. For this reason it is important for all parents to find out what their scout has signed up for after each scout meeting! Parents will need to fill out a permission form for each outing.

Summer Camp

The troop attends a one week summer camp in July or August of each year. Summer camp is an excellent learning experience for the scout. It is a great opportunity for Scouts to earn merit badges and other awards. New Scouts: If you think you might want to go, contact the troop leadership immediately.

Camping and Hiking Equipment

Scouts will need personal equipment for the outdoor events (hiking boots, backpack, rain gear, eating utensils, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, etc.). However, we recommend that you do not purchase equipment before discussing it with your troop leaders. First year scouts should consider renting or borrowing some of the more expensive equipment (i.e. backpacks, sleeping bags). The troop has group equipment like tents, cooking gear, stoves, lanterns, dining flies, water filters, first aid kits etc. Equipment required for specific outings will be discussed prior to each outing.

Transportation

All parents are required to share in the transportation duties. Please help out.

Additional Information

The web is full of good information about the Boy Scout Program. Many sites are not run by the Boy Scout organization itself, but by any number of dedicated volunteers who are enriched by their involvement in Boy Scouts. There are dozens of discussion groups and threads on just about every scout topic.

www.seattlebsa.org (official chief seattle council site)

http://members.doubleknot.com/Green_River_District/ (official Green River District Web site)

www.Troop455.com

www.scouting.org (official national organization site)

www.scoutstuff.org (catalog of official scout merchandise)

www.usscouts.org (several links)

www.meritbadge.com

www.boyscouttrail.com

www.scouter.com

Troop 455 In-Troop Behavior Code

A scout is expected to behave according to the Scout Oath and Scout Law. A scout will respond to adult leadership at all times! No abusive language will be tolerated.

During troop meetings, outings and other activities, disruptive behavior by any individual will be handled as follows:

- Step 1. First offense - verbal warning by the SPL or other leadership.
- Step 2. Continued disruption - A mandatory call for a parent to pick-up the scout.
- Step 3. Two or more infractions - SPL and adult to confer with parents.
- Step 4. Suspension.
- Step 5. Dismissal.

Outings - The buddy system will be in effect at all times during outings and will be subject to adult leadership approval. **The adult leaders on any outing reserve the right to call an individual scout's parents to have them picked up as soon as possible, regardless of time or location, if their behavior is highly disruptive or abusive.**

Breakage - Individuals responsible will pay for breakage and provide a written letter of apology to the owner of the broken item within one week of the incident.

Vandalism - Severity of punishment to be determined by an adult leader in charge at the time of the occurrence. Punishment could range from strong verbal warning to immediate dismissal.

Backpacks and personal gear - Rummaging through another scout's backpack or gear without his permission is prohibited!

First Infraction - Strong verbal warning and suspension.

Second Infraction - Immediate dismissal from the troop.

Unauthorized Absences - Breaking curfew during any outing could lead to:

First Infraction - Immediate pickup by parent regardless of time and location. Immediate suspension for three to six months.

Second Infraction - Immediate dismissal from the troop.

Theft - Scouts caught stealing during any scout outing will be dismissed from the troop immediately. Parents will be required to pick up their son immediately, regardless of time or location, as a direct result. Proof of theft will also lead to immediate dismissal.

Smoking and/or the use of alcohol or drugs during troop functions - Scouts caught smoking, using alcohol or drugs will be dismissed from the troop immediately. Parents will be required to pick up their son immediately, regardless of time or location, as a direct result.

NOTICE: BOYS ON SUSPENSION LOSE SERVICE TIME. TIME REQUIRED FOR THE NEXT RANK ADVANCEMENT BEGINS AFTER SUSPENSION HAS BEEN COMPLETED

What is Troop 455 all about?

Information for Prospective Scouts and Parents

Troop Size – Our Troop currently has 16 active scouts. We have a even distribution of age groups. This troop size provides great opportunities for younger scouts to grow into leadership positions.

Troop Philosophies – Scouting is practice for life. Things like taking leadership, giving leadership, being held accountable, and holding others accountable. Dealing with difficult leaders, leading difficult people. Making tough choices, learning from mistakes.

Participation – Our youth have a variety of choices when it comes to interests and activities. This is a good thing. A variety of life experiences is important to development of well rounded adults with broad vision and perspective. The Boy Scout program offers a wide variety of topics for investigation and a wide range of experiences to build a broad perspective. These experiences and opportunities happen when boys participate, but only when they participate.

Parental Involvement – Boy Scout Troops are only successful if the parents get involved. Parental support is needed in a variety of ways.

Leadership Expectations – A Troop our size thrives when the boys are presented with leadership opportunities and are held accountable for putting forth an honest effort. Rank advancements beyond First Class require leadership responsibilities. When beginning a leadership position the expectations of the Scout are discussed and a shared vision of successful term in office is created.

Troop Schedule – Our Troop meets weekly on Mondays from seven until eight or eight thirty. The youth leadership also meets as a patrol leader council – a monthly planning session. Outings and activities occur typically once per month. Our outing goals include 20 nights camping per year, and community service outings. These outings are chosen by the boys, with some boundaries such as camping expectations, troop traditions, community service quotas, etc.

Troop Meeting Place – Our Troop is chartered by and meets at Fairwood United Methodist Church in the Fairwood community of King County.

Transition – Scouts are transitioned in new scout patrol for 6 to 12 months. New scouts make up a new scout patrol which is assisted by a Troop Guide – an older scout who will assist the new patrol through first class rank – the core Boy Scout skills.

Notes

