

Troop 1257 Scoutmaster Policy Handbook

Purpose of this Handbook

This Scoutmaster Policy Handbook is intended to convey the way Troop 1257 program operates. Your involvement in the Troop will hopefully span many years. Please review this Handbook carefully to become familiar with how Troop 1257 operates.

History

The Boy Scouts of America and the Church of the Epiphany partnered to charter Troop 1257 in 1999. It is the mission of Troop 1257 to promote and foster an exciting outdoor program in a Christian environment that will provide a foundation for positive growth of each member in the areas of moral strength and character; participating citizenship; and physical, mental, and emotional fitness. Specific goals support and reinforce the policies of the Church of the Epiphany and the Boy Scouts of America.

Boy Led Troop Concept

Troop 1257 is a boy-led troop. This means that the scouts themselves run Troop 1257. The boys select and decide on monthly activities and outings for the year. The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) is elected by the Troop, and chairs the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC). He, in consultation with the Scoutmaster, appoints scouts to the other troop leadership positions for generally a six-month tenure. The SPL and his assistants run the meetings and outings.

Patrol Leaders' Council

The Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) is the boy-led governing body of the troop. It is attended and run by Scouts who hold Troop leadership positions. These positions are listed below. It is their responsibility to plan the meetings and outings on a monthly basis. Normally, there is no regular Troop meeting on the Tuesday following a weekend outing. The PLC meets at this time. The SPL, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) and Patrol Leaders (PLs) are required to attend on this Tuesday. However, other scouts in non-leadership positions may attend the PLC as observers with prior approval of the SPL and Scoutmaster.

Scout Leaders

A scout leader lives by the Scout Oath and Law and promotes scout spirit. He plans, organizes, and executes the activities of the Troop. A scout leader inspires the Troop to higher levels of accomplishment by setting the example for the Troop through his bearing, manner, and appearance. He is proficient in the scouting skills, encourages teamwork, is honorable and trustworthy, shows genuine concern for the good of the Troop, and is active at Troop functions. Responsibilities for each leadership position are further defined in the *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*.

Scout Leadership Positions

- Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) - Elected
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders (ASPLs) – Appointed by SPL
- Junior Assistant Scout Master (JASM) – must be 16 yrs old and approved by the SM

- Patrol Leaders - Elected
- Assistant Patrol Leaders – Appointed by PL
- Troop Order of the Arrow Representative – Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Troop Guides– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Instructors– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Scribe– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Historian– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Librarian– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Quartermaster(s) – Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Den Chiefs– Appointed by the Scoutmaster
- Chaplain Aid– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Bugler– Appointed by SPL with approval of the Scoutmaster
- Other positions as deemed necessary

Terms of Leadership Positions

The terms of these positions are generally 6 months and coincide with the term of the SPL.

Scout Responsibility

A scout lives by the Scout Oath and Law and promotes scout spirit. Each scout must work to master scouting skills, support the Troop and its leaders, be a good follower, and be active in Troop activities. A scout is respectful of others and sets the example through his bearing, manner, and appearance.

Scout Patrols

The patrol structure is the foundation of the boy-led concept. Each scout is assigned to a patrol where he will function as a part of a team. The Scoutmaster assigns new Scouts into Patrols. Experienced scouts determine their patrol make-up in conjunction with the SPL and Scoutmaster. The scouts in each experienced patrol elect a Patrol Leader (PL). In accordance with the *Patrol Leader Handbook*, the PL appoints other patrol positions as needed. The Scoutmaster assigns one or more Troop Guides and one or more Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) to each new scout patrol. Patrol leadership in the new scout patrols normally rotates every month for the first six months of the scout year. The rotation is determined by the Patrol Advisor (ASM) and Troop Guide. Following the first year, the Scoutmaster may place scouts in individual patrols after discussing the scout's preferences and considering patrol balance and experience level.

Peanut-Free Troop

Troop 1257 is a "peanut-free" troop, in recognition of known food allergies to peanuts and peanut products within the troop population. Peanuts, peanut butter, and peanut products are not to be included in troop snacks, campout meals, or other food supplied in support of troop events.

Questions About Troop 1257

Call the Scoutmaster or the Committee Chairman. Their names and phone numbers can be found in the latest Troop leader listing. Additional information such as troop facts, the calendar, high adventure programs, merit badge information, and photos can be found on the Troop 1257 website at www.troop1257.org.

Parent's Responsibilities/Involvement

- Parents are expected to bring their scout to meetings on time and pick them up on time at the end of the meeting
- Parents are encouraged to read the Boy Scout Handbook with their son
- Parents are required to fill out an enrollment application, and a medical release and medical history record
- Parents are expected to ensure the Scout's dress and appearance meet the Troop's standards
- Parents are expected to provide transportation for outings even if they do not stay the weekend. Generally, all scouts are expected to travel as a troop to outings. Older Scouts may not drive other scouts to and from outings unless the other scout is a sibling
- Parents are expected to help out, when asked, on special projects
- Parents should make sure their scout completes homework so he can attend meetings
- Parents are responsible for completing the exercises in the booklet "How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse and Drug Abuse" with their son when he joins the troop. This is an advancement and joining requirement and is the only requirement that a parent is allowed to sign for in the handbook
- Parents are expected to discuss with the Scoutmaster conditions or situations that may exist that would impact their son's level of participation, so that the adult leaders can meet the boy's needs. It may be necessary for the parent to be involved on outings and at meetings on a consistent basis to achieve this goal. **Contact the Scoutmaster if there are any changes in medical or family history that may affect the Scout**
- Parents are expected to attend Parent Information meetings to stay informed of Troop happenings and any situations that may arise in the Troop
- Parents are expected to show interest in their son's progress.

Responsibilities of Adult Leaders

An Adult Leader refers to any BSA registered adult. Besides the responsibilities that go with the position, while on Troop outings or at Troop meetings and activities, **ALL** adult leaders are responsible for the safety and well being of everyone in the Troop. They are expected to take a proactive role to ensure the safety and well being of all scouts as well as ensuring that scouts conduct themselves in a scout like manner. All adult leaders are expected to treat scouts in a fair, courteous, and friendly manner, and should be treated likewise by scouts and other parents.

Leaders are also expected to respond to scout phone calls in an expeditious manner to ensure advancement or troop activities are not jeopardized. Adult leaders are required to get all BSA training associated with the positions they hold.

Training includes but is not limited to:

- New Leader Essentials

- Leader Specific Training
 - Outdoor Leader Skills
 - Youth Protection Training
 - and specialized training for medical conditions that affect scouts in our Troop.
- The Troop Training Coordinator will help adults determine individual training requirements.

Parental Participation

When the son joins -- the parents join. We expect at least one parent to register with the Boy Scouts of America and actively participate in the Troop in a Committee or Adult Leader role.. Experience shows that involved parents keep scouts interested and active. Parental involvement is essential to support the activities of the troop.

There are numerous ways you can volunteer. Please contact the Committee Chairperson to request an assignment.

- Assistant Scoutmaster (note: because of the specific and unique skills required, the Scoutmaster recruits adult leaders who he feels are qualified for ASM positions.) The ASM candidate must commit to attending the minimum Scoutmaster training as determined by the Troop Training Coordinator.
- Monthly Trip Coordinator
- Fundraiser Chairman
- Troop Committee Member
- Attend Troop Committee meetings
- Serve on Boards of Review as a Committee Member
- Run special training sessions at meetings
- Help with special projects
- Serve as Merit Badge Counselor
- Provide transportation to and from outings.

Parents are always welcome at meetings and on outings, but are not expected to attend every outing or meeting.

Scoutmaster's Role/Responsibilities

The Scoutmaster is responsible for running the Troop program. He, with the help of the ASMs, guides the scouts in rank advancement, development of their leadership skills, planning of troop events and their growth to adulthood.

Additional Scoutmaster responsibilities include:

- Ensure an emotional, spiritual and physically safe environment for all scout activities
- Lead, coach and encourage the assistant scoutmasters
- Mentoring the scout leadership
- Provide an environment to support the concept of a boy-led Troop
- Hold Scoutmaster conferences with scouts as part of advancement
- Periodically communicate with parents on Troop activities
- Ensure Troop holds periodic elections for scout leadership positions

- Determine if scouts are ready to begin merit badge work and sign “Blue Cards” *after being properly filled out by scouts and prior to the scout starting any work on the specific merit badge*
- In coordination with the Troop Training Coordinator, ensure that adults attending outings are properly trained for any work they do with the troop

Troop Committee

The Troop Committee provides support to enable the Scoutmaster to deliver the scouting program to the boys. It is the policy-making body that has ultimate responsibility for the performance and welfare of the Troop. Its members consist of interested parents and friends of the troop who have registered with the Boy Scouts of America. The Committee Chairman manages the Troop Committee and chairs all Committee meetings. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate. The Scoutmaster, his Assistants, and a representative of our chartering organization, The Church of the Epiphany, also attend.

Troop Meetings

Troop meetings are held Tuesday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at The Church of the Epiphany. Parents should make sure that they deliver their scouts no later than 7:00 p.m. so that the meeting can begin on time! From 7:00 to 8:30 will be devoted strictly to troop business, training, and patrol meetings. As a reminder, the Tuesday following weekend outings is normally for PLC. Every attempt is made to end the formal portion of the meeting promptly at 8:30 PM. Scouts **MUST** be picked up at approximately 8:30 or remain in the Troop Room. The Scoutmaster (or his designated representative) and another assigned adult will not leave the Church until all the boys have been picked up. Being late is an inconvenience to the Scoutmaster and the assigned adult who must stay until the last parent arrives. Please be on time!

Scouts are expected to attend weekly troop meetings. As in sports, a boy must attend the practices to play in the games and to improve. Similarly in scouting, a boy must attend the meetings to be eligible to go on the monthly outings and to advance. Advancement opportunities and skill training occur at meetings and outings. Missed meetings means lack of advancement -- the scout will lag behind other boys. Meeting attendance has a direct relationship not only to advancement, but also to how well the scout handles camping and gets along with other scouts. Attendance will be taken regularly. The Scoutmaster acknowledges that from time to time, a sport commitment may conflict with regularly scheduled troop meetings. If a scout is unable to make several consecutive meetings, he should talk with the Scoutmaster ahead of time.

Outings

Prior to the beginning of a new scout year the PLC, with support from the Scoutmaster, plans the annual calendar. This annual plan is presented to the Committee for approval and budgeting. An ASM or other adult leader, with the assistance of a boy representative, takes responsibility for coordination of the program for each activity. The SPL is the scout leader on the outing. If the SPL or his ASPL cannot attend a meeting or an outing then the Scoutmaster may assign a scout to be acting SPL for that event.

Parents are always welcome to attend outings. However, parents are expected to help out with the program as requested by the Scoutmaster. Parents going on an outing should always attend the meeting before or make arrangements directly with Scoutmaster. Parents attending an outing are assigned as a patrol member of an Adult Leader Patrol. They will be expected to function within that patrol for all meal planning, preparation, clean-up and other patrol duties. The adult patrol will function using the BSA Patrol Method. The Scoutmaster or his designee functions as the patrol leader of the adult patrol. The Troop has a limited supply of tents and other gear for use by parents on outings on an "as requested" basis.

NOTE: Parents must be registered with BSA and complete appropriate training before working directly with the scouts.

Attendance at Outings

A firm commitment to attend an outing is expected to be made at the meeting two weeks before an outing (longer for special outings such as Camporees, skiing, and Summer

Camps) or as designated by the Trip Coordinator. Planning for food and transportation depends upon the scouts (and parents) responsibility to make a firm commitment at this time

The individual patrols plan, purchase, and carry food for all outings. The food cost is generally about \$20.00 per scout per outing (usually 4 meals per outing). Other costs may be added by the Trip Coordinator, including the cost of propane or other fuels. Each patrol assigns a scout the responsibility for purchasing, properly packing and delivering the food to the departure location for the outing.

A Scout who changes his mind has the responsibility to notify his Patrol Leader of the change. The Patrol Leader will inform the Scoutmaster. If food, event costs, reservations or other items have been purchased prior to this notification, the Scout must pay his share of the cost regardless of his attendance on the outing.

Individuals who are interested in Scouting but not registered with Troop 1257 may attend troop outings with prior approval of the Scoutmaster.

Personal Equipment that Is Discouraged

Walkman players, radios, tape players, electronic games, cellular phones, and beepers are disruptive and annoy others not possessing them. Scouts may only use these items during travel to and from outings (with the driver's permission) and they must be left in automobiles during the remainder of the outing. These devices are not allowed at meetings. Parents who attend outings and meetings are also expected to support this policy.

Because it is not possible to adequately list all items that are not allowed and / or inappropriate on scouting events it will be left to the discretion of the Scoutmaster as to the appropriateness of items brought by scouts or adults on scouting events. All items deemed inappropriate by the Scoutmaster will be confiscated for the duration of the event.

There will be no alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs permitted in the troop meetings or any Troop activities by scouts or adults at any time. Scouts are not allowed to have or use tobacco products at any time. While discouraged, smoking by adults will be allowed only if out of sight of all scouts.

Medical Emergency

A medical release form and medical history form signed by parents are required for each Scout. A Medical Records Coordinator will keep forms and ensure adult leaders are aware of any conditions that might affect the scout's ability to enjoy his scouting experience. Therefore, it is extremely important that parents fill out the forms completely and include any medication taken by the scouts. Also, ensure symptoms or warning sign of onset to the scout's condition are described on the forms. Parents concerned about medical information should speak personally with the Scoutmaster and Medical Records Coordinator. In a medical emergency, this release form authorizes the Scoutmaster to obtain emergency medical service and treatment including hospitalization.

Upon registration with the Council, all registered youths and adult leaders are automatically covered by supplemental accident insurance during approved and supervised program activities. Please keep in mind that it is not the purpose of this coverage to replace or diminish the need for family health insurance. Rather, its purpose is to provide assurance that financial help is available to help meet emergency medical expenses should an injury occur during a scouting activity. Any other medical care and insurance is the responsibility of the parents or guardian, regardless of the cause of the accident or injury.

Advancement

The scout, his parents, adult leaders, and the Scoutmaster are all responsible for his advancement— it's a team effort. However, even though the troop and the adult leaders endeavor to provide a multitude of advancement opportunities and encouragement it is the scout who is ultimately responsible for his own advancement.

The Scoutmaster (SM) and the Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) are responsible to ensure that a scout has mastered a given skill and satisfied a given rank requirement prior to a Board of Review. These leaders may delegate the testing and approval responsibility to another qualified scout or adult leader. The Scoutmaster will personally conduct all Scoutmaster conferences for Star, Life, and Eagle to ensure that scout spirit requirements are consistently met for advancement. The SM may delegate to an ASM the conduct advancement conferences for ranks up to and including First Class. The Troop will follow all BSA advancement requirements as published in the current edition of the Boy Scout Requirements.

Service Projects

Service projects are required for some scout ranks. All service projects must be approved by the Scoutmaster. We have had situations where scouts have requested service hours for serving at church functions or during church services (e.g., acolytes) and for school service hours as required now by many schools in the Fairfax County. It is our desire that the scouts will develop the understanding and ideal that being a citizen of a community, member of a school, church or synagogue or other organization involves participation and giving of oneself for the good of others and the organization. In addition, their service to those organizations should be offered without the expectation of a payment or reward, such as achieving a scout rank.

Board of Review

A Board of Review is an interview of a Scout who has met the requirements for rank advancement. This interview covers the Scout's progress and objectives. The Board of Review must be conducted by at least 3 Troop Committee members. Boards of Review are not for the purpose of retesting of requirements. The Scoutmaster, or his designee, has already checked on the scout's knowledge during the Scoutmaster Conference that is a prerequisite to the Board of Review. A Scout must have a completely signed Handbook, be prepared to recite the Scout Oath and Promise from memory, and be in full Class A uniform for a Board of Review.

Merit Badges

Merit Badges are subject specific skill, knowledge and learning achievements. MBs are required for rank advancement to Star, Life and Eagle ranks, A scout may start working on merit badges after he has achieved the rank of Scout. The Scoutmaster or his designee will be the first to sign the merit badge "Blue Cards." *This must be accomplished prior to the scout beginning work on the merit badge.*

Court of Honor

The Court of Honor is a ceremony that recognizes rank advancement, merit badges, and other awards earned. Parents are also recognized with a rank pin to be pinned on a special "Proud Parent" ribbon as a Troop tradition. Court of Honor ceremonies are held at regular Troop meeting times as well as during some campouts and at family picnics. All parents are requested to attend the Courts of Honor in order to make them a special event for all scouts. Additionally, each time a scout obtains the rank of Eagle, an individual Eagle Court of Honor may be held. The date, time, and location for these are the decision of the Eagle candidate and his parents. All Troop members are expected to attend Eagle Courts of Honor as well to show support for a fellow troop member in obtaining the highest rank in scouting. Note: it is the policy of Troop 1257 to award scout rank, MBs and other achievements at the next Troop Meeting following completion of the achievement.

Scout Uniform

A scout is expected to have a field uniform as defined by the following items:

- Official Scout Shirt with red epaulets, Troop 1257 numerals, and National Capital Area shoulder patch
- Official Scout pants or shorts
- A Scout Belt (may be the standard scout belt or a leather one from the various camps.)
- Official Scout socks
- A Troop neckerchief
- A hat is optional, but if worn, must be a scout hat.

Activity Uniform

An activity uniform (sometimes called Class B) is appropriate for many outings and especially summer activities. The activity uniform substitutes a troop or Boy Scout T-shirt for the tan shirt of the field uniform. The appropriate uniform will be specified for each troop activity.

Handbooks

The individual Scout handbooks are required at all meetings and outings. The Boy Scout Handbook is an important reference for all scouting activities. Advancement requirements are signed off and dated directly in this book. The scout's Handbook is the official record of his advancement. Don't lose it!

Equipment

In addition to their personal camping effects, there are three (3) important pieces of equipment scouts are expected to provide:

Sleeping Bag-- A sleeping bag rated for 20 degrees is recommended. In addition the sleeping bag should be placed in a waterproof "Stuff Sack".

Boots-- Troop 1257 participates in high adventure activities including caving, rappelling, and backpacking. A pair of above-the-ankle boots, which provide ankle support and protect the foot, is highly recommended. Tennis shoes generally do not offer the type of protection needed for these types of outdoor activities. An inexpensive pair of leather work boots is suitable.

Raingear-- A poncho or rain suit is an absolute necessity! The thin plastic type tends to get torn to pieces the first time they are worn in the woods. However, a heavier gauge vinyl plastic poncho will be acceptable. Refer to the Boy Scout Handbook for personal equipment checklists.

Troop Provided Camping equipment

The following patrol equipment is provided:

- Propane stove
- Propane lantern
- Group cooking pots & utensils
- Tents
- Dining tarp and poles
- Saws & axes
- Dutch ovens

Prohibited Equipment

These items are prohibited on Troop 1257 outings or activities:

- Sheath knives
- Folding knives with blades over 4" long
- Sandals and other open toe shoes at the discretion of the Scoutmaster depending on activity
- Fireworks or other pyrotechnics
- Any kind of firearm including air rifles or pistols
- Other items deemed inappropriate or hazardous by the Scoutmaster.

Registration Fees & Finances

Each Scout must pay a yearly cost (currently \$100), due during the fall, which includes the following:

- Troop Program Fee to cover activities, advancement patches, and other Troop program costs

- National Registration Fee, which goes to the National BSA organization
- Boy's Life Subscription cost. Troop 1257 is a 100% Boys' Life Troop.

All adult registration fees are paid from the troop treasury. Parents should contact the Troop Committee Chairman in cases of financial hardships. Note: the registration fees and dues for a new scout joining in the spring of a calendar year is half of the annual fee.

Fund Raisers

The Program Fee covers only part of the yearly cost of running the Troop. Every Scout and family is expected to participate in troop fund raising activities. To raise money, we usually have a mulch sale in the early spring and popcorn sales in the fall. The Troop Committee and / or fund raising chairman will set a minimum sales and participation goal for each scout and family.

The Troop pays for most general camping and campground entrance fees. Occasionally, trips (e.g., skiing) require an advanced reservation deposit and the troop needs to charge a non-refundable deposit to discourage cancellations and avoid non recoverable costs to the Troop. The Troop will subsidize certain special outing events as determined by the Troop Committee to be financially prudent. District Camporee fees and meals will be paid for by those attending. All awards earned by scouts such as rank patches and merit badges will be paid for by the Troop. The Troop will purchase and maintain all Troop equipment. All Adults and Scouts authorized in advance to spend Troop money will provide the Treasurer with an accounting of expenditures to maintain integrity of accounting.

The Troop will normally reimburse all youth and leader training fees.

Scout Behavior

Scouts are expected to behave according to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, are required to be respectful of other scouts, adult leaders and other people, and project a good Scout image at all times. Hazing, taunting, bullying, ganging or injuring another scout or any behavior that can affect the safety of others is automatic grounds for disciplinary action. Any scout who provokes or outrages another scout to the point of the behavior previously described will be disciplined as well. Other inappropriate behavior that violates the Scout Oath and Scout Law will not be tolerated. Any offending Troop member is subject to disciplinary action as described below.

Sending home from Scout meeting or Scouting event, including monthly outings --

Scouts who do not behave may be sent home, regardless of where we are or the hour of the day or night. Parents will be called to pick up their Scouts and are required to immediately pick up scouts whenever called.

Further disciplinary actions may include Restriction from Activities, Removal from Positions of Leadership, or Removal from the Troop

All disciplinary action will also require a Scoutmaster conference with the offending scout and his parents.