

Troop 444 New Parent Guide



Version: 4/16/2015

Welcome to Troop 444

Our Troop is 25 years old and we have produced a number of Eagle Scouts over the years. We do this by making the Troop fun and a supportive place for advancement. The work must come from your son; all we can do is provide the opportunity. For those of us who have experienced Scouts from Tiger to Eagle, the value of this program cannot be expressed in words.

Boy Scouts turn young boys into special, confident young men. Boy Scouts is an organization where anyone can excel in his own way. We have come to recognize that when you first join an organization there is a lot of information you need to know as soon as you start. This pamphlet was created as a quick reference guide to information you want to know now. It addresses such issues as parent participation, uniform requirements, equipment, advancement, and dues.

As parents of current and past Scouts, we have come to see the importance of parent participation in your Scout's experience. The journey is filled with adventure and learning. Shared with other adults in the Troop, it can be one of the most treasured experiences you will have.

The Difference Between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts

Cub Scouts:

Come in as a boy, leave as a boy.

Parent led.

Involves supervised activities.

Boy Scouts:

Come in as a boy, leave as a young man.

Scout led, parent advised.

Involves activities requiring greater degrees of self-supervision.

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

At Troop 444, the Scouts plan and decide on the program, run the meetings, manage the equipment, plan and execute the trips, and learn leadership skills to advance.

Your Role as a Scouting Parent: Stay Informed

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

- * Meet and converse with other parents and leaders;
- * Attend the monthly (during the school year) parent meeting; see troop calendar for parent meeting dates. Usually same night as Courts of Honor.
- * Read our web site: www.troop444.rocks
- * Join the Troop's Facebook Group- Vilonia BSA Troop 444
- * Make sure you are on the email (Google Groups) distribution list; email viloniatroop444@gmail.com to request and Groups invitation.
- * Consider joining the Troop Committee, becoming a merit badge counselor, and attending events. Without parental involvement, our Troop will fail.

Your son will, at times, have specific responsibilities to the Troop and his Patrol. He may be a Patrol Leader or hold some other leadership position. He may also have an assignment for a trip (food, equipment, etc.). As a parent, be aware and encourage their leadership.

When your son joins the Troop we provide: Handbook, neckerchief and slide.

What you need to buy:

- Boy Scout Class A Uniform. This consists of the following items from the Scout Shop at Quapaw Area Council store at:
3220 Cantrell Road, Little Rock, AR 72202

Scout shirt(tan color):

The uniform shirt includes the US flag and has "Boy Scouts of America" embroidered (older shirts and dress shirts) or decaled (newer shirts) over the right-hand breast pocket. Scouts need to purchase shoulder loops(Scout green), Troop numerals—444, the universal Scout symbol (purple and white knot), and the Quapaw Area Council shoulder patch.The Troop

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

provides rank insignia for the left-hand breast pocket and leadership position patches. If Scouts are trained, they receive the "Trained" patch at training and wear it only while they hold the position they were trained for. The Class A also requires a neckerchief, which is supplied free when your son joins the Troop.

* Class B T-shirt–Are available for \$10.

Scout pants/shorts and socks are optional, but recommended.

• *Camping in winter and summer–safety requires the right equipment!*

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

* The correct equipment–Review the Boy Scout Handbook and ask for a list from your son who can get one from the Senior Patrol Leader ("SPL") or his assistants. In addition, we have a required equipment list on our web site. Troop leadership checks equipment when safety is involved, such as for winter campouts, bicycle trips, etc. We will do "pack checks" often the week before an outing if it a potentially challenging event such as an Backpacking trip. Please review the Pack Check List under Resources for a complete list of required equipment. The Troop has extensive equipment such as tents and stoves, so what your Scout will need will be his personal gear, food, etc.

* The right training–The Troop leadership may place training or advancement requirements as a prerequisite for deciding which Scouts may attend an activity. Getting the required training is usually part of advancing through the ranks. Examples are winter camping prior to the Winter outing or the Canoe merit badge prior to 50-mile canoe trips. Generally, we require the First Class rank or above to attend the 50-miler summer outings.

* Scout Spirit–This becomes a very real issue when dealing with a large group of young boys. Showing good Scout Spirit will make an outdoor experience fun, enjoyable, and exciting for everyone!

The Troop Quartermaster is also a source of equipment such as tents, stoves, tarps, and other equipment. Scouts are responsible for treating this equipment with respect, cleaning it before it is returned, and indicating any damage that may have occurred.

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

Meetings: When to Attend

Troop meetings typically occur every Monday evening from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. We meet at the Vilonia United Methodist Church in the upstairs Teen room. The dates and location are on the Troop calendar posted on the Troop's website. We usually do not have a formal meeting the following Monday after an overnight weekend outing, but have a gear cleaning night and offer an optional Advancement Night . Class A uniforms are to be worn at the meetings.

Courts of Honor are special meetings where the Scouts are recognized for their achievements. It is very important for Scouts and parents to attend these as a sign of respect for the Scouts' hard work. For this reason, Class A uniforms are mandatory. Courts of Honor are held two times a year, typically in May and September.

Advancement: Badges of Honor

The Troop Guide plays an active role in helping your Scout earn the early ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. We generally have one assistant Scoutmaster focused on the early ranks. We plan activities on weekends and at summer camp that helps him attain these ranks, typically within the first couple years.

After the requirements for a rank are attained, the Scout asks the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. After a successful Scoutmaster Conference the Scout asks the Advancement Chairman (see roster) for a Board of Review. After a successful Board of Review, the Scout will have earned the rank they interviewed for.

The approach changes after First Class. The ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle require a Scout to be more self-motivated to earn merit badges, participate in service projects and show leadership skills. A Scout may elect to independently pursue merit badges, or to take advantage of opportunities announced for group classes. Be advised attendance is not sufficient to attain a merit badge. There is often individual work involved outside of Troop meetings.

A list of counselors is available from the Scoutmaster or Advancement Chairperson. The Scout will need a merit badge booklet to learn the requirements for the badge. The merit

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

badge pamphlets are available at the scout store or may be available in the troop library (scout closet). We also advise new parents to be very aware of what we call the "Blue Card." It is the often-irreplaceable proof of accomplishment required for receiving the badge, and is to be obtained from and signed by the Scoutmaster before beginning work. A Scout may not work on a badge alone with a counselor, but must find a buddy. A parent cannot sign his/her son's Blue Card unless part of a group. It is very helpful to create a Scout loose-leaf or 3-ring binder and keep all the paperwork in one place, including a meeting and outing(overnight) attendance record (needed for rank advancement).

Troop 444 also supports the Order of the Arrow, which is Boy Scouts' honor organization. To be eligible, Scouts must meet specific camping and rank requirements, and must have the approval of the Scoutmaster. Troop members vote for eligible Scouts, and those who are elected go on to participate in the OA's initiation. Generally, Scouts are in their third year before OA is a possibility.

Troop Dues: Money and Responsibility

The Troop does charge dues. This is usually a \$1.00 at each meeting. This is to make a scout learn to be thrifty, so they use their money wisely.

Monies collected from time to time include summer camps (a week costs 275 +/-), food, and other expenses for trips your Scout elects to attend. Scouts and parents are required to participate in the annual Troop fundraiser's. If families, due to economic hardship, cannot afford camp or any other Scout activity, please discuss this with the Troop Committee Chair or the Scoutmaster. We usually have enough funds to scholarship your child to any Troop activity.

Conduct: Keeping Things Safe and Enjoyable

Troop leadership makes every effort to balance Scout-led activities and safety. Our Bylaws outline our policies in this regard. Our leaders must be registered with the BSA with background checks and training for the Youth Protection–YPT (on-line training is available at www.MyScouting.org). Before every outing we will collect a signed Permission Slip–available under Resources on the troop web site. If your scout does not have a signed Permission Slip at the departure for an outing we are not allowed to let them attend.

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

Permission Slips outline any additional requirements, and allow parents to indicate emergency phone numbers and authorize emergency procedures. A BSA Medical Form is required annually. This form is available on the troop web site under Resources in fillable PDF format for annual updating. We will need parts A&B to attend any outing. We will need Part C with a doctor's signature for week-long (summer camp) and high adventure outings. We also require health insurance information.

Outings:

We try to have one outing a month during the school year. These outings are planned and organized by the PLC and adult leaders. Usually these will be an overnight, but may be both a Friday and Saturday for events called Camporees, which are group camps with other Troops. In December we typically do a winter hike. March is often the month for our District Spring Camporee, where we compete with other Troops in Scouting events.

Summer months are a busy time for Troop 444. Troop 444 reserves a week at a Summer Camp that is picked by the PLC. This Scout Camp is a fantastic experience in a world-class setting. Younger scouts get an opportunity to work on skills and advancement and older scouts get to work on Merit Badges. There is also troop time where they get to do fun events from pier jumping to canoe swamping. Scouts should make every effort to attend this week of camp.

Every two years, we will try to have a high adventure trek for Scouts older than 15, usually to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. Other years, a 50-miler canoe trip or a trip to a National Park, like Vicksburg or Shiloh will be organized.

We know this is a lot of information to digest. Please feel free to ask any uniformed parent at the weekly scout meetings if you have a question. The Troop web site is also a great source of information. The Quapaw Area Council web site is a valuable resource as well.

Welcome to Troop 444, we look forward to many adventures with you and your son.

<http://www.troop444.rocks> and <http://www.quapawbsa.org>

We would like to thank Troop 600, Chief Seattle Council, for their help in making this guide.

Troop 444 New Parent Guide

You will find most of the Troop 444 information you need to know at our website including our Troop calendar, upcoming events, packing lists, permission slips, medical forms, etc. Please complete your son's Youth Application; READ the Troop 444 New Parent's Guide; Complete an Adult application, which allows you to participate on outings and complete Youth Protection Training (set-up account through www.MyScouting.org and take on-line training). Note: Youth Protection Training must be done before turning in a Adult application.

Troop 444 web site and Calendar: www.troop444.rocks

Quapaw Area Council web site: www.quapawbsa.org

Google Groups—for Troop Communications—Send request with your email to viloniatroop444@gmail.com

Meeting Time: Mondays at 7:00pm - 8:30pm
(Weekly: except for Monday legal holidays and the week of Scout Camp)

Meeting Location: Vilonia United Methodist Church
5 S Church St, Vilonia, AR
Teen Room (upstairs)