



**BOY SCOUT
TROOP 497**

**SCOUT
AND
PARENT
HANDBOOK**

A guide to scouting with Troop 497

Welcome !

We extend a warm welcome to both you and your son as new members of the Troop 497 family. This handbook was compiled and written to help you understand scouting in general and to inform you about how our troop operates. Your understanding of the troop's mission, procedures, and activities will enrich your own experience and will go a long way in ensuring a meaningful and productive experience for your son.

All of us at Troop 497

The New Scout

When a boy joins the troop, he chooses a patrol to join. Each patrol consists of six-to-eight boys led by a patrol leader (a scout). An adult from the troop is assigned to each patrol and functions as a parent contact for the patrol.

An older scout is assigned to each new scout as a "big brother" to help the new scout feel welcome and adjust to the troop and its activities.

With the assistance of the patrol leader and big brother, the new scout quickly makes friends and becomes familiar with scouting and the troop.

It is particularly important for new scouts to attend all regular troop meetings and as many camping trips as possible so that they quickly get a solid understanding of the breadth of the scouting experience and their own role in the troop.

The New Parent

We want our new parents to feel at home with the troop from the very beginning. In fellowship, we provide our sons with the best which scouting has to offer.

You are cordially invited to participate either as an adult leader or as an active parent. We welcome you and your ideas.

Many events are planned for the specific purpose of encouraging new parents to meet adult leaders and other parents in the troop. Please attend as many of these gatherings as you can.

A troop of the size of Troop 497 depends on active adults in a variety of leadership and support roles. It is the troop's expectation that every parent will assist in some way during the course of the scouting year. Elsewhere in this handbook appears a roster of volunteer roles which parents can fill to make our program successful for all its families.

The Patrol Leader

The scouts are organized into patrols consisting of up to eight boys of varying ages and school grades. Patrols are led by patrol leaders who are elected by the scouts in each patrol for a term of six months. Elections are typically held at the end of January and on the last day of Summer Camp (August).



The patrol leader is responsible for seeing that many things are done. The position of patrol leader, therefore, is a leadership opportunity for scouts holding the rank of first class or higher.

The Senior Patrol Leader

The Senior Patrol Leader is usually an older scout who holds the rank of Star or higher and who is elected by the scouts to serve a one-year term. The Senior Patrol Leader, with the assistance of the patrol leaders and members of the senior patrol, plans and leads all activities at the scout level. The scoutmaster and his assistant scoutmasters are advisors to the senior patrol leader. He is elected at the annual elections at the end of January.

Patrol Leaders' Council

The council consists of the senior patrol leader, members of the senior patrol, and the patrol leaders. The council meets monthly to plan upcoming troop meetings and camping trips as well as other troop activities. The scoutmaster and several assistant scoutmasters participate in the meetings. At present, the Patrol Leaders' Council meets on the fourth Thursday of each month. Seniors should arrive at 6 p.m. and patrol leaders at 6:30 p.m.

The Patrol Advisor

Each patrol has a patrol advisor who is a registered assistant scoutmaster trained to function as an effective adult leader. The patrol advisor does not run the patrol but serves as a resource person for the patrol leader and members of the patrol. The advisor consults with the scouts on any scouting topic. The patrol advisor also keeps parents of scouts in his patrol fully informed about what's going on, what activity deadlines are nearing, and what adult issues are under consideration.



Patrol Competition

Patrols compete against each other for the highest point score within an established time period. Points are awarded based on patrol members' attendance at troop meetings and camping trips; for patrols' winning in specific competitive events; and for other patrol accomplishments. The winning patrol receives a prize which is established and announced in advance of each competition. Past prizes have included a trip to King's Dominion and a troop-subsidized ski trip.

Troop meetings

The troop meets each Thursday (except during August) from 7:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room at St. Joseph's School in Cockeysville.

Troop meetings concentrate on skill development, patrol involvement, competition, games, and fun. The Patrol Leaders' Council plans each meeting around a specific theme. One patrol arrives 20 minutes early for set-up and remains after meeting adjournment for clean-up.

At 7:45 p.m., a brief and informal adult information meeting is occasionally held to discuss upcoming events and other matters. This short gathering provides parents with an opportunity to ask questions or obtain clarifications about troop activities and issues. Everyone is welcome at this information meeting.

Scout uniform

The uniform identifies each scout and adult leader as a member of the world's largest youth group -- just as a baseball uniform identifies members of a baseball team. The uniform is both practical attire to be worn during selected scout activities, and it provides a vehicle for the display of badges and awards earned by scouts.

Each scout is required to have a complete "class A" uniform and to wear it during troop meetings, while travelling to and from camping sites, and on other occasions.

Purchase of Uniforms and Equipment

Uniforms. The troop maintains a uniform bank. Before you purchase a new uniform, first take a look at the uniforms here to see if there's a fit. You may be able to purchase shirts, pants, or shorts at significant savings. If you prefer a new uniform, they're available at Scout Shop at the Baltimore Council scout headquarters or online at scoutstuff.org.



The Scout Shop is located at:

Address: 701 Wyman Park Drive,
Baltimore, MD 21211-2899

Hours: Mon. Tues. Wed. Fri. 10 am - 6 pm
Thurs. 10 am - 7 pm, Sat. 10 am - 4 pm

Telephone: (410) 338-0144 (phone orders welcome!)

Payment: cash, check, MasterCard, Visa

Neckerchiefs and troop hats are provided to all scouts by the troop and are given soon after a new scout joins the troop.

Equipment. Please consult one of the adult leaders before purchasing camping equipment such as sleeping bags. We can advise you about the type of equipment you'll need and other features to look for in camping gear. Likewise, we may be able to give you information on where to get the best price.

Troop committee

The troop is directed by the troop committee which consists of all registered adult leaders. All parents are encouraged to attend committee meetings which are held on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m. in the parish center.

Troop Webpage www.troop497.org

The troop webpage is a great source for up-to-date information regarding troop activities. It contains pictures of recent trips, important scouting forms, troop history, and many other areas for your use.

Troop emails and twitter

The troop sends out emails periodically with announcements especially before important events or events that occur with little advanced notice. During summer camps and for very last minute updates, e.g., a weather cancellation, the troop will send out a notice via twitter.

Troop Roster

The troop maintains a roster of scouts and adult leaders that includes their contact information. The roster is used as the email list so make sure your information is current (swe the troop web site. It is distributed in pdf format via email several times throughout the year.

Outdoor Activities

Troop 497 spends a weekend at a camping site once each month from September through June. Trips usually begin at 6 p.m. on Friday and *always* conclude at 2 p.m. on Sunday. The destination of each trip, the cost to scouts, suggested clothing/equipment, and other useful information are all announced well in advance. Scouts are required to register for each trip and pay any fees ahead of time. If a scout commits to a trip and any costs are expended based upon that commitment, the scout is responsible for paying those costs whether he attends the event or not.



In addition to weekend camping trips, a number of day trips are scheduled during the year.

Transportation for Camping Trips

Each Troop 497 family is expected to drive on two short trips (or one long trip) per year. Sign-ups are taken on a first-come-first-served basis at the annual parents meeting in September. Your cooperation in this regard allows the troop to provide safe and economical travel to and from its destinations.

The troop provides drivers with detailed instructions which are posted on the web site and distributed before each trip to assist drivers in locating the camps.

Sign-up for drivers for trips during the scout year is conducted each fall. It is expected that once a family volunteers to drive on a particular trip, the family will honor that commitment.

Summer Camp

Our annual summer camp is a fun-filled activity planned for a seven-to-10-day period -- annually during late July/early August.

In past years, the troop has traveled to distant points such as Maine, Washington, Wyoming, North Carolina, Canada, and New Hampshire. The trip to and from the camp includes stops at places of interest, amusement parks, museums, and other attractions. The cost of the summer trip is modest and is partially defrayed by proceeds of fundraising events.

It is strongly recommended that every scout attend summer camp. *It is the single most important activity of the scout year.*

Active Scout Awards

Two awards are given each year to scouts who have been very active with the program. Perfect Attendance Awards are given each February to scouts who attend every meeting during the year. The 497 Campers award is given each October to those scouts who attend 75% of the nights spent camping during the year and attend summer camp.

Cost of scouting

When a new scout joins the troop, he pays a fee (currently \$50) to cover the cost of the troop neckerchief and hat which he will receive, the first year registration fees, and a one-year subscription to Boy's Life magazine. This is a one-time fee for each new (or transferring) scout. Subsequent years' registration fees are paid by the troop using money collected through various fund-raising efforts.

Dues are \$36 a year and are used to pay costs associated with the troop's purchase of merit badges and badges of rank. Each scout is expected to pay this cost out of his own funds. Dues accumulate every week regardless of meetings or attendance.

A fee is charged for every camping trip as well as for summer camp. The troop subsidizes the cost of scouts' attendance at these camps through a year 'round program of fundraising events and activities.

Fundraising

Scouting is made affordable through the troop's fundraising efforts. The cost of camping trips as well as summer camp is partially paid by the troop from its fundraising proceeds. Likewise, the cost of each year's registration fees and Boys Life subscriptions is paid in full by fundraising proceeds.

The troop has purchased all necessary troop equipment such as tents, tarps, stoves, and lanterns. Again, fundraising efforts make this possible.

Fundraising requires scout and parent support -- and participation. The troop relies on four fundraisers each year.

- Parent Club Bull Roast (November)
- Pancake Breakfast (February)
- Car Wash-A-Thon (June)

For some of the fundraisers, money is "credited" to each family in proportion to the amount raised by the family. We expect each family to support the fundraising efforts of the troop since the funds support all members through subsidies and troop operation expenses.

Campership Fund

Troop 497 has a policy that any scout who wishes to participate in a camping trip will not be denied that opportunity based on financial status. On a strictly confidential basis, the troop will provide financial assistance from its Campership fund to any scout in need of such help. Scouts or their parents should speak directly to the scoutmaster about such assistance.

Court of Honor

The court of honor ceremony is held three times per year to officially recognize and present to each scout the badges or ranks he has earned. All troop families are invited to attend the ceremony -- and, in fact, excellent adult attendance goes a long way in making these events special for the scouts. At least



once yearly, the court of honor ceremony is held in conjunction with an outdoor campfire conditions permitting. A family dinner is featured for the February/March ceremony.

Service projects

To earn certain badges of rank, a scout is required to work on or perform a service project. If your son is working on such a project, please know that it has been reviewed and approved in advance by the troop committee after a thorough investigation. It is a policy of the troop that service projects receive appropriate supervision.

Scouts undertaking service projects typically recruit help from their fellow scouts who can use their participation in many cases to earn patrol points

Merit badge counseling

When a scout wishes to earn a merit badge, he must first meet with an adult counselor. Counselors are recruited and identified for each badge offered by the Boy Scouts. The troop maintains a directory of these adults. In no case shall a scout meet with a merit badge counselor alone. Each scout should have buddy or parent with him, or should meet in a public place.

The requirements for each of the over 100 badges available are contained in a merit badge booklet bearing the badge title. These booklets may be borrowed at branches of the Baltimore County Public Library or purchased at the Scout Shop at scout

headquarters. The troop also maintains a library of merit badge booklets which scouts may borrow.

Safety

Troop 497 adult leaders have been trained and are experienced in providing a safe environment for all activities. Special care is always taken to ensure the safety of everyone. The troop also pays for each assistant scoutmaster to have a federal and state criminal background check completed. This is done both for the safety of the boys, parents, and leaders.

Medical Forms / Accident Insurance

When you join Troop 497, you are asked to sign a form authorizing our adult leaders to obtain medical treatment for injuries. Before summer camp, forms are provided for medical exams so that we know in advance about any physical restrictions. Scouts and their parents are expected to respond promptly to troop requests for such exams.

The troop maintains an accident insurance policy which covers the cost of any medical bills not covered by any other insurance.

Annual Parent's Meeting

In September of each year, the troop holds a mandatory annual parent's meeting. One parent from each family is expected to attend. At this meeting, the annual troop program is presented, a discussion of the past year is held, and a presentation regarding the troop is made.

Any issues, concerns, or questions can be brought forward at this meeting and discussed.

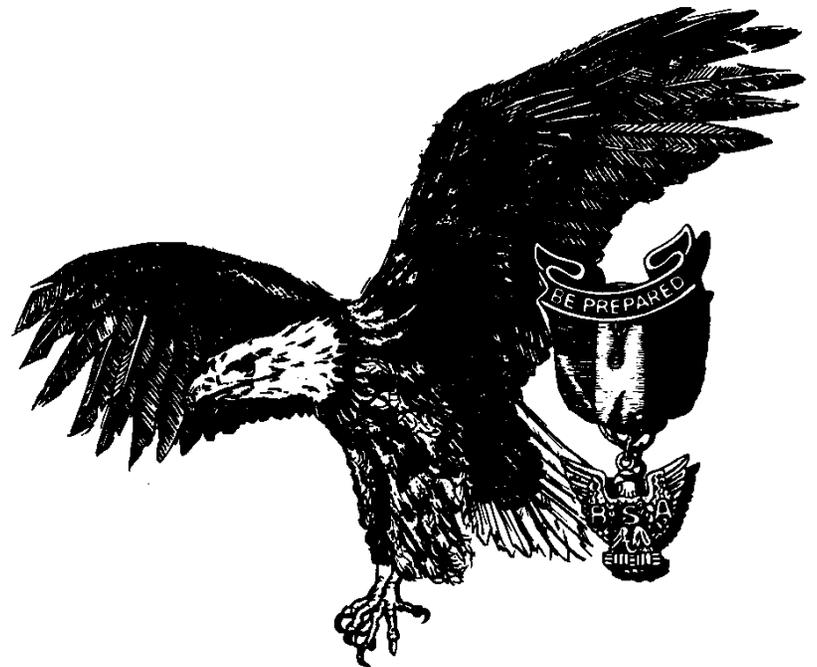
Some final remarks

Now that you know a little about us, please ask us questions to learn even more! Any adult in uniform or seated at the tables in the back of the troop meetings will be happy to answer your questions.

Please keep this handbook in a safe place in your home so that you can consult it whenever you have a question -- but, in all cases, if you need information,

please ask!

Troop 497



**Recommended Camping Equipment List
And Guidelines**

Year 'round

complete uniform	mess kit [knife, fork, spoon, cup, plate, bowl]
pants	
shirts	air mattress or pad
underwear	canteen
sweater or sweatshirt	flashlight [extra battery and bulb]
windbreaker jacket	
socks	toilet articles [soap, toothbrush, etc.]
daily clothing	
raingear	watch
shoes	handbook
sneakers	notebook, pencil
handkerchiefs	matches (waterproof)
compass	sleeping bag

Fall/Winter/Spring additions to above

insulated underwear	hat
coat/parka	boots
gloves	blanket

Spring/Summer/Fall additions to above

summer sleeping bag

Winter additions to above

winter sleeping bag	wool hat
scarf	wool socks
mittens	

Summer additions to above

Shorts	swim trunks
towel	

Optional Equipment List/Guidelines

Year 'round

Pillow	camera [flash]
Sunglasses	Fieldbook
play balls	day pack
cards	Bible/prayer book
fishing gear/license	binoculars
bottle/can opener	Chapstick
shoe- or bootlaces	wallet/money

Spring/Summer/Fall additions to above

Ballglove	suntan lotion
insect repellent	