

BSA Troop 635

Family Handbook

2024

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Troop 635 Family Handbook

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I. Statement of Philosophy – The Aims and Methods of Scouting

Welcome to Troop 635! The purpose of this troop handbook is to familiarize scouts and their parents with what the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and Troop 635 are all about. BSA's program for youth ages 11-17 is called Scouts BSA.

Troop 635 has been in existence since Scouts BSA accepted girls in 2019. We are the first (and still only) girl troop in Baltimore City. Our Troop's mission is to develop young women of character and leadership through Scouting. We think that we run a fun and exciting program. If a program is not fun, it will fail. As you will learn, however, there is much more than fun involved in Scouting!

The philosophy of Troop 635 is to provide an outdoor program in which youth can have fun and adventure in a safe, natural, and wholesome environment. While the outdoors is the focus of our program and the BSA Scout experience in general, our scouts also learn valuable life and leadership skills. Our troop focuses on learning skills that will last a lifetime. The outdoors is a place where scouts can learn much about living with others, facing real life challenges and learning to solve real problems. The program of the BSA Scouts is unique among youth organizations in its focus on the "Outdoor Experience".

You will hear about the Scout Oath and the Scout Law and they are printed on the back of every Scout Book. The Scout Oath and Law reflect BSA's values and moral code, and instill the values of good conduct, respect for others and honesty.

The principal aims of the BSA Scouts are to provide a program, which **builds character, fosters citizenship, and develops fitness in both mind and body**. All our activities and training should support one or more of these aims.

- What is character? It is hard to define. It is a moral and ethical quality. It is honesty, courage, and integrity. It includes the four "self" qualities: self-reliance, self-discipline, self-confidence, and self-respect.
- What is citizenship? It is defined as, "behavior in terms of the duties, obligations, privileges and functions of a citizen." It is the quality of an individual's response to membership in a community. Citizenship is about love of country and community. It is understanding government, democracy and our heritage and history.
- What is fitness? The Scouting program strives to develop physical, mental, emotional, and moral fitness in youth, and many aspects of the program focus on this aim. Each scout swears or affirms to the scout oath and lives by the scout law of conduct, which pertains to these aims of Scouting. They promise to do their duty. Currently, what parent could not agree that these are some of the most important principles a young person could be exposed to?

There are several methods that the Scouting program utilizes to achieve the aims of scouting. These methods are tried and true and will be discussed in this handbook. The methods include Scouting Ideals, the Patrol Method, the Outdoor Program,

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Advancement, Personal Growth, Adult Association, Leadership Development, and the Scout Uniform.

So, for any who may have thought that Scouting is only good-hearted adults taking a bunch of kids on a hike or out camping, welcome to the real world of scouting!

Scouting is an organized, national, and worldwide program that strives in many ways to help youth grow up right. It is a fun and important program to which Troop 635 Adult Leaders are deeply dedicated. As a parent, what can you do to help? If you have any special talents or interests, share them with us. Pick up your scout's BSA Scout Handbook and look it over. You'll be amazed and very pleased with what it contains. Encourage your scout to read and study their handbook. You'll be doing them a great service.

Probably the most important philosophy of Troop 635 is the concept of "The Scout Led Troop." Our troop is organized so that the scouts do the work of running the troop. Youth learn by doing. Scouting recognizes the advantages of learning by making mistakes, practicing skills, and eventually being successful. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting said, "Give a scout a job, and then let him do it!" This is great advice for parents and leaders alike. In Troop 635, we give a scout the means, the training, and the knowledge and then we let them do the job. This handbook explains how the scouts run the troop.

It takes a lot of work by the adult leaders, the Troop Committee, and all the dedicated parents and guardians, to plan, supervise and provide mentorship to the scouts who run 635's program.

PARENTS! We ask you to get as involved as you can in your youth's scouting experience. Behind every successful scout is an interested and participating parent. **Every scout from Troop 635 should have at least one parent active in some capacity in the Troop.** We hope that someday, you may know the pride of seeing the Eagle Scout Award pinned to your scout's chest.

To that end, parental involvement includes more than getting your scout to and from meetings. Successful scout families both have the information needed, but also work together to manage school, extracurricular activities, family obligations and scouting. This often means supporting your scout with learning time management and prioritization of commitments.

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BSA Organization

BSA is a national organization with more than 2.4 million youth participants and nearly one million adult volunteers. BSA is divided into regions, areas and local councils. Our local council is Baltimore Area Council (“BAC”) (#220), and its headquarters is at 701 Wyman Park Drive in Baltimore. BAC owns and operates Broad Creek Scout Reservation in Whiteford, MD. Broad Creek has two camps currently operated by the BSA, Camp Oest, and Camp Saffran. The BAC is an independent not-for-profit entity responsible for delivery of the Scouting program to youth in Baltimore City and Baltimore, Harford, Carroll, Howard and Anne Arundel Counties.

The BAC has 7 districts and our district, the Fort McHenry District, includes all of Baltimore City. There are over 450 youth from ages 5 to 17 in 28 units in Baltimore City, but there is a lot of potential for scouting in Baltimore! The BAC grants annual charters to all of their units and helps unit leaders with policy questions and advice for running programs.

Each Scouting Unit, including Troop 635, must have a Chartered Organization. Our Chartered Organization is the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, located at 5603 North Charles Street. Our Troop is part of the Church, and all of our assets technically belong to Redeemer. Redeemer has chartered Troop 35 since the 1930s and over 400 boys have become Troop 35 Eagle Scouts since their founding.

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The troop was initially chartered from May 2019 until December 2022 through Grace United Methodist Church as Troop 612. When Grace United Methodist Church decided to no longer sponsor BSA troops at the end of 2022, we re-chartered through the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer under a new number, 635. We officially became Troop 635 in January 2023.

The charter is reviewed and renewed annually. The charter is granted to the Troop Committee (Unit Committee in the chart above), whose responsibility is to handle the troop administration and support the troop program.

The Troop Committee is a group of adults who assume the responsibility of administering the troop in accordance with national and council BSA policy. The Troop Committee is responsible for supporting the program and providing all that is necessary for the program to exist and run smoothly. The Troop Committee administers all Troop business including finances, membership and recruiting, advancement, equipment and diversity & equity issues and much more. The Troop Committee chooses the Scoutmaster and supervises the adult leadership. The troop Key 3 consists of the Troop Committee Chair (Ted Restelli), the Scoutmaster (Catherine Harrison-Restelli), and the Chartered Organization Representative (John Schmick). The Chartered Organization Representative is provided by Redeemer, and is the liaison between Redeemer and the Troop, and is our boss. The Troop Committee meets approximately six times a year.

Current Troop Committee positions are listed in Appendix E. We have vacancies and can use the help.

The Unit Commissioner (an adult volunteer provided by BAC) serves as an advisor to the Key 3. Troop 635's Unit Commissioner is currently Walt Windisch. Unit Commissioners complete administrative tasks like the annual Journey to Excellence and are important resources and sounding boards to the Key 3 for any questions on policies, programs or Troop Committee business.

Troop 635's Scoutmaster (SM) and Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM) work directly with the Scouts in planning and administering the Troop's program and activities. Because we are a mid-sized troop, adult leaders can wear many hats and several adults are members of the Troop Committee and ASMs.

PARENTS! Is there a spot on the committee for you? Or would you like to become an ASM? Speak with the Troop Committee Chair or Scoutmaster any time. The Committee meets once a month and all are welcome. If you have a special agenda item to discuss, please call the Troop Committee Chair ahead of time so that he/she can be aware of your request. (See Appendix J for the name and addresses of Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and Troop Committee members.) Becoming a Committee Member requires being a registered adult, paying an annual fee and submitting to a background check (see more below). There is also online training for both Troop Committee members and online and in-person training for Assistant Scoutmasters.

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Troop 635 is not a “drop & run” troop. We need parental involvement, and there are ways for each of us to help the Troop. From our personal experience, the most rewarding part of Scouting is sharing formative experiences with our children. There is no substitute for being in the outdoors with your Scout as they challenge themselves and grow in skills, leadership and character.

II. Parent Volunteer Opportunities

Scouting is for adults as well as youth. We invite you to share your skills and interests so the best possible program can be developed for the scouts in Troop 635. Please volunteer. Ask parents, Committee members, the Scoutmaster, the Assistant Scoutmasters and other parents how you can help. “Many hands make light work!”

There are many ways to get involved, but the three most common are:

1. Becoming an Assistant Scoutmaster
2. Joining the Troop Committee
3. Becoming a Merit Badge Counselor

None of these are mutually exclusive. Several 635 adult leaders do all three. More details on these positions follow.

III. The Patrol Leaders Council / Junior Leader Training

The Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) is comprised of youth leaders and works with the adult leaders to develop and execute our program. The head of the PLC is the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). An Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) supports the SPL, and each patrol has a Patrol Leader (PL). The PLC also includes the Troop Scribe (not a voting member), Troop Guide, scouts with Star rank or above and other junior leaders appointed by the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster supervises and advises the PLC, and ASMs and the Troop Committee Chair may also attend. The PLC meets monthly and more often if needed.

In a scout led troop it is necessary that the PLC run smoothly. This can only occur if all members of the PLC (Troop junior leaders) do their jobs. The scouts depend upon their elected Patrol Leaders to attend the PLC and communicate information to them.

IV. Troop Elections and Positions of Responsibility

Troop 635 elections, selections of roles and appointments of special roles are typically made once a year, at summer camp. This ensures change and encourages participation by all Scouts in junior leadership. Troop junior leadership positions are required for ranks of Star, Life and Eagle.

In Troop 635, the leadership positions of Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) are elected by the entire Troop. Each Patrol elects their Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader.

The Troop will vote in order for:

1. Senior Patrol Leader – the youth leader of the Troop
2. Assistant Senior Patrol Leader – 2nd highest Scout leadership position, assists the SPL
3. Patrol Leader (1 per Patrol). Elected by their own patrol. Only Scouts who are 2nd Class or higher are eligible to be Patrol Leaders.
4. Assistant Patrol Leader (1 per Patrol). They assist the Patrol Leaders and are elected by their own patrol. There is no rank requirement for this position. This position does not count toward Star, Life or Eagle leadership requirements.

Scouts who are running for an elected position can make a brief speech (no longer than 2 minutes) prior to the election. The speech is not required.

Voting: Only Scouts who are present can vote (same as the Order of the Arrow election). You can vote for yourself.

Scouts who are **not** present at summer camp **can** run for an elected position. They can also send a pre-recorded speech (no longer than 2 minutes) or a statement to be read prior to the election. Please notify the Scoutmaster if you fall into this category. In addition, Scouts not at camp can let the Scoutmaster know about their preference for non-elected positions.

Additional leadership positions that will not be elected are listed below. After the elections above are held, there will be a procedure starting with the highest ranking scouts for them to choose their non-elected leadership position. For Scouts of the same rank, the oldest Scout goes first.

1. Troop Guide
2. Order of the Arrow Representative
3. Den Chief
4. Scribe
5. Librarian
6. Historian
7. Quartermaster
8. Bugler (does not count for Eagle rank)

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9. Chaplain Aide
10. Instructor
11. Webmaster
12. Outdoor Ethics Guide

The duties of each position are listed [HERE](#).

Junior Assistant Scoutmasters may also be appointed by the Scoutmaster. This position is typically reserved for senior scouts who have previously been SPL.

During troop elections and selection of positions of responsibility, priority is given to scouts who require leadership roles for advancement. If two scouts desire the same role, priority goes to the higher rank scout. If scouts holding the same rank desire the same leadership role, priority will go to the older scout. A scout may hold the same position more than once (but not more than twice) if no other scouts desire the position.

What happens if my scout loses an election or doesn't get the position they want? This happens frequently, and life continues. Please have them form a contingency plan for other elected or non-elected positions.

If a scout is incapable or unwilling to do their job, they will be removed from the junior leadership position and will not be credited with completing that junior leadership position for rank advancement. We urge all scouts who accept junior leadership positions to understand what is required of their role and fulfill their obligations.

All junior leaders are supported by the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters. Once each year, formal troop junior leader training occurs, typically in Sept/Oct, after the troop re-convenes after summer elections. All junior leaders are required to attend the Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST). This course is given by the Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmasters or the local council. Scouts are always encouraged to seek junior leader positions and to help as much as possible whenever needed.

The Troop's leadership development program is laid out in Appendix H. The SPL, ASPL and Patrol Leaders are strongly encouraged to attend the Baltimore Area Council's National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), which is offered twice a year. Scouts must be First Class rank or above to attend NYLT. BAC offers additional leadership training called Brownsea annually. To attend Brownsea, Scouts must be Second Class rank or above. Any other training that a scout can attend beyond this is a bonus and can substantially contribute to the success of the troop and the personal growth of the individual scout.

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V. New Scouts

Some scouts bridge to our troop from a Webelos Den in Cub Scouts and others come with no scouting experience. However new scouts join us, the transition can be exciting but also difficult while they get to know how the troop operates. To make this transition as smooth as possible, all new scouts are placed into an existing patrol with more experienced scouts who can help them learn basic skills and get acclimated to the troop program. One of the best ways to get acclimated is to join camping trips. In addition, there is a specific junior leader role called the "Troop Guide" whose role is to help and be a resource to new scouts. If any new scout has a problem or a problem develops, the parents are encouraged to reach out to the Scoutmaster or one of the Assistant Scoutmasters. It is very important to the adult leadership that the new scouts are comfortable and successfully assimilate into Troop 635.

VI. The Patrol and The Patrol Method

"The patrol method is not just one method in which scouting can be carried out. It is the only method." --Lord Robert Baden-Powell

The Patrol Method is one of the eight fundamental methods to achieve the aims of Scouting. Troop 635 currently has two mixed-aged patrols, the Rangers and the Stallions. New Scouts who join the Troop are placed into one of these patrols. Each patrol has experienced youth leaders who help to guide and support the younger Scouts.

The main unit of the Troop is the patrol. Every Troop is made up of patrols. A patrol is a semi-permanent group of Scouts who elect their own leader. Each patrol typically has its own name, flag, and yell. Patrols consist of approximately six to eight Scouts.

The Patrol Leaders, with the elected Senior Patrol Leader at their head, form the core of the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). It is the job of the PLC to plan and run the troop program. Each Patrol Leader represents their patrol on the PLC and interprets and brings back to their patrol the plans and decisions that the PLC makes. Patrols may also have their own meetings, and plan, and carry out their own patrol activities with proper adult supervision.

Through the troop leadership development program, patrols will be given the opportunity to participate in team building activities as well as other forms of leadership development.

VII. Meetings / Programs / Summer Camp

Scouting is a year-round program. Our troop meets once or twice a month for troop meetings (once if there are other activities that month). Meetings are held at the Church of the Redeemer on Friday evenings. Parents should do their best to help their scout with meeting attendance. We like to start on time and end on time. The meetings are valuable, interesting, fun and a forum for troop announcements, rank advancement and other activities. If your scout is not there, they will be missing information and opportunities for advancement.

Our troop emphasizes and celebrates our adventurous outdoor program and our scouts' impressive outdoor achievements. In the recent weekend campouts, we have been caving, whitewater rafting, horseback riding, done many shooting sports, rappelling, climbing and backpacking. Troop 635 aims for six annual campouts a year (three each in the Fall and Spring), and in months when we are not camping, we strive for one outdoor activity such as hiking, cycling, orienteering or ice skating.

Campouts are the essence of Scouting. They are where Scouts bond, work together, encounter challenges, learn from them and overcome them. Encourage your scout to participate. Every rank advancement has requirements for overnight camping. Campouts are also where most of the impact of scouting takes place. A week of camping is worth six months of troop meetings in terms of personal growth. Written information on all trips is made available to all scouts and parents on TroopTrack.

TroopTrack is the application we use to communicate with Troop families as well as track participation, rank advancement, merit badges earned, and leadership positions. All scouts and parents have access to TroopTrack. If you do not have access, please reach out to the Scoutmaster or one of the adult leaders.

Periodically, our troop will participate in special scout functions such as day trips, day hikes, special camporees, or community service projects. Our troop spends one week a year at a BSA-sponsored residential summer camp. A week at summer camp is an event that will be remembered for a lifetime!

Our troop is usually at camp the 3rd or 4th week of June. To attend camp, scouts should have a record of good attendance, display efforts towards advancement and must comply with National and Council requirements (be registered and have appropriate health examination (which includes a physical by a medical professional) and paperwork – BSA Medical Forms A, B and C).

Our troop has had an excellent time at summer camp. We highly encourage all first and second-year scouts to attend because of the growth and bonding that happens over the course of the week. Camp is also a place where many merit badges are earned and significant progress toward rank advancement happens. All BSA camps focus on earning merit badges, advancement, swimming, cooperation, fun competitions and having a great time! (See Appendix B – Suggested Summer Camp Gear.)

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Whether summer camp, a two-night overnight camping trip, or a one-night overnight camping trip, please try not to leave until the entire troop is leaving. Many hands make light work and there are many traditions that occur at the end of camp, such as a final ground sweep (in keeping with Leave No Trace), final check of lost and found, lessons learned, and the final closing by the Scoutmaster. Camping trips close out more smoothly if we ALL stay until the end and help.

The Troop does not hold regular meetings in July & August after the conclusion of Summer Camp, but there are many opportunities to continue scouting over the summer! Troop 635 Scouts and families have done High Adventure programs in Maine and Switzerland, attended the BSA National Jamboree in West Virginia and participated in additional weeks of Scouts BSA Summer Camp as provisional campers who join another girls Troop for the week. Scouts can work year-round on merit badges with merit badge counselors or plan their Eagle Service projects. Our Troop activities resume in force in late August.

VIII. Transportation

Most of the troop's outings and trips require transportation. Parents should plan on providing the substantial majority of this transportation. When possible/necessary, carpools will be arranged, but parents should be willing to do their part to help with scouts and/or gear transportation. The best way to be sure there is always room for your scout is to be sure that your car is helping!

IX. Registration Fees & Dues

As in most other active organizations, it takes money to be able to run and to maintain a quality troop program. Scouting is not free, and each scout is expected to pay for their fair share when it comes to registration, paying dues, and sharing camping expenses.

Registration fees collected from each Scout and registered adult each year are a major income source for BSA National. Troop 635 re-charters and pays registration fees (\$85 per Scout and \$45 per adult) to BSA National in December of each year. In addition, beginning in 2025, the Baltimore Area Council will charge all Scouts an \$80 membership fee (\$75 fee plus \$5 for insurance). For Scouting year 2024-2025, Troop 635 will not charge scouts additional dues, because we have been very successful fundraising recently.

Therefore, the total annual registration fees will be \$165 per scout and \$45 per adult. All adults who will be with scouts for more than 24 hours must register, pay a fee, take Youth Protection Training (online) and submit to a background check before re-chartering in December.

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Troop 635 does charge a per head cost for camping trips and special events (e.g., rafting, horseback riding, etc.). The costs of camping trips are determined by the cost of food, fees, etc. Camping trip fees are usually very reasonable and are posted in TroopTrack for the specific event. Scouts and parents should be sure that camping trip fees are paid on time. Deadlines for trip registration and payments are posted in TroopTrack. If a scout is not allowed on a camping trip because of non-payment, parents must understand that this is troop policy and should support it.

Payments for troop trips and summer camp can be made to the troop Treasurer via:

- Venmo: @Kevin-Stringer-6
- Paypal: 635treasurer@gmail.com

Be assured that accurate financial records are kept on all trip fees by the Troop Treasurer.

Our current Troop fundraisers have provided adequate funds for the Troop. Some fundraisers benefit the Troop only, but others benefit both the Scout and the Troop. The scout's portion can be used to defray their cost of an upcoming camping trip or event. Participating in fundraising events (holiday wreaths and year-round hot sauce sales) are great opportunities for scouts to contribute to the Troop as well as defray their own costs.

One of the reasons Troop 635 has fundraisers is to be able to help the less fortunate among us. If a scout is not able to participate in summer camps, programs or campouts due to financial hardship, assistance is available. Please contact the Committee Chair or Treasurer to learn more. Requests for assistance will be held in confidence.

X. Uniform Policy

Troop 635 wears the uniform as established by BSA. The uniform can be purchased at the local Scout Shop (800 Wyman Park Drive – across the street from BAC headquarters). At minimum, a scout needs a “Class A” uniform shirt (aka “Field Uniform”) and a sash for badges. See the full uniform description below. The scout should wear as close to the full uniform as possible for all formal events (e.g., Scoutmaster Conference, Board of Review, Court of Honor, dinner at summer camp, other special events, and when traveling to or from a long-distance scouting event). You will be surprised how many positive comments result from people seeing a Scouting uniform!

Wearing the uniform helps in a few ways:

- When smartly worn, the uniform helps build troop spirit and a scout's pride in themselves.
- By wearing the uniform, the scouts give each other support and when properly worn on the correct occasions, it can attract new members.
- Scouts in uniform create a strong, positive youth image in the neighborhood.
- The uniform makes the troop visible as a force for good in the community.
- As a scout wears the uniform, they are standing for their principles.

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- Scouts in uniform are standing with each other, not alone, declaring their intent to support the principles for which scouting stands.

When the Class A uniform is not required, the scout can wear the Class B uniform, which consists of a Troop t-shirt designed by the scouts. Ask an adult leader about ordering a t-shirt. (See descriptions below.)

Troop 635 does not allow any scouts to wear clothing that advertises alcoholic beverages, cigarettes or tobacco products or any other derogatory or offensive messages. Troop 635 adheres to the normally required uniform parts that are listed in the BSA Handbook. Some parts are optional or provide more than one choice, and due to the cost of the uniform, the troop has provided some alternatives.

Scouts BSA Uniform Definitions:

Class A (aka Field Uniform)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BSA tan scout shirt. We recommend the short sleeve, because it is better for year around wearing. 2. BSA olive long pants for winter wear; BSA olive shorts for warmer weather. *To reduce costs, the Troop accepts any olive pants, jeans or shorts in good repair. 3. BSA green web belt or BSA Leather belt. *To reduce costs, the Troop accepts belts of any color in good repair. 4. BSA red and olive ball cap or BSA camp or activity cap. Any warm hat or stocking hat for wintertime use. 5. Shoes or hiking boots (flashy sneakers are discouraged). 6. BSA Red-topped green socks of any length are worn when the shorts are worn. *To reduce costs, the Troop accepts athletic or hiking socks of any color in good repair. 7. BSA Merit Badge sashes are only worn at Court of Awards and are required. 8. Troop neckerchief – Solid black neckerchief with white embroidered BSA and white embroidered piping trim and neckerchief slide. Other neckerchiefs earned through training or other BSA activities are acceptable.
Class B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Troop 635 T-shirt, or legacy Troop 612 T-shirt. <p>Everything else as described above, except no sash and neckerchiefs are optional (but worn all the time by European scouts).</p>

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XI. Advancement

In general, the process of rank advancement and merit badge completion both follow a set path: the Scout learns; the Scout is tested; the Scout is reviewed; and the Scout is recognized.

Rank Advancement

Scouts enter the program without a rank and earn ranks by completing requirements in the following order: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle.

Your scout will advance through ranks at their own pace. This does not mean that they will be left on their own. The leaders of the troop will always be there to guide and assist as well as to prod your scout. As a parent, show an interest in your scout's advancement. Ask them to show you where they are signed off for achieving the requirements for the first four ranks.

In the early ranks, (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class) your scout will get quite a bit of group training from senior scouts and/or adult leaders. The many requirements in these four ranks represent the Scouting skills that all scouts should master.

Scouts will have the support of their Patrol Leader, the senior scouts, and adult leaders. If your scout is motivated, they will be able to earn First Class in about two years. If your scout is not focused on rank advancement due to other commitments or obligations, or just wants to have fun in the Troop for a period of time (all of which is fine!), it will take longer. Either way, the troop will support your scout to achieve their goals.

Scouts may work on requirements for the ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class simultaneously. Scouts must complete the ranks in order, but many Troop activities focus on higher rank requirements, which allow even new scouts to make progress on those ranks.

Many scouts have the goal of becoming an Eagle Scout, which is the highest Scouts BSA rank. Achieving Eagle Scout takes time and hard work but is achievable for any scout who makes the effort. It can take as little as three years to become an Eagle Scout, but most scouts take four, five or even six years to finish Eagle. There are many scouts that become Eagle only days before their 18th birthday!

The back of the Scout Book contains a section with all requirements for each rank. This helps the scout, leaders and parents to track the scout's progress. The Leader Initial & Date column on the right side of the page can be ***signed off by an adult leader or a youth leader who has Star rank or above***. A scout's own parent or relative cannot sign-off on their rank advancements, even if they are a Troop leader. However, parents can work with their Scout on requirements anytime and have the Scout display their knowledge of the requirement to get signed off at a later date. The Scout Book contains

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all of the knowledge necessary to master each requirement. If a Scout is struggling with mastering a skill, work with them, or have them reach out to a “senior scout” or adult leader.

After a scout becomes First Class, they are expected to take even greater responsibility in their own advancement. The last three ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle are generally focused on leadership, service and earning (at least) the 21 Merit Badges required for Eagle. These “Senior Scouts” must be present at Troop events to lead and teach others.

The Scoutmasters are always there to guide but the scouts themselves must decide which Merit Badges interest them, what service they want to perform and what positions of leadership they want to hold. As a parent, provide encouragement to them to always be working on their advancement. A scout should always be working on a Merit Badge, especially those that are required for Eagle.

For every rank, a scout must complete a Scoutmaster Conference. For every rank above Scout, a scout must also successfully complete a Board of Review.

Scoutmaster Conference

The Scoutmaster Conference is a meeting with a scout that allows the Scoutmaster (SM) or an Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM) to review how the scout is attaining the aims of scouting. It generally reviews these benchmarks:

- The Scout’s growth in their understanding of the Scouting ideals
- How the Scout applies these ideals in their daily life and in the patrol and troop
- The requirements of the Scout’s next rank so that they can be properly encouraged

The SM/ASM must understand whether the individual scout is advancing, whether they are having fun, and whether they seem eager or uneasy. The SM/ASM is assessing whether the scout is ready for a Board of Review to advance in rank. The Scoutmaster conference is neither an interrogation nor a retesting of a Scout’s competence. It is an informal conversation between the Scout and the SM/ASM either toward a certain goal or as a requirement for advancement.

Board of Review

The purpose of the Board of Review is to make sure that all the requirements for the rank have been earned. It is not a re-examination, although spot checking is acceptable in a Board of Review. Boards of Review are composed of between three and six members of the Troop Committee who are 21 years or older. If three Troop Committee members are not available, knowledgeable parents or adults who understand Scouting’s aims may also serve on Boards of Review. SM and ASMs are prohibited from participating in a Board of Review although the SM may observe a Board of Review as a non-voting participant. A Scout’s parent/guardian are discouraged from

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attending a Board of Review as their presence may affect the Scout's answers to questions. However, if a parent insists on attending, they may observe.

XII. Merit Badges

The ranks of Star, Life and Eagle all require both elective and Eagle-required merit badges. A scout may begin working on merit badges immediately after joining. Scouts have many opportunities to earn merit badges that are of interest to them. BSA currently has 138 merit badges from which to choose -- everything from hiking, climbing and camping to oceanography, astrology, scholarship and aviation – and everything in between! Check out the full list [HERE](#).

When a scout wants to start a merit badge, they should inform a SM or ASM and get a (physical) blue card. An example of a blue card is [HERE](#). The SM/ASM will then provide a Merit Badge Counselor (MBC) for that badge and the SM/ASM and scout should agree on the MBC. The Merit Badge Counselor is an adult who has been qualified by the SM and BSA to teach the badge. The MBC will then track the Scout's progress against the requirements and sign off each requirement on the blue card as they are completed.

Troop 635 has a number of Merit Badge Counselors (MBCs) who are qualified to teach many of these merit badges. If your scout would like to learn something that we do not have expertise in, adult leaders will find an MBC to counsel your scout (always within the boundaries of youth protection guidelines).

MBCs may work with and pass any scout, including their own children or relatives. However, the Troop will encourage scouts to work with non-relatives if other adult leaders also counsel the badge.

Many merit badges are offered at BSA summer camps, and many summer camps use electronic tracking systems instead of blue cards to track progress. If a scout does not complete a badge at summer camp (or another BSA activity where merit badge progress is tracked electronically) an adult leader or parent will receive a list of the requirements that were completed at camp. The adult leader will then transcribe those requirements onto a physical blue card and give it to the Scout so they have a record and know what requirements remain.

Shortly after joining the Troop, the SM will give the scout a three-ring binder with plastic insert pages. These insert pages should be used to store partial and complete blue cards. Please contact the SM if your scout does not have a three-ring binder.

Scouts should be cautioned to keep all proof of rank advancement and blue cards documenting the completed merit badges in a safe place. One day, they may be needed to document advancement towards Eagle.

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Each merit badge has a “merit badge booklet” which describes the material taught in the badge and lists the requirements. Some merit badge books can be found in the Troop Library, and all can be purchased in the Scout Shop. Merit badge books can also be found for free online by doing a search. Reading the merit badge book is recommended, but not required to pass the requirements.

There are unofficial worksheets and learning aids for merit badges also available online. These materials may be used but the materials should be correlated with the current requirements of the badge. Completing a worksheet may suffice where a requirement calls for something in writing, but this would not complete a requirement where the Scout must discuss, tell, show or demonstrate, etc. Scouts are NOT required to use these learning aids to complete a merit badge.

There are currently 14 Eagle-required merit badges. (Those with the asterisk are frequently a prerequisite to other more advanced badges, so we recommend completing these early).

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

Note: If you are interested in becoming an MBC, please reach out to the Scoutmaster or one of the ASMs. It is a relatively simple process, and it is very rewarding to work with our scouts. Some merit badges, such as Whitewater Rafting, Climbing, Rifle Shooting or Shotgun Shooting, require specialized external training to become a MBC. But most do not. You will be surprised at how many merit badges you can counsel. For example, if you have a family and know how to cook, you are qualified to teach the Family Life and Cooking merit badges. And in the process of preparing to teach them, you will almost certainly learn something about these subjects, even if you are already an expert in the field. If you have specialized skills and can counsel less common merit badges, the Scouts and Troop would benefit greatly from them!

See the [THIS](#) link for an article discussing the most and least common merit badges in 2023. [HERE](#) is a link to the Merit Badge Counselor Application form.

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Rank and Merit Badge Submission Process

After a scout has completed a rank or merit badge, we have an online form that is used to send photos of the completed blue cards (for merit badges) and photos of the complete rank pages (for Rank advancement). The link with instructions is [HERE](#).

Recognition

Advancement instills pride and self-confidence in a scout. Acknowledgement of all advancement is given three times a year at Courts of Honor where the scouts are recognized for their rank, merit badge and other achievements. We expect all Scouts and families to attend these. For rank advancements, parent/guardians are part of the ceremony.

Finally, when a scout attains the rank of Eagle, we have a special ceremony called an "Eagle Court of Honor" which may be separate or combined the regular Courts of Honor. We also ask that all scouts and families attend these. Attaining Eagle is a big achievement and the culmination of years of hard work. The Eagle Scout deserves as much recognition as we can give them.

Your scout has started the trail to Eagle. Seldom does a scout get there by themselves. Troop 635 leaders have made the commitment to help them; if your scout wants to be an Eagle Scout, please commit to helping them and our Troop.

XIII. Equipment

TROOP EQUIPMENT

It takes a lot of equipment to run a BSA Troop. Troop equipment is the responsibility of the Troop Committee who assigns the Quartermaster to do this job. The scouts have an appointed Quartermaster to keep track of the equipment. All scouts must be responsible for the troop equipment they use, and care for this equipment properly.

All precautions are taken for the safe use of all cutting tools. ***No new scout may use a cutting tool of any kind until they have received their Totin' Chip and can demonstrate safe use of cutting tools.***

Scouts cannot carry fire-lighting devices (matches, lighters, etc.) until they earn their Firem'n Chit.

Troop 635 is in the process of building our troop equipment. Currently, we own troop several troop tents. We are working toward completing Patrol Boxes, each with patrol cooking gear, including propane, stoves, cooking table, and tarp system. There is currently one large-capacity cooler for the patrols to share. In addition, many Troop families have extra camping equipment (canopies, sleeping bags, sleeping mats, tents)

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that are used on Troop campouts. If your scout/family needs camping equipment for a campout, please contact the Troop's Equipment Coordinator or Scoutmaster and we will find it.

If you or your scout forget to bring an essential item to a campout (we have all done this!), please talk to the adult leaders on site. Troop leaders bring extra equipment to every campout for exactly this reason.

Troop ownership of equipment saves the individual scout families from having to purchase this equipment, but it carries with it the responsibility that each scout takes care of maintaining the equipment for future use by members of the troop. Some Troop equipment is stored at Redeemer, but other Troop equipment like tents will be stored in individual scouts' homes and tracked by the Quartermaster. If Scouts sleep in a Troop tent, one scout must bring the tent home after the campout and make sure it is aired out and not stored wet or dirty.

A series of rules pertaining to Troop 635 owned equipment has been established:

1. It is the responsibility of each scout to use and maintain any troop owned equipment in the manner for which it is intended in order to keep it in working order. Any malfunctioning or damaged equipment should be immediately reported to the adult leaders. This is primarily the responsibility of the Patrol Leaders and the Troop Quartermaster.
2. Any scout that damages any troop owned equipment is responsible for fixing or replacing that piece of equipment. If a specific person cannot be identified or the damage is due to rough play by several members of a patrol, the entire patrol will be responsible for the cost of the repair or replacement.
3. Damage through ignorance of how to use a piece of equipment is no excuse for a scout not replacing a damaged item. There are plenty of scouts or adult leaders that can assist in the correct use of equipment. If you don't know how to handle the equipment – ASK before you use it!
4. During campouts, all cooking equipment is to be thoroughly cleaned by the scouts and all scouts will be expected to participate as the duty rosters indicate.
5. DO NOT spray insect repellent in or near tents. It can ruin the nylon tent and the waterproofing.
6. Troop owned equipment may not be borrowed for non-Scouting events.

INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT

Click [HERE](#) for what to bring to overnight camping.

Click [HERE](#) for cold weather camping trip preparation tips.

Click [HERE](#) for what to bring to summer camp.

XIV. Communication

Adult troop leadership uses [TroopTrack](#) to send emails to announce upcoming activities and events with all troop families. When on camping trips, the adult leaders typically use text messaging.

The Scouts and patrols may use another method of communication with each other to plan and coordinate for upcoming activities. Right now, the Patrols are using text messaging. This may change based on what is available to the younger scouts who have leadership positions.

XV. Use of Phones on Campouts and Summer Camp

We understand that many youth today have their own cell phones as a means to communicate with their parents and friends. There is a place for a cell phone at a campout or summer camp, as long as it is not a distraction. Cell phones can be used to receive and share information about camping logistics, take pictures, work on merit badges and send an occasional message home. Having said that, it is **NOT** necessary for any scout to have a cell phone at camp (the exception perhaps being the senior youth leaders). It is a privilege, not a right.

The Troop 635 adult leadership reserves the right to relieve a scout of their cell phone (or other social media device) if it is clear that it has become a distraction to their full participation. If this happens, the Scoutmaster or one of the ASMs will contact the parents to let them know. Please ensure that your scout is aware of this Troop policy. The intention is not to be punitive, but rather to help the scout be available to their environment and experience.

XVI. Discipline

We understand that there is a great deal of energy in youth of scouting age. That is one of the reasons Scouting includes an active outdoor program. However, there are some actions that will not be tolerated. Any activity which is illegal or prohibited, including fighting or hazing, that threatens the safety or life of any scout, or interferes with the program, are grounds for disciplinary action by the Scoutmaster and/or the Committee. The Committee may impose other actions, up to and including expulsion from the troop. Hazing or corporal punishment are strictly forbidden by BSA. No Scout discipline may be enacted except through the Scoutmaster or an appointed Assistant Scoutmaster.

XVII. Scout Spirit

Scout spirit means living by the Scout Oath and Law. A scout with good spirit thinks about what the Scout Oath and Law means and tries to incorporate this into their everyday life. A scout with true scout spirit shines in the Troop. They are happy, helpful, and ready to volunteer. They are thoughtful, active in the scouting program and assume leadership and responsibility. Scout spirit is a requirement for advancing beyond the First-Class Rank.

Scouts can also demonstrate Scout spirit by taking pride in their appearance by wearing the uniform correctly. It shows the scout's pride in themselves and their troop, which also builds Troop spirit.

Patrol spirit is fostered through good-natured Patrol competitions.

XVIII. Youth Protection

The BSA has the largest organized youth protection program of any youth or young adult program in the world. Troop 635 implements all youth protection guidelines developed by the BSA. The program is a plan to combat child abuse and to improve the environment in which young people live. The key elements of this strategy include the following points:

1. Educating Scouting volunteers, parents, and the 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 BSA.
4. Encouraging scouts to report improper behavior to identify offenders quickly.
5. Swiftly removing and reporting alleged offenders.

Youth Protection Training (YPT) is required for all adult leaders in our troop, registered adult volunteers (as a requirement for joining), and scouts 18 years old and older. YPT training must be renewed every year.

To earn the Scout and Star ranks, scouts must complete Personal Safety Awareness training developed by the BSA. Before completing the online training, Scouts should complete the exercises in the "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide" pamphlet with their parent or guardian. (This pamphlet can be found in the front of the Scout Handbook.

[Watch the Understanding Youth Protection Video](#)

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[Click here to log in and take the Youth Protection training](#). You do not have to be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America to take Youth Protection training.

Click [HERE](#) for additional information on BSA Youth Protection.

XIX. Fundraising

The Fundraising Chair (appointed by the Unit Committee Chair) is responsible for supervising all Troop fundraising activities and ensures that all youth members have an opportunity to participate in all fundraising activities.

Recent Troop 635 fundraising activities:

- Selling our own hot sauce
- Selling wreaths and greenery for the winter holidays
- Hosting roller skating parties

Fundraising activities can help Scouts develop communication and teamwork skills as well as give them the opportunity to work on merit badges that require sales, marketing, graphic design, and entrepreneurship. Participating in fundraising is encouraged, but not required.

XX. High Adventure Activities

As mentioned earlier, the Troop has participated in High Adventure activities in Maine and Switzerland in recent years. BSA recognizes four National High Adventure Bases:

1. **Philmont** Scout Ranch in New Mexico for backpacking treks, horseback cavalcades while doing other daily program activities.
2. **Sea Base** in the Florida Keys and Bahamas offers scuba diving, sailing, fishing and other ocean-based activities.
3. **Summit Bechtel** Reserve in West Virginia offers whitewater rafting, ATV trekking, hiking & rafting trips, shooting sports and multi-adventure packages.
4. **Northern Tier** offers summer canoeing treks in northern Minnesota and Alberta, Canada and winter dogsledding and wilderness camping in Minnesota.

In addition, there are other BSA Council-owned high adventure camps that offer a variety of high adventure experiences in every region of the country. There is Chilkoot High Adventure Base in Alaska, Swamp Base in Louisiana and Maine High Adventure (canoeing and hiking).

And because BSA is part of the World Scout Movement, there are potential opportunities for Troop 635 to visit scout camps in 176 countries, as we did at the Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland in Summer 2024.

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Finally, we do not have to go to a Scout reservation to do a high adventure experience. Troop adult and youth leaders can plan our own high adventure experiences whether it is backpacking the Appalachian trail, bike packing the C&O canal, or renting our own equipment and designing our own itinerary. The opportunities for High Adventure with Troop 635 are limitless!

Note that many official high adventure programs have age limits of 13 or 14, but some (such as KISC in Switzerland) do not.

XXI. Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is a national brotherhood of scout honor campers. It is based on brotherhood and cheerful service to others. Troop members are nominated and elected to membership by fellow scouts in their troop. They must meet certain entry requirements and qualifications that are established by the National OA. Each troop may hold an annual election supervised by the Council's OA lodge. Scouts are not admitted to OA ceremonies unless they are OA members. Election to the Order of the Arrow is a distinct honor and the OA is a very important part of the scouting experience.

Troop 635 holds our OA elections once per year before summer camp.

XXII. Duty to God and The Twelfth Point of the Scout Law

It is important to know that the BSA has a religious element as a part of the program as stated in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. However, the BSA is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward a member's religion or faith. The BSA policy is that the home and organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life.

BSA is nonsectarian – it is not affiliated with any particular religious group or faith. Troop 635 is sponsored by the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer, but we are open and welcoming to scouts of all religions or beliefs.

We may give thanks before meals and may conduct a brief worship service on a campout. Any worship service would be simple and not specific to any religion. Religious freedom is a cornerstone of our country, and we try to incorporate all walks of faith. We in no way wish to offend a scout or their family by implying that they should believe in any religion or practice.

The twelfth point of the Scout Law is that a scout is "Reverent." Reverent means that a Scout is faithful in their religious duties and respects the beliefs of others. No matter what the religious faith of a Scout may be, this fundamental of good citizenship should be kept before them.

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BSA requires that a Scout believe in a Supreme Being and the ability to be referent as stated in the Scout Law. If your child, because of their belief, does not feel comfortable with our methods of worship, please ask to meet with the Scoutmaster.

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Appendix A – Troop 635 Camping / Gear List

Click [HERE](#) for what to bring to overnight camping.

Click [HERE](#) for cold weather camping trip preparation tips.

Appendix B – Troop 635 Suggested Summer Camp Gear

Click [HERE](#) for what to bring to summer camp.

Appendix C – Uniform Device Placement

Click [HERE](#) for Scouts BSA Uniform insignia placement.

Appendix D – Physical Form (Forms A, B and C)

Access the BSA Medical Form ABC [HERE](#).

Appendix E – Troop 635 Committee Positions

September 2024

Chartered Organization Representative:	John Schmick
Committee Chair:	Ted Restelli
Scoutmaster (non-voting):	Catherine Harrison-Restelli
Secretary:	Vacant (Ted Restelli acting)
Treasurer:	Kevin Stringer
Outdoor Activities:	Peter Morin
Advancement:	Margi Fiore
Chaplain:	Vacant (Margi Fiore acting)
Training:	Vacant (Margi Fiore acting)
Equipment:	Peter Morin
Membership:	Vacant (Ted Restelli acting)
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:	Margi Fiore
Recruiting:	Lucy Mac Gabhann
Fundraising:	Greg Walsh
Friday Programs:	Alison Dombrowski
Webmaster:	Amy Webb Woolf
Re-Chartering:	Vacant

Appendix F – Camping Planning Checklist for Adult in Charge (ASM or Registered Adult)

TBD – next version

Appendix G – Camping Planning Checklist for Patrol Leaders

TBD – next version

Appendix H – Leadership Development Program

TBD – next version

Appendix I – Organizational Chart

TBD – next version

Appendix J – Troop 635 Contact Roster

TBD – next version

Appendix K – Parent Resource Survey

TBD – next version. Fillable PDF