

Troop 788 Adult Camping Info

Here is some information we try to give parents on their first campout with the troop. Camping is the heart of scouting, so please take a few minutes to read this sheet. Scouts BSA and troop camping are absolutely different from Cub Scouting or Webelos!

In General:

Scout Tenting & Meals - Scouts tent with their patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. Patrols plan their own menus, and cook and eat together as a team.

Adult Tenting & Meals - Adults tent with the adult patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. We plan our own menu, and cook and eat together as a team. In general, adults do not eat or tent with a scout patrol.

Adult/Boy Tenting - Scouting America youth protection policies forbid an adult and a scout sharing the same tent. While youth protection policies may not apply to a parent and child tenting together, it is a troop policy that scouts tent with scouts and adults with adults. If a father tents with his son, it has been our experience that the scout will lose out on many opportunities to make decisions and be part of the patrol team!

Scout Leadership and Growth - Adults should not interfere with the functioning of scout leaders, even if they make mistakes (we all learn best from our mistakes). Step in **only** if it is a matter of immediate safety or if the mistake will be immediately costly. Never do anything for a scout he can do himself. Let him make decisions without adult interference, and let him make non-costly mistakes.

Smoking/Drinking - Scouting America and Christ Church Episcopal policies prohibit possessing and/or consuming alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs at a scout event or on church property.

Rationale for the Scouts BSA Camping Program:

The Patrol System and Hierarchy of Leadership

Troop camping activities center on the patrol, where scouts learn teamwork, leadership, and most camping skills. It is important that adults not be in the middle of patrol activities such as site selection, tent pitching, meal preparation, and anything else where scouts get to practice decision-making.

A key difference versus Cub Scouting/Webelos/AOL, is **leadership**. Look for the word “leader” in a job title, and you will begin to appreciate the difference. The responsible person for a Cub/Webelos den is the adult Den Leader. The person responsible for a Scouts BSA patrol, is their Patrol Leader.

This isn't token leadership. A Patrol Leader has real authority and genuine responsibilities. Much of the success and happiness of six to ten other scouts depends directly on him. The Hierarchy of Leadership should be followed at all times, to ensure a well-run troop. If a scout has questions, he should ask his Patrol Leader. If the Patrol Leader has questions, he should ask the Senior Patrol Leader, or in his absence, the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. If the Senior Patrol Leader has questions, he should ask the Scoutmaster. In the absence of the Scoutmaster, he should ask the Assistant Scoutmaster, or the Adult appointed by the Scoutmaster. This hierarchy allows scouts to grow as Leaders, to know the boundaries of Leadership, and to respect the authority of others.

Practicing Leadership and Making Mistakes Without Interference

Scouts BSA teaches leadership. And scouts learn leadership by practicing it, **not** by watching adults lead.

So what do we adults do, now that we've surrendered so much direct authority to scouts? Here are our troop's guidelines on the **indirect, advisory** role you now enjoy (no kidding, you **should** enjoy watching your son take progressively more mature and significant responsibilities as he zooms toward adulthood).

The underlying principle is **never do anything for a scout that he can do himself**. This includes packing for camping trips, finding lost items while at camp, choosing activities, and solving minor problems. We allow scouts to grow by **practicing** leadership and by learning from their **mistakes**. And while Scout skills are an important part of the program, **what ultimately matters when our Scouts become adults is not whether they can use a map & compass, but whether they can offer leadership to others in tough situations**; and can live by a code that centers on honest, honorable, and ethical behavior.

Scouts need to learn to make decisions without adult intervention (except when it's a matter of immediate safety). Scouts are in a patrol so they can learn leadership and teamwork without adult interference.

We Need Your Help!

Our Troop is open and inviting. We adults are here to lift up the scouts at meetings and on campouts. There is no place in scouting for nick-naming, making fun of, laughing at, shaming, or "showing up" scouts. Positive reinforcement and helping when asked are key to a successful campout. Sometimes it is necessary to tell a Scout to stop doing something (i.e., if they're being unsafe, disrespectful, or not abiding by the Scout Oath and Law). As we grow as a Troop and our scouts grow in confidence, leadership, and understanding of the Patrol System, we will see less and less of this.

When an Adult Leader goes on a campout, they are a member of the Adult Patrol. This patrol has several purposes – good food and camaraderie (of course), but more important is providing an example the scout patrols can follow without telling them what to do (we teach by example). Since a patrol should camp as a group, we expect the adults to do so also; that way, adults don't tent in or right next to a scout patrol where your mere presence could disrupt the learning process.

Quite simply, our troop policy requires adults to cook, eat, and tent separately from the Scouts (even dads & sons). We are safely nearby, but not smotheringly close. Sure, go ahead and visit the patrol sites (not just your son's), talk to your son (and the other Scouts), ask what's going on or how things are going. But give the guys room to grow while you enjoy the view. Show a Scout how to do something, but don't do it for him. Avoid the temptation to give advice, and don't jump in just to prevent a mistake from happening (unless it's serious). We all learn best from our mistakes. And let the Patrol Leader lead.

Adults will be called on to help in certain circumstances. Safety is of primary importance, and a responsibility of both adults and scouts. For example, Scouting America rules on boating and swimming require a trained adult and an observer. Or on a hike, adults may be required to accompany the scouts. In addition, the scouts, through the Patrol Leaders or the Senior Patrol Leader, may ask for assistance in accomplishing a certain task (like a service project, or teaching a skill) – in these cases, wait to be asked, and then follow the direction of the Scout in charge.

Of course, Scouting America rules regarding 2-deep leadership and youth protection must be followed at all times, no exceptions.

Thank you for volunteering with Troop 788!!!