



New Parent & Scout Information

Where do I start? When you first join the troop as a new scout it might be a little overwhelming. This is a brief overview to get your scout started and to answer some basic questions.

1. Scout Handbook
 - a. This is critical for your scout. Scouts should bring it to every meeting and outing. If your scout doesn't have a cover for their handbook, they should get one. The scoutshop has one (<https://www.scoutshop.org/scouts-bsa-handbook-cover-649241.html>) you can buy in person or online. If you wish to get a different type that is fine.
 - b. Have your scout write their name on their book and on their cover. Books are often misplaced and having a name will allow it to get back to the right person.
2. Where to start
 - a. The primary focus of all new scouts is the rank requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class.
 - b. Scouts can find these requirements in the back of the scout handbook. (If you look in the table of contents it will be under Advancement).
 - c. If your scout attends weekly meetings and most outings, these requirements are generally covered and within a couple of years they should be able to get all requirements passed off.
3. Passing off requirements:
 - a. All requirements (except for scoutmaster conference, service, and boards of review) are passed off by older scouts with a rank of first class and above.
 - b. Scouts should bring their handbooks with them to meetings and outings. The meetings will generally cover a certain set of requirements for rank advancement. After learning the skill being done at the meeting, the scout should request the older scout who taught them to pass off the requirement in their book. **PARENTS AND ADULT LEADERS CAN NOT SIGN OFF ON THESE REQUIREMENTS, ONLY SCOUTS RANKED FIRST CLASS AND HIGHER**
 - c. If a scout wants to work on requirements outside of meetings that is great. The scout can come a little early to meetings or stay a little late and ask an older scout to sign off on the requirements they worked on. The scout should be prepared to demonstrate or provide proof of the requirement being completed. If the scout wants to bring a list with them of what requirements they need to get signed off, that is fine.
 - d. The scout should be the one to take the initiative. They should be the one to contact an older scout, to demonstrate or show other proof of passing it off, and to provide their book for the older scout to sign it off. Parents can encourage their scout, but it is the scout's responsibility, not the parent's.
 - e. Some requirements can only be passed off on campouts. Some ranks require a certain number of outings (non-meeting activities) as well. The campouts are the best part of scouts. Your scout will make friends, have fun experiences, and learn a lot on the campouts. The more they come the more comfortable they will feel and the more fun they will have.
 - f. When the scout has finished (and been signed off in their book) for all requirements for a rank they need to request a scoutmaster conference and then a board of review. The process for doing this is outlined in the "What To Do When" document located at <https://www.troop1857.org/forms>



4. Merit Badges

- a. Merit badges should not be the primary focus until the scout is First Class. No merit badges are required for rank advancement until Star.
- b. The process for starting a merit badge is outlined in the “What To Do When” document located at <https://www.troop1857.org/forms>
- c. If your scout attends scout camp they will take Rawhide (which helps pass off rank requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class) along with a few merit badges. If there are merit badges they don’t finish at camp it is considered a “partial”
- d. Merit Badges from camp:
 - i. After camp (it may take a few months as there is a lot of work to process this for every scout attending camp), your scout will receive blue cards from the merit badges they received at camp.
 - ii. If they completed the merit badge, they will get a blue card that is signed and marked as complete.
 - iii. If they don’t complete the merit badge, they will get a blue card showing what requirements were finished and what requirements were not finished.
 - iv. If the scout receives a partial merit badge, they should follow the instructions listed in the “What to Do When” document and request a merit badge counselor from the person they would ask about a new merit badge.
 - v. The scout can then email the counselor, let them know they have a partial from camp and would like to finish the merit badge. The scout should ask if the counselor would be willing to help them finish. If the counselor cannot help, the scout can repeat the process and ask for the name of another counselor.
- e. Merit Badges outside of camp:
 - i. **Before starting any merit badge in any way (outside of camp) the scout must follow the instructions in the “What To Do When” document located at <https://www.troop1857.org/forms>**
 - ii. The scout can choose to work on a merit badge on their own (under the supervision of a merit badge counselor) or through a class.
 - iii. Working on Merit badges without a class:
 1. Once the scout has opened the merit badge AND contacted a counselor, they can begin working on the merit badge.
 2. A useful resource is to google the merit badge name and merit badge workbook (for example Citizenship in the Nation merit badge workbook)
 - a. You will be able to print a pdf document that has space for the scout to answer each requirement. This serves as a reference for when the scout meets with a merit badge counselor to go over the requirements.
 - b. If the merit badge requires approval from the merit badge counselor BEFORE starting the requirement, the scout should email the counselor to get permission or to give their plan BEFORE doing the work for that requirement.
 - iv. Working on Merit badges in a class
 1. There are many organizations that offer merit badge classes or workshops.



2. A great way to find them is to either google the name of the merit badge you want + workshop or + class and list your city
3. Here are some other locations that often have classes:
 - a. <https://www.atlantabsa.org/meritbadgedays> (Follow Atlanta Area Council on FB to get notifications of upcoming class offerings—they change all the time or register on their site for an account and request emails)
 - b. Aquatics Merit badges are offered at Allatoona Aquatics Base during the summer and early fall: <https://www.atlantabsa.org/caabmb> (These classes start posting in April and often fill up on the first day of registration. Registration dates are listed when the classes first post)
 - c. Atlanta area council also offers Merit Badge Summits a couple of times a year. Classes vary but usually include several Eagle Required badges: <https://www.atlantabsa.org/meritbadgesummit>
 - d. A weekend event where several merit badges are offered (primarily focused on conservation) <https://www.campwoodruff.org/conservation>
 - e. Chattahoochee Nature Center: <https://www.chattnaturecenter.org/education/scouts/scouts-bsa/>
 - f. Dunwoody Nature Center: <https://dunwoodynature.org/scout-merit-badges/>
 - g. Scoutland is offered during the summers by the Northeast Georgia Council: <https://www.nega-bsa.org/Pathfinders>

5. Other Helps

- a. The troop website is <https://www.troop1857.org/>
 - i. Events page has a calendar with information about weekly meetings, upcoming outings, sign ups for the outings and Eagle Project workdays (if any).
 - ii. Forms page has answers to many common questions including a packing list, new parent handouts, link to medical forms, and parent camping guide. Most questions can be answered by information linked in the forms page.
 - iii. News page has links to all the past newsletters.
- b. If you stay for the first 10 minutes of each meeting you will hear all the announcements and will get a lot of information about what is happening in the troop. Scouts often don't remember to pass this information on.
- c. If you have any questions there are usually leaders or parents that you can talk with during meetings to get answers to any questions you have.