# MISSION AND PURPOSE

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

The purpose of the Boy Scouts of America is to provide an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop personal fitness. Scouting promises you the great outdoors, friendship, opportunities to work toward the Eagle Scout rank, the tools to help you make the most of your family, your community, and your nation, and experiences and duties that will help you mature into strong, wise adults. The mission of Boy Scout Troop 351 is to deliver this promise of adventure, learning, challenge, and responsibility.

# JOINING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We are happy to consider new Scouts: a) who are eager to participate fully in the weekly and monthly outdoor programs; b) who are interested and motivated to advance in rank; c) who are willing to accept responsibility and leadership roles as they gain in age, rank, and experience; d) whose parents will actively help the Troop in some of its many needed areas; e) whose parents will help and support their son as he progresses in the program.

To become a Boy Scout, a youth must have completed fifth grade, or be 11 years old, or have earned the Arrow of Light Award as a Webelos Scout. The youth must not have reached age 18.

# STEPS IN JOINING

Parent or prospective Scout should contact the Scoutmaster or other adult leader in advance of a visit to discuss the current membership status of the Troop and to discuss the prospective Scout's interest in joining. Prearrange a visit to a regular Troop meeting. A minimum of 2 visits is usually recommended before joining.

1. Parent completes and signs the Boy Scout Application form (or Transfer Form if moving from another troop) and turn it in to the Troop Committee Chairperson.
2. Parents complete and both sign the BSA *Informed Consent, Release Agreement, and Authorization* form. The form serves as a parental permission to participate in Troop outings and is required by BSA.
3. Pay the fees and dues applicable at the time of joining. Make check payable to "BSA Troop 351" for the appropriate amount. Dues are $28.00/calendar year or $2.50 per remaining month of the calendar year.
4. Parents complete the Troop Resource Survey from and turn it in to the Committee Chairman.
5. Parents discuss with the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chairman his/her willingness to register as a member of the Troop Committee and to complete an Adult Registration Application form.
6. Purchase the Boy Scout Handbook for the new Scout so he can study and learn the "joining requirements" and pass them off at a regular meeting as soon as possible. He should bring his Scout Handbook, note pad, and pencil to every meeting.
7. Purchase the Official Scout Uniform for the Scout, including patches and insignia, from the retailer immediately after joining. Also be prepared to purchase/obtain needed camping equipment, although the troop has a fairly extensive amount of gear to borrow (tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, etc) until your son is committed to staying in the troop.
8. Very soon after joining, a boy is assigned to a Patrol, a group of 6 to 10 boys. A boy's Patrol will be his team for games and contests, his closest pals in camp, and his teachers as he works on advancement.

# HOW THE TROOP WORKS

This troop is sponsored by the chartering organization, St. Aloysius Catholic Church. It arranges for our regular Troop meeting place and approves the adult leaders who administer the Troop's affairs. The adult leaders are the Scoutmaster and his assistants and members of the Troop Committee. All are unpaid volunteers; most are parents of boys in the Troop.

The Troop Committee meets regularly every 2 months. Parents’ meetings are generally scheduled the week following the Troop Committee meeting and are extremely important for each scout parent to attend. These meetings provide the parents with essential information regarding trips, scheduling, advancement, and policy issues.

Every month the Troop conducts an outing or special event. It is usually an overnight camping trip and/or a visit to some location of special interest or significance.

Scouting requires family involvement. In order to encourage that, there are multiple planned Family Activities each year. These usually consist of Courts of Honor (awards) with covered dish dinners or desserts, Family Night at summer camp, and an annual trip that includes all parents and siblings (e.g. canoeing, cycling, rafting). These occasions are opportunities for families to get to know each other and discuss important scout activities.

At Troop meetings, during Troop outings, and on his own, a boy will have a chance to earn badges and awards. His goal is advancement through the ranks of Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, 1st Class, Star, Life, and, finally, to earn the most distinctive of all - the Eagle Scout Award.

Troop 351 does have attendance requirements and guidelines. Please refer to the sections detailing these guidelines in this handbook.

# COMPLAINTS or PROBLEMS

Any complaint or problem should be discussed with the Committee Chairman.

# THE ROLE OF A SCOUT PARENT

The success of Troop 351 has been, and continues to be, dependent upon the full participation of the Scout parents. Every family is invited to participate in the Troop Committee, and we need and encourage parents to register as Adult Scouters. All parents are required to take *Youth Protection* training online by registering on [www.Myscouting.org](http://www.Myscouting.org).

As a parent, you will want your son to get the most out of Scouting. So you'll keep the dates of Troop activities on your calendar, check your email and the troop website ([www.troop351hickory.org](http://www.troop351hickory.org/)) regularly, and encourage him as he progresses in the advancement program, and perhaps help him master the skills of Scouting. But his success in Scouting depends in part on the success of our Troop. You can help keep the Troop strong with your support of talents and available time. Opportunities to help are many - serving on the Troop Committee; providing transportation for outings; helping organize and participating in Troop camping trips; helping maintain Troop equipment; serving as a merit badge counselor in a hobby or career field you are familiar with; attending and/or helping with the Family Activities. Your participation in these activities and your offers of help when the Troop has a need will show your son that you support him and want him to have the best experiences possible in Scouting.

# COSTS OF SCOUTING

Yearly dues must be paid before our rechartering is due, usually by early December. This helps cover the costs of merit badges, rank patches, and Boy’s Life Magazine. The dues should be paid to the designated person, usually the Troop Committee Chairman or the Treasurer.

The majority of the time, the troop pays for dues, activities, etc. directly from the troop checking account. Unless otherwise instructed, please always make out any checks to *BSA Troop 351*.

Summer camp at the Council's Scout Reservation, Camp Bud Schiele, and other camping and training opportunities that are periodically offered by the local BSA Council have fees for attendance. Summer camp for 1 week at Camp Bud Schiele is approximately $240. Troop 351 desires all Scouts to participate in this camp. A limited number of camperships are available to scouts with special circumstances. We also encourage participation in leadership training camps available to the Scout and adult leaders and defray some costs for these.

Uniform and equipment costs vary but can be significant.

Certain trips require recovery of part or all of the expenses based on the plans of the adult trip leader. These fees are determined in advance. They typically cover cost of food, transportation, and special fees that may be charged by a camping area, outfitter, resort, etc. The Troop defrays some trip costs based on proceeds from our fund-raising events and each Scout family's participation in these events.

# UNIFORM CODE

All respected groups and organizations wear a uniform which sets them apart, apparel which embodies their spirit, ideals, and honor. The uniform of the Boy Scouts of America is a summary of the scout’s experiences and advancement, and is highly personalized. At Troop 351, we take the wearing of the uniform very seriously. Scouts who either don’t wear the uniform correctly or don’t wear it at all demonstrate disregard for the mission and goals of the scouting program. We do recognize that society as a whole has moved towards being more casual and therefore have adopted a policy of wearing two variations which we have deemed “Class A” and Class B.” Class A is to be worn on the first meeting of the month, all Courts of Honor, Boards of Review, and any other local, regional, or national scouting event. Class B is to be worn for all meetings after the first meeting of the month, and any other activities which the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee deems as being informal. Scouts will undergo weekly uniform inspection by the Senior Patrol Leader at the beginning of each meeting.

# Class A Uniform:

* Official BSA khaki shirt (short or long sleeves) with current rank insignia, troop number (351), and Piedmont Council patch
* Official BSA pants or shorts
* Merit badge sash (once minimum number of badges earned)
* Green shoulder epaulets (loops)
* Official BSA belt and buckle
* Official scout socks
* Footwear (no sandals/ open shoes)

# Class B Uniform:

* Troop 351 tee shirt or any other Boy Scout tee shirt (e.g. summer camp, Philmont, etc.)
* Official BSA pants or shorts
* Official BSA belt and buckle
* Official scout socks
* Footwear (no sandals/ open shoes)
* We realize the cost of all uniform components is high. Official BSA attire is extremely durable and rarely wears out, but of course your son will grow during his scouting years. We recommend always purchasing clothing slightly larger so as to extend the time your son can wear it. Also, most of our older scouts have used uniforms which are just sitting in closets and drawers. We will be placing a list of available uniform items, equipment, and other scouting supplies (which are no longer being used by the older scouts) on our website.
* The only current local retailer of official BSA uniforms is *Berndt’s Army & Navy*, located in downtown Hickory. You may also order BSA uniform and other supplies at <http://www.scoutstuff.org> . If you are having difficulty finding a certain part of the uniform, please let the Scoutmaster know.

# ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Active status in Troop 351 is maintained by attending a majority of the regular weekly meetings and the outings/ activities (generally once a month). This is defined as 70% of the regular meetings and 50% of all other scouting activities (camping trips, field trips, service projects, eagle projects, etc.). A scout may be excused due to illness if his parent notifies either the Scoutmaster or Committee member (who records attendance) by phone or email. It is almost impossible to achieve the goals set forth by BSA if these minimum attendance requirements are not adhered to. If not met, a scout may be dropped from active roles, removed from their leadership position, and unable to advance in rank.

Attendance is *strongly advised* for the regular meeting immediately before a planned trip, so as to ensure adequate preparation and safety for your son. The Quartermaster will also dispense any needed troop equipment at the end of this meeting, especially tents.

# OTHER EXPECTATIONS

1. A Scout must be registered through the Scout Office and have turned in a signed *BSA Medical and Informed Consent* form before he can be allowed to go on a Troop outing.
2. Every family is expected to assist with transportation for trips as needed. We encourage either parent to camp with us whenever they can.
3. Scouts will be informed about each trip in advance as to times of departure and return, cost, where we will be, and activities of the trip. An adult contact will know how to reach the Troop if needed.
4. Each Scout is responsible for his share of the food purchased for the camping trips. For most trips each patrol plans their meals, buys the food required, and does their own cooking. If a Scout has to miss a trip and does not tell his Patrol leader before the food for the trip is purchased, he still is expected to pay for his share of the cost.
5. On camping trips, especially backpacking trips, consideration must be given to food packaging and containers. Scouts are responsible for carrying out their own trash and should not count on being able to burn paper due to wet weather or fire-building restrictions (drought conditions). Glass containers are not permitted.
6. Only during adult supervised functions will a Scout be permitted to use a stove or lantern that requires any fuel. A Scout may bring and use a backpack camping stove only after he has been certified for its use by the Scout leadership. To be certified, a Scout must demonstrate that he knows how to operate his stove in a safe and mature manner, and that he knows all the precautions and hazards associated with handling this equipment.
7. Most patrol camping equipment is provided by the troop, especially tents. Troop 351 requires all scouts who are under First Class rank to share a tent with another scout. We strongly advise younger scouts to use tents owned by the troop due to weight, compactness, durability, safety, and protection against adverse weather conditions. All troop equipment must be signed out by the scout via the Quartermaster. Equipment will be inspected upon its return to ensure it is dry and in good condition. The scout who signed out the equipment is financially responsible if it is lost or damaged due to misuse.
8. Merit badge and rank requirements must be signed-off by the designated boy and adult leaders. To prevent embarrassment and misunderstanding, a parent may not do this for his own son. We encourage a Scout to also use approved counselors outside of our Troop for merit badges so that he will gain experience in dealing with new people. BSA policy requires that merit badge counselors be Registered Scouters. Parents interested in teaching and/or being counselors for merit badges or any phase of Scouting skills are urged to tell the Committee Chairman or Merit Badge Coordinator as this help is always needed. We will assist parents in the registration process.

# TROOP 351 MERIT BADGE POLICY

A scout may initiate a request to work on a merit badge not typically offered by the Troop.

The scout himself must submit a written request for the specific merit badge, why it’s important to him to complete this badge, who the counselor is, who will be planning or teaching the badge, and what the anticipated schedule of sessions will be. Eagle required merit badges will not be approved by the Troop Committee to be completed via this format. Only the approved Troop 351 form will be accepted for this request.

The Troop Committee will perform any needed review of the request, including verification of the merit badge counselor’s credentials. Per BSA national policy, the counselor must be registered for that specific merit badge by the BSA local council (Piedmont). Certification by the council does not guarantee acceptance of the counselor’s qualifications by the Troop Committee. Other factors such as 1) the scout’s participation in/completion of Troop-offered merit badges, meetings, summer camp, and outings, 2) the frequency of such individual requests, and 3) the scout’s progress in rank advancement, will also be considered in the Committee’s decision as to whether to approve the request.

Upon approval of the request by the Troop Committee, the scout will be asked to announce at the next Troop meeting the nature of the merit badge and the tentative dates/times/locations it will be taught. If there is interest expressed by others, the counselor will be contacted to see if he/she can accommodate the others. Any other scouts participating must abide by the scheduling that was agreed upon by the counselor and the requesting scout.

Troop 351 Merit Badge Request Forms may be obtained by contacting the Committee Chairman.

# ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES

Advancement is an integral part of the Scouting program which provides recognition for individual effort and accomplishment, as well as a measure of acquired proficiency in basic skills. Advancement is a three- part obligation of:

* The Scout to take the initiative and to work;
* The parents to encourage excellence;
* The adult leaders of the Troop to provide guidance and opportunity.

Requirements for advancement are described in the Boy Scout Handbook and other Scout literature. Both Scout and parent should be thoroughly familiar with the requirements. The Scoutmaster, Advancement Chairman, and other adult leaders as well as the Scout leadership can answer questions about getting started on the "Eagle Trail.”

Troop 351 attempts to offer a wide selection of merit badges throughout the course of the year. These are predominantly taught during the regular Monday night meetings, although some merit badge requirements may necessitate time scheduled outside of the regular meetings. We try to offer merit badges which are pertinent to your son’s level of rank and experience, and also to mix up “fun” merit badges with Eagle-required merit badges. Your son should expect to earn 6-8 merit badges per year if he attends the regular meetings and Summer Camp

A Scout coming before an Advancement Board of Review should be thoroughly familiar with what was done for the rank applied for, and he must be in proper and complete formal Official Boy Scout Uniform (Class A). Boards of Review are normally held as scheduled following a request. Scouts wanting a Board of Review should do the following.

* Insure that all requirements have been completed.
* Ask the Scoutmaster for a "Scoutmaster Conference.” It is advisable to give him at least a week's notice.
* Participate in a practice or pre-Board of Review. The Troop Guide, your Patrol Leader, or any other leadership Scout can assist in scheduling and conducting a pre-board.
* Ask the Advancement Chairman to schedule a Board of Review for you. He will also need at least a week's notice.

Requirements for a Scout coming before a Board of Review are as follows.

* Be in proper and complete formal (Class A) Official Scout Uniform.
* Bring your Boy Scout Handbook.
* Bring a rope suitable for tying the required knots and lashings.
* Bring your compass.

Rank advancements will be presented as soon as possible after approved, certified, and registered with the Council. Merit badges will generally be presented at Courts of Honor.

# YOUTH BEHAVIOR POLICY

Scouting activities are fun, memorable experiences, and the troop leaders want the Scouts to enjoy themselves at all times. Their fun and enjoyment must, however, stay within the boundaries of proper behavior. Not only does inappropriate and disruptive behavior ruin the Scouting experience for others; it can also be dangerous.

* Examples of misbehavior and inappropriate activities include, but are not limited to, the following:
* Disrupting activities
* Being disrespectful to adults or property
* Not following rules
* Not following safe Scoutcraft procedures
* Being uncooperative
* Intentionally damaging property or equipment
* Hitting fighting or similar actions
* Doing anything that would be considered dangerous
* Leaving a designated area without an adult leader's permission
* Using inappropriate language
* Smoking
* Gambling
* Using illegal drugs or alcohol
* Refusing to take prescribed medications
* Disobeying the leaders or adult volunteers
* "Mooning"

The consequences of misbehavior will vary depending upon the severity of the activity. These consequences can include warnings, sitting out during an activity, parent conferences, being sent home from an activity, suspension, and expulsion from the troop.

In most cases, a progressive form of discipline is used. This means that the Scout would first be given a warning. If the misbehavior continues, he would be required to sit out during an activity. Continued misbehavior would include the other consequences listed in the preceding paragraph. If the misbehavior is severe enough, however, the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, without regard to the use of progressive discipline.

Scouts are responsible for paying for the repair or replacement of any troop equipment that is lost or damaged as the result of misbehavior or misuse.

# OUTINGS GUIDELINES

All participants at troop events are expected to behave in a way which is in keeping with the ideals of scouting. Please review the Youth Behavior Policy. This is not complicated, our rules for behavior are simple - safety first, respect others, respect the outdoors, team work, use common sense, and act in accordance with the Scout Oath & Scout Law. Scouts are not allowed to bring the following items on any troop activity:

* Axes or hatchets
* Sheath knives
* Any knife with a blade longer than four (4) inches, and NO SWITCHBLADES
* Wire saws
* Butane Lighters
* Any glass containers
* Any hand-held electronic games or other electronic devices (adults carry cell phones in case of emergency)