

Welcome Handbook



Troop 125

Welcome!

Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 125 of Okemos, Michigan. We are very happy to have you join us. We are a 32-year old troop chartered by the Okemos Kiwanis Club and we belong to the Chief Okemos Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). In 2001, we had a membership of 30 boys. Membership is open to any boy eligible to be a Boy Scout, regardless of race, religion, nationality, or place of residence. For more information on the BSA, obtain an official *Boy Scout Handbook*.

As a Boy Scout in Troop 125, you are expected to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law (inside the front cover of this *Welcome Book*). We expect all boys to participate in Scouting activities, learn Scouting skills, advance in rank, learn and practice leadership skills, and have fun. We insist you keep Scouting in the right perspective. Your family, religious obligations and school come first, but Scouting should also be a priority. We understand that many boys have friends, lessons, sports and other demands on their time. but to be a member of Troop 125 you need to be able to participate in most of the meetings and activities. If you find other things consistently more important to you than Boy Scouting, you will need to reevaluate your decision to be a member of Troop 125. We hope you find fun and enrichment in this Troop, but membership is also about responsibility and not letting other Scouts down by failing to show up and do your share.

Boy-Led Troop

Under the philosophy of Boy Scouting, Scouts are responsible for their own actions. The founder of Scouting, Lord Baden-Powell, believed in boy-run Troops and we do too. This means the boys decide what activities we will pursue such as high adventure trips, campouts, canoe trips, service projects, fundraising, potlucks, etc. Boys run their own meetings. Adult leaders (Scouters) are in the Troop to guide, teach and assist the Scouts reach their Scouting goals.

Patrol Method

We organize the Scouts into patrols of 6-8 boys. Each patrol chooses its own Patrol Leader. All the boys elect a Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) who runs the Troop meetings and heads the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). The PLC is comprised of the SPL, all Patrol Leaders and all other officers the SPL appoints such as the Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Quartermaster, Historian, etc. We hold Troop elections twice a year in February and August. Newly elected leaders are expected to attend a Troop run Junior Leader Training.

New Scouts crossing over into Boy Scouts from Cub Scouts will be members of a New Scout Patrol. During their first year in Troop 125, a Troop Guide will assist them. Each new Scout will have a chance to be the Patrol Leader. At the end of their first year in the Troop they will join an existing patrol.

Each patrol has its own name and identity. It is a team that will work and play together. On campouts, patrols cook and eat together and divide up the work amongst patrol members. Patrols are the places where boys practice their leadership skills.

Family Participation

Scouting in Troop 125 is just not just for the boys. The family of each Scout is expected to support Troop activities. This includes coming to Scout programs and volunteering to help when needed. There are enough opportunities to serve that each family can select what it enjoys most or is best able to do. Examples of ways Scout parents/guardians can help the Troop include serving as merit badge counselors, chaperoning trips, providing transportation, making phone calls, serving as Assistant Scoutmasters, being on a Board of Review, and many other jobs. Ask your Scout's Assistant Scoutmaster, the Troop Committee Chair or ScoutMaster how you can help—or they will call you to let you know what is needed from you. When asked to take your turn at helping, please do your part with enthusiasm for helping to make Scouting a great experience for the boys of Troop 125

A parent/guardian from each Scout family is required to attend the Parent Committee Meeting held three times each school year. We understand each family has many demands on its time but we believe that every boy's Scouting experience should be enough of a family priority that one parent can attend three short meetings each year. Parents can meet other leaders and parents, are given information about upcoming activities, and are offered opportunities to ask questions and can suggest Troop activities. We put notices of these meetings in Troop schedule and we email reminders, too.

Uniform

The uniform of Troop 125 is the official BSA uniform shirt; either short or long sleeve style, a Scout belt and the green Troop shorts or long pants. The shorts or long pants can be the official BSA shorts or long pants or alternates purchased through the Troop. There is a Troop neckerchief and Troop hat, which are part of the complete uniform and are to be worn along with the shirt whenever a uniform is required. Troop 125 Scouts are expected to wear their uniform to all meetings, Boards of Review, and other activities the PLC designates. As a sign of courtesy and respect, hats are never worn inside our meeting place, Faith Lutheran Church. For some events, such as service projects the PLC will require an activity uniform such as a Scout related T-shirt & Scout shorts or long pants. Your Patrol Leader can tell you if an activity does not require the uniform. Otherwise, wear it to all Scouting events.

Every Troop 125 Scout is expected to wear all his appropriate insignia on his uniform shirt. New badges or insignia should be sewn on the Scout's shirt promptly when received. Directions for placement of insignia on the Scout shirt are found on the *Boy Scout Uniform Inspection Sheet*.

Troop 125 maintains a “uniform closet” where Scouts can trade and recycle uniforms as they grow. Mrs. Marilyn McCarthy runs the uniform closet. You can purchase new uniforms at the Chief Okemos Council Office Scout Shop, 4000 W. Michigan in Lansing. That’s near the intersection of Waverly & W. Michigan next to Family Video. Call 321-9400 for the hours. Uniforms are also available through the *BSA Catalog* or Holden-Reid Clothiers.

Meetings

Troop 125 meets Monday evenings at 7 PM all months except for a portion of August at Faith Lutheran Church, 4515 Dobie Road in Okemos. Meetings last until 8:15. “Service Patrols” are appointed for each meeting to set up and clean up. Service Patrol members need to be at Faith Lutheran 10 minutes before the meeting and stay 10 minutes after to clean up.

On Mondays following a campout, only the PLC meets not all the boys. Some meetings are cancelled during holiday times and during Okemos Schools vacations during the school year. Consult your Troop Schedule or ask your Patrol Leader. He can tell you if a meeting is cancelled.

Advancement

Troop 125 wants its members to advance through the ranks of Scouting and earn the many badges and awards that are available. Scouts can learn a lot and have great fun working on merit badges, awards, and advancing in rank. Complete information on the ranks in Boy Scouting can be found in your *Boy Scout Handbook*.

In Troop 125, our Advancement Chair, Mrs. Joan Wierzba keeps track of your progress and awards. She is the person to whom you must turn in your completed blue card, when you finish a merit badge. To work on a particular merit badge, you must first get a signed blue card from the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster. You can borrow a merit badge booklet for the particular badge from the Troop 125 library for a quarter. Ask Mrs. Wierzba for the name, address and phone number of a merit badge counselor for the merit badge you’ve selected. This adult will advise you and measure your achievement as you work on your badge. When you meet with a merit badge counselor, take a parent or another Scout along.

To advance in rank, you must meet the rank requirements detailed in your handbook, pass a Scoutmaster Conference and pass a Board of Review. Please note that for the Star, Life and Eagle ranks, you are required to be active in Scouts for 3, 3 and 6 months at the lower rank before you advance. The Parent Committee has defined active to mean that you have attended at least half of the meetings and activities. The Scoutmaster has discretion to redefine active if the Scout shows extenuating circumstances. Troop 125 holds a Board of Review about every 3 months. Boards of Review are announced at regular meetings. When you pass a Board of Review your higher rank will be awarded at the next Court of Honor. Courts of Honor are also held every 3 months.

Service, New Skills and Fun

When Troop 125 goes on a camping weekend, a high adventure trip or to summer camp) read more about these activities below), we go for several reasons. On every trip, we want our Scouts to learn and practice low-impact outdoor skills, work on rank advancement, practice teamwork and leadership and have fun. Some trips are especially designed to be service projects where Scouts help others. We consider service to be an important part of Scouting, and we expect Troop 125 Scouts to participate in the service projects as much as they do in the outdoor activities. Even on the service projects, we have fun.

Campout Weekends

Troop 125 plans a camping weekend every 4-6 weeks. Both Scouts and parents are encouraged to come on every campout. Usually, the campout has a specific theme, such as fishing, first aid or canoeing, etc. Usually, we sleep in three person Troop tents. At some winter camps we sleep in cabins or outside.

Notice of the campout and permission forms are given to the Scouts several weeks before the event. At the final meeting before a campout Scouts *must* turn in the completed and signed permission slip and pay for the campout. Give these permission slips and fees to Mrs. Brown, Troop 125's Outdoor Chair. Make checks payable to 125 Outdoors. Commitment to a campout is needed at that time so patrols can plan menus and duty rosters, the Patrol Grubmasters can buy the food, drivers scheduled, the Patrol Quartermasters can pull equipment and campground fees paid. All of these are based on the number of Scouts and parents committed to a trip. *Campout fees are not refundable if the Troop has incurred food and reservation costs. In addition to the permission form and payment, a Scout can attend a weekend campout only if he has a completed medical form on file with the Troop.*

Parents are encouraged to attend any campout or Troop activity. Parents who come on weekend campouts don't pay fees for attending. If parents lack equipment let the Scoutmaster know and we'll find some for you. *All parents who attend campouts, high adventure activities, etc. must have the appropriate BSA medical form on file with Troop 125.*

Because we are boy-run and practice the patrol method, parents attending campouts are organized into their own patrol, the Old Fogey Patrol. The adults tent together and cook and clean together. One of the Assistant Scoutmasters usually plans the menu and duty roster.

Most weekend campouts leave from Faith Lutheran Church. We expect you to be on time to leave. Parent volunteers transport the Scouts to the campouts. After a campout, parent volunteers drive the Scouts to their homes. In case of a delay, parents will be called.

High Adventure Trips

It is a Troop 125 custom to have a high adventure trip every summer. These trips are usually 1-2 weeks long. Recent trips have included canoeing in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Wilderness Canoe Area, hiking in Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico and hiking and canoeing in New York's Adirondack State Park. Adult leaders and parents accompany the Scouts. There is a fee ranging from \$250-300 per trip (more for Philmont), that each participant must pay. Scouts can use funds in their unit account to pay for these trips. Sometimes, the Troop holds fundraisers to defray the cost of these trips.

High adventure trips have age and Scout rank requirements that vary according to the trip. Usually the requirement is that the Scout be 12 years old and have attained at least First Class rank. Philmont Scout Ranch requires the Scout to be either 14 or to have finished the eighth grade.

Boy Scout Summer Camp

Every summer, Scouts have the opportunity to attend Boy Scout summer camp at Northwoods, the Chief Okemos Council camp near West Branch, Michigan or an out-of-council camp. This is a one-week camp where Scouts have the opportunity to have fun and work on rank advancements and merit badges. The camp fee ranges from \$160-200. We find that new Scouts that go to summer camp the first year in the Troop do better. Campers can use their unit account to pay their fees.

Camping Equipment

To help every Scout get off on a good start with camping and backpacking, we will lend every new Scout a Troop backpack for two years. Other Scouts will fit this backpack to the new Scout so it will be the proper size. Troop 125 owns 19 three-person canoes, which we use on our high adventure trips, other outings and the red Cedar Cleanup. The Troop owns many 2 and 3 person Eureka tents, which we use for tent camping. These are our "Troop tents". In addition, the Troop issues each patrol a Patrol Box. This box holds cookware, utensils, a stove, basic cleaning supplies and water containers for Patrol cooking. If a Scout damages or loses Troop equipment, he is expected to repair or replace it. There is also a Troop First Aid Kit that travels on all activities. Troop 125 also owns, compasses orienteering gear, dry bags, backpacking stoves, life vests and canoe paddles and water filters.

Attached to this Welcome Handbook you will find several personal equipment lists.

Expenses

Troop dues are \$60 per year, payable in September. Or you can pay \$35 in September and \$35 in March. Dues for each additional Scout in a family are \$30 per year. New Scouts pay \$30 upon joining the Troop. Each boy has a unit account into which the Troop deposits the Scout's share of fundraising money. Each Scout can use his unit account to pay for dues, trips, equipment (such as sleeping bags or backpacks), or any other Scout expense.

In addition to dues, Scouts have expenses for campouts, high adventure trips, and summer camp. Boys will have to provide for their own sleeping bag, pad, rain gear, mess kit, water bottle, etc., though Scouts can sometimes borrow gear from the Troop or family.

Scouts are expected to contribute at least some of the money need to be a Scout. He can do this through odd jobs, savings and doing Troop fundraisers. We prefer that families not give their sons the money needed to be a Scout.

When there is a camping trip with a fee, payment can be made from the unit account or by cash or by check. Make checks payable to "Troop 125 Outdoors".

Fundraising

Troop 125 Scouts are expected to participate in two regular, annual fundraisers. First, Scouts are expected to help with the Kiwanis Club Peanut Day Sale. The Kiwanis Club is our chartering organization and Peanut Day is a major fundraiser. The second fundraiser is the fall BSA popcorn sale. Scouts can sell several varieties of regular and microwave popcorn. Profits are split 50/50 between the Scout and Troop.

Troop 125 might also schedule one-time, special-purpose fundraisers to raise money for a particular trip or activity.