

New Parents/Leaders Guide to Cub Scouting

Welcome to the wonderful world of Cub Scouting!! You have taken the first step into fun and adventure for your whole family. Cub Scouting is not just for your son, it is for you, your spouse, your daughters, younger/older sons, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc... Cub Scouting is a family event and all are welcome. You will have an opportunity to become closer to your family and meet other families who are like minded.

Pack 115 has been chartered by South Park PTO for 25 years. The PTO provides a place for us to meet and in return gets to be part of an organization that has been helping America's youth for 100 years. All boys in the 1st through 5th grades are welcome to join Pack 115. Boys DO NOT have to attend South Park Elementary School to join. Pack 115 and Boy Scouts of America (BSA) do not discriminate against boys or families based on race, sex, or religion. BSA requires only that a boy and his family believe in God but places no requirements on how God is worshiped.

How do parents fit in? The second line of the Cub Scout Law of the Pack states, "The Cub Scout helps the pack go". This means that without the Cub Scout, there is no pack, but the first line of the Law states, "The Cub Scout follows Akela". Who is Akela? YOU!! The definition of Akela is any TRUSTED adult. This means first and foremost, parents, but also packs leaders, police officers, firemen, teachers, etc... It is your responsibility to see that your son gets the most out of his scouting experience. The den leader is there to help him and guide him through the advancement trails, but ultimately, it falls on the parents to ensure that the boys learn and have fun. Parents are challenged to become active participants in the den and pack meetings. Help out in any way you can. Many parents will say, "I don't know anything about camping, so I don't see how I can help". This is a common mistake. Cub Scouts camp only 3-4 times a year, the rest of the time will be spent in a den meeting environment. Scouts will work on crafts, songs, games, skits and other things that have absolutely nothing to do with camping. You don't have to be a registered leader to help. You only have to be a concerned adult interested in helping boys be the best they can be in everything they do. Your den leader CAN NOT do it all alone. Volunteer to call other parents, bring snacks to the next meeting, plan a meeting, help clean up after a meeting, help set up before a meeting, teach the kids a new skill, teach the kids a new academic or sports beltloop. There are countless ways that parents can get involved and help out the den and the pack and in turn help their own son. Remember, it's your pack!!

How do the boys fit in? This seems like it would be an obvious answer, but many people don't know what the responsibility of the boys are. The scouts themselves should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own scouting career. They should be challenged to try new things. Don't let them sit at home all week and never touch the handbook. Ask them to pick a subject they want to learn more about and ask your den leader if there is an academic or sports beltloop that corresponds to that subject. If they are asked to do something in the book at home, make sure they take it upon themselves to complete it. Most of these will be family activities so you will be able to help them with it. Boys should be proactive about setting goals for themselves and good examples for the younger dens. If your son is a Webelos then the Tigers, Wolves and Bears are looking to him to see how to act. Tigers look to Wolves; Wolves look to Bears and so on. Scouting gives the boys a chance to become friends but also to become leaders and role models. When they become Boy Scouts, they will have the opportunity to hold actual leadership positions within the troop. The boys should offer to help leaders set things up, carry things and even prepare meals at campouts. They will never be forced to do anything. Forcing a child doesn't teach him to be a leader or to volunteer their service. They will be encouraged to pitch in and help.

How do the leaders fit in? Leaders are parents just like you. Most of the time, a leader's own son will be a part of his/her den and the leader will move up to the next rank level with his/her son. Leaders can be men or women who are 21 years or older. A thorough background check is performed on each leader when he/she applies. Each leader MUST complete Youth Protection training as well as leader specific training that teaches them how to be an effective leader. The leader's position is not a paid position. They are volunteers who are interested in helping to make a great scouting program and give up their free time each week to do so. Their job

is to run the meetings, participate in the planning of den and pack activities, and set an example in behavior and uniforming for the boys.

How do advancements work? The first actual rank badge your son will have the opportunity to earn is the Bobcat Rank. When a boy joins Cub Scouts, no matter what grade or age he is, he must earn this rank first. He will then have the opportunity to earn the rank of his den, Tiger, Wolf, Bear and Webelos. Each rank has different requirements. Some requirements are as simple as showing the Cub Scout salute, some are much more difficult. All requirements are age based. The requirements to earn the Webelos rank are more difficult and challenging than those required for the Tiger rank. At the end of the program year, your son will move to the next den level, Tiger – Wolf, Wolf – Bear, Bear to Webelos I, Webelos I – Webelos II, at a special ceremony. Your son WILL move up even if he hasn't made rank for his current den. For example, if your son is a Tiger and he earns the Bobcat rank, but not the Tiger rank, he will still move into a Wolf den at the end of the year. A scout may only work on his current den rank, with the exception of the Bobcat rank. For example, if your son moves up to the Wolf den and he earned his Bobcat, but not his Tiger, he CAN NOT go back and work on the Tiger rank, he may ONLY work on the Wolf rank. If he moves up to a Wolf den and did not earn his Bobcat, he must complete the requirements for the Bobcat before he can earn the Wolf rank.

For Tigers, they will immediately begin working on the Bobcat rank. In doing so, they will earn the Tiger Cub Immediate Recognition emblem. This is a plastic tiger paw that hangs from their right pocket button. While they are working on the Bobcat rank, they will also be working on achievements for the Tiger rank. They will earn an orange, white or black bead for the den, family and go see it achievements. These will be attached to the Immediate Recognition emblem. Once they earn the Bobcat Rank, the Bobcat badge can be sewn onto the left pocket. After they have completed all 15 Tiger Cub achievements, and earned the Bobcat Rank, they will receive the Tiger Cub Rank badge. This can then be sewn onto the left pocket directly under the Bobcat badge. After a scout has earned the Tiger Cub badge, any electives he has completed will be added up and Tiger Track Elective Disks will be awarded. These are yellow plastic disks that are also attached to the Immediate Recognition emblem. A scout can earn one disk for every 10 electives completed.

For Wolves and Bears, they will work on the Bobcat Rank if not earned as a Tiger. They will also begin working on the 12 achievements for Wolves or 24 achievements for Bears, depending on which den they are in. After a scout has completed 3 achievements he will receive the Progress Towards Rank emblem, which is a plastic diamond that hangs from the right pocket button, and one yellow bead if he is a Wolf, or one red bead if he is a Bear. He will then receive one bead for every 3 additional achievements he has completed. Both Wolves and Bears must complete 12 total achievements to earn rank. Bears have 24 achievements to choose from. Scouts should continue to wear the Progress Towards Rank emblem throughout Wolves and Bears. After the scout has earned his respective rank badge, it can be sewn onto the left pocket of his uniform between the Tiger and Bobcat badges. The Wolf badge goes on the wearer's right side of the Bobcat and the Bear badge goes on the left. After the scout has earned his rank badge, he will be awarded a gold embroidered arrow head patch for the first 10 electives he has earned. This should be sewn onto the left pocket of the uniform directly underneath the rank badge he earned while working on the electives. He will also receive a silver arrow point for every 10 additional electives completed. This should be sewn on directly below the gold arrow point in rows of two.

For Webelos, they will work on the Bobcat Rank if not earned earlier. They will then work on the requirements to earn the Webelos Rank badge. These requirements include learning the Boy Scout Oath and Law as well as other Boy Scout related information. They will also work on activity pins which are small metal pins that are attached to a metal device with the word Webelos and 3 colored ribbons called the Webelos Colors which is pinned to the right sleeve directly under the American flag, or directly under the Den Number or Den Emblem patch if worn. The Webelos scout will also have the opportunity to earn the compass points emblem which is an embroidered patch attached to the right pocket. He will receive the emblem for earning 4 additional activity pins above the ones needed for the Webelos Rank badge and he will also receive a metal compass point pin to attach to it for every 4 additional activity pins earned. Once he has done all of this, he can earn the Arrow

of Light award. This is the highest award that a Cub Scout can earn and is the ONLY badge earned as a Cub Scout that can be worn on the Boy Scout uniform. Adult leaders who earned this award as a Webelos scout can also wear the square knot patch for the Arrow of Light.

Do I have to attend the meetings?

Tiger Cub Parents are REQUIRED to be with their child at all times. For Wolf, Bear and Webelos, the parents are not required to be at den meetings, but are encouraged to do so. You don't know how much fun you are missing by not participating in the meeting with your son. We understand that sometimes you may have other obligations and need to drop your son off and leave, but keep in mind that TWO leaders must be with the kids at all times. This means that if the meeting ends early or you arrive late to pick up your son, TWO leaders will have to give up their time and wait with him until you return, so please be considerate. On all outings and campouts, regardless of den rank, a parent or guardian must accompany each child.

The Uniform. The Tiger, Wolf and Bear Class A uniforms consist of the blue button up Cub Scout shirt, appropriate neckerchief and slide for their den, the blue Cub Scout belt, and if your son wears a hat, the appropriate Cub Scout hat for his den, with all the appropriate insignia and patches. The Webelos Class A uniform consist of the tan button up Boy Scout shirt, blue shoulder loops, plaid neckerchief and Webelos neckerchief slide, the blue Cub Scout belt (academic and sports beltloops will not fit on the green Boy Scout belt), and if your son wears a hat, the Webelos Cub Scout hat, with all the appropriate insignia and patches.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your son is joining as a Tiger, be sure to purchase the Class A uniform shirt in a larger size. He will wear this uniform for 3 years and we all know little boys grow like weeds. The same goes for Webelos and the tan shirt; he will be able to wear the same shirt for two years as a Webelos I and II, and then for several years as a Boy Scout so buy it big.

We wear the uniform to give the boys a sense of belonging and equality. It also identifies to the public that we are part of the Boy Scouts of America and part of Pack 115. The Class A uniform should be worn at all den meetings, pack meetings, outings and anything else where we are representing the Cub Scouts to the public. A Class B uniform, consisting of the blue Pack 115 T-Shirt, will be worn when the scout will be doing something that could damage the Class A, your leader should let you know in advance if you are to wear the Class B, if not, assume Class A. When at council sponsored campouts, Class B will be worn during the campout, but Class A should be packed as well to be worn at flag ceremonies and the campfire program.

The uniform can be purchased at the following locations:

Online at www.scoutstuff.org

The Sports Center on Pemberton Blvd in Vicksburg

The Scout Shop on Riverside Drive in Jackson

Some parents have even been able to find very good deals in consignment shops, yard sales and on ebay.

Camping. Cub Scouts are only allowed to camp as a pack, with the exception of the Webelos den. We camp about 3 to 4 times a year. There are 3 council sponsored campouts, The Akela Cub, The Polar Bear, and the Cub-O-Ree. These council sponsored campouts are for the entire Western District and can have as many as 400 kids attend. They usually begin on a Saturday morning and end mid day Sunday. The Cub Scouts don't "rough it". We do family car camping. If you want to bring it, bring it. We only ask that you don't bring a generator because it can disturb other campers, which is against the Cub Scout Leave No Trace guidelines. We also ask that boys don't bring hand held video games. These boys should be camping to enjoy nature, not sit in the tent and play video games. All family members are welcome to attend any scout camping event. Each boy MUST have one parent or guardian with him at all times.

A Webelos den may camp without the rest of the pack and with a Boy Scout troop by invitation. A parent or guardian still must attend for each child.

Alcohol and drugs ARE NOT ALLOWED at ANY scout event. If you are found to be in possession of or using either, you will be asked to leave. The official BSA policy on tobacco use is that tobacco is not allowed at any scout event either. The BSA does however state in the same paragraph that if you must smoke or use tobacco, please do so well away from the scout event and out of site of any of the scouts. We as parents and leaders are here to set a good example for these boys.

How much does it cost?

Pack 115 charges \$100 per scout per year (June 1st – May 31st). This can also be paid in 10 installments of \$11 each totaling \$110. The extra \$1 per month goes towards helping to pay for things we will have to purchase for your son before the complete \$100 is paid. What does this cover?

The \$100 yearly fee covers the following items:

1. All required patches (den numbers, world crest, council strip, etc...)
2. All awards and participation patches (*excludes religious award metals)
3. Beltloops and pins
4. Webelos colors and Activity pins
5. Neckerchief and slide (new ones each year)
6. Handbook (new ones each year, including Boy Scout book when scouts bridge up)
7. Class B T-Shirt (one per year)
8. 3-Council sponsored Pack Campouts

The BSA also charges \$15/scout/year to register and \$1/scout/year for insurance. The \$100 fee does not include the Class A uniform shirt, belt, or hat (optional).

The \$100 fee doesn't cover everything that will be provided for your son such as program material, crafts, activity fees or summer activities. This difference is made up by selling Campmaster Gourmet Popcorn. The more popcorn you sell the better the summer activities will be. We encourage you to let your son become a salesman and sell the popcorn himself. This teaches him responsibility, finance and helps him build his people skills.

So once again, WELCOME TO PACK 115!!!!

Helpful Web Links

Pack 115 – www.pack115vicksburg.org

Andrew Jackson Council – www.bsa-jackson.org

BSA National Council – www.scouting.org

Pack 115 Badge and Patch Placement – www.pack115vicksburg.org/placement.htm

Official BSA Insignia Guide - www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/InsigniaGuide.aspx

ScoutParents – www.scoutparents.org

BSA Official Online Catalog – www.scoutstuff.org

BSA Guide to Safe Scouting - www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx