

# Boy Scout Troop 26 – Lyme-Old Lyme, Connecticut

## Troop Handbook

### ***About this Handbook***

*Note: This handbook is “under construction”, so not all of the referenced sections exist yet. When complete, copies will be distributed to all Scout families.*

This is a handbook for Scouts and their parents. It explains the things you should know about Boy Scout Troop 26 of Lyme-old Lyme, Connecticut. The topics include a Troop history, description of outings and activities, our summer camping program, what equipment is needed by each Scout and what is provided by the Troop, requirements for Scout advancement, and how to prepare for a Board of Review. In addition, Troop 26 policies on uniforms, attendance, conduct and discipline are included.

Parents should review this handbook with their son. A "Membership Agreement" is included at the end which must be signed by each new Scout, certifying that he agrees to abide by the rules contained herein. There is also a place for a Parent/Guardian to sign, acknowledging their responsibility to their Scout and the Troop.

### ***Boy Scouts of America Mission, Aims and Methods***

Our youth must make mature decisions about many things that they're limited experience with life has not prepared them for. Many of these decisions will have long-term consequences.

Boy Scouting offers young men a unique opportunity to practice and learn teamwork, leadership and citizenship. Since 1910, it has been the mission of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to prepare young men to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Boy Scouting works towards three Aims:

- *Growth in moral strength and character* - we define this as what the boy is-his personal qualities, his values, his outlook.
- *Participating citizenship* - The relationship and obligations a boy has to other people, to the society he lives in and to the government that presides over that society.

- *Development of physical, mental and emotional fitness* - Fitness includes a well-tuned and healthy body, a mind that is able to think and solve problems and positive emotions such as self-control, courage and self-respect.

To accomplish these Aims, the boy Scouting program uses eight Methods:

- **Ideals** - The ideals of Scouting are spelled out in the Scout oath, law, motto and slogan. Each Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve.
- **Patrols** - the Patrol Method gives Scout's and experience in group living in participating citizenship it places a certain amount of responsibility on young shoulders and then increases it as the boy learns.
- **Outdoors** - Boy Scouting is designed to primarily take place outdoors. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at Troop meetings come alive with a purpose.
- **Advancement** - Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps to overcome them through the advancement method. Each Scout progresses at his own pace, overcoming challenges and gaining self-confidence as he is rewarded for achievement.
- **Adult Association** - Boys develop by learning through their association with adult leaders of high moral character.
- **Personal Growth** - By planning their activities, progressing toward their goals, participating in community service projects and doing Good Turns for others, boys experience personal growth.
- **Leadership Development** - Boy Scouting encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Understanding the concepts of leadership guides boys toward the citizenship Aim of Scouting.
- **Uniform** - The uniform makes the Scout Troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive use image and the community. Wearing his uniform is an action that shows each Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform also provides identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.

## ***Troop 26 Organization***

Troop 26 of Lyme-old Lyme has been in existence since 1945 and is organized in accordance with BSA policies as defined in the current Scoutmaster's Handbook and Troop Committee Guidebook. The Troop is sponsored by the Lyme-old Lyme Chamber of Commerce. Responsibility for Troop policies and organization lies with the Troop Committee, which is overseen by the Committee Chairman.

The Scoutmaster and his Assistants oversee the Troop's operations, which are planned and run by the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC). The PLC is comprised of the Patrol Leaders and other youth leaders, with the Senior Patrol Leader in charge.

The Troop is made up of Patrols, which are groups of six to eight boys who work together as a team. Each Patrol has a Patrol Leader and an Assistant Patrol Leader. Scouts are expected to support their Patrol and to be responsive to directions given by Patrol Leaders and the Senior Patrol Leader.

## **Troop 26 Vision**

*“To foster an exciting, self-sustaining, program-driven and boy-lead organization that benefits our community by producing leaders and outstanding citizens.”*

## **Troop 26 Goals: 2007 – 2008**

- To improve our program planning and organization.
- To reinstitute the Boy-led Patrol Method.
- To select appropriate candidates for youth leader positions and train the youth leaders to run the Troop.
- To get everyone wearing complete class A uniforms to Scouting events.

## **Activities**

Troop activities consist of the following:

- Weekly Troop meetings
- A monthly Troop event
- Several community service projects
- Eagle Scout work project activities
- Old Lyme Memorial Day parade
- Summer camp for a week in July (participation recommended)
- One or more high-adventure trips for older Scouts (participation optional)
- Parking cars at the Hamburg Fair in August for a Troop fundraiser
- An additional fundraiser for Scouts to raise money for their personal Scout Account

## **Participation and Attendance Policy**

An objective of our Troop is to have our Scouts plan their own activities, create a fulfilled, healthy environment, discipline themselves and become good citizens by being good leaders and followers with minimal direction from our adult leaders.

Just as a sports team relies on its players to wear their uniforms and participate in practices and games, a Boy Scout Troop will only function correctly if its members

regularly attend meetings and activities and wear uniforms. A Boy Scout Patrol is as important, as complicated and requires as much loyalty as any other team.

If a Scout doesn't participate regularly, he loses interest, becomes a disruptive bystander and the meetings suffer. Additionally, if a youth leader doesn't attend a campout or other activity, his friends frequently do not go. If the youth leaders don't go, the younger Scouts are left in mid-air or they do not go and the Patrol method breaks down. Further, if the older Scouts do not actively participate in meetings and go on outings, there is no way that the Scouts can run their own Troop.

In discussions, the Troop committee acknowledged the direct relationship between the active participation of its members and the quality of the Troop's programs and decided to set forth its expectations on attendance for youth leaders and the Troop as a whole.

**It is Troop 26's policy that active participation in meetings and events is expected of each Scout.** Scouts should arrive at least 10 minutes before an activity begins, in full uniform and with their Scout Handbook. If a Scout isn't interested in attending and doesn't think Scouting is fun, for his sake and the sake of the Troop, let him do something else.

**Attendance for advancement in rank:** Advancement in rank generally requires that a Scout be active in his Troop. It is Troop 26's policy that a Scout attends at least 70% of the Troop activities for the time period specified in the Boy Scout handbook in order to satisfy the rank requirement.

**Attendance for youth leadership positions:** For the ranks of Star, life and Eagle, there is a leadership requirement that is, in part, to "serve actively for a period" of X months in one or more of a defined list of leadership positions. At Troop 26, we have defined "active" as attending the majority of meetings each month and the major activity for that month.

**Excused absences** - if a Scout is unable to attend a Troop meeting or activity due to an important school, church, or family obligation, he should provide as much advance notice as possible to his youth leader (e.g. Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader) and the Scoutmaster.

## ***Family Support***

A Troop with the level of programs, outings, advancement and service that Troop 26 provides, requires the support of family and friends. It is expected that parents will support their Scout's participation in the Troop, as well as their advancement and that each family in Troop 26 will support the activities of the Troop in some way during the year. Many parents find that this is an enjoyable way to spend quality time with their son and his peers.

## **Advancement**

Advancement through the ranks is one of the most important parts of Scouting. The extent to which a boy participates in the advancement program largely determines the benefit he gains from membership and the length of time he stays in Scouting. Boys join the Troop as a Scout and then advance through the ranks in the following order: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and then Eagle. A summary of the complete requirements for each rank can be found in the current Boy Scout Handbook.

Parents should encourage their son to make advancement his own personal goal and he should progress at a pace that is comfortable for him. Scouts, not parents, should contact Troop Leaders and Merit Badge Counselors concerning advancement and appointments.

Parents can help their son get started on the right track by:

- Making sure he has a Boy Scout Handbook with his name boldly marked on the outside and inside and reminding him to bring it to every Troop activity.
- Sitting down to review the requirements of his next rank with him. Do not sign off the requirements, but help them learn them. Establishing a little momentum early on as your son advances through the First Class rank will usually carry him through Star and beyond.
- Encouraging him to participate in Troop meetings and activities.
- Encouraging him to attend summer camp with the Troop. A large percentage of rank advancement typically occurs during the weekly summer camp session. The program is well-organized and the mixture of outdoor experience, personal achievement and learning offered at Camp is unmatched elsewhere.
- Not using Scouting as a disciplinary measure or as a reward for getting good grades in school. Scouting is as much an educational program at school or work. If you feel you must restrict your son's participation, please discuss it with the Scoutmaster.

**New Scouts:** If a boy he reaches the First Class rank within the first 12 months after he has joined the Troop, he is likely to stay in Scouting longer. The Scout will also benefit and enjoy his Scouting experience more if this objective is attained. During the first year, Scouts can achieve the rank of First Class if they actively participate in Troop activities. If they are not First Class by the time of attending summer camp, they can often achieve it during camp, if they conscientiously work at it.

**Star, Life and Eagle:** After the rank of First Class, Scouts work on Merit Badges. Other requirements for advancement include tenure in rank, leadership experience, service hours or project, a conference with the Scoutmaster and a Board of Review.

**Merit badges:** Troop 26 maintains a library of Merit Badge pamphlets and a list of Merit Badge Counselors in our area. Scouts should contact the Troop Librarian for assistance. Families are encouraged to donate Merit Badge pamphlets to the Troop 26 library when they are finished with them.

What a Scout decides to pursue a Merit Badge, he should obtain a "blue card" from the Scoutmaster, Advancement chairman, or Committee chairman. The card needs to be signed by the Scoutmaster before the Scout meets with the Merit Badge Counselor. Then, the Scout should contact the Merit Badge Counselor to review the requirements, set appointments and establish an approach to complete that specific Merit Badge. Note that BSA Youth Protection guidelines must be followed to ensure that a Scout is not alone with an adult. Another Scout, or a family member or friend must accompany the Scout at Merit Badge Counselor appointments.

**Becoming a Merit Badge Counselor:** If you have expertise and would like to register as a Merit Badge Counselor for one or more badges, please contact the Advancement chairman.

## ***Uniforms***

Uniforms make the Boy Scout Troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform also signifies membership in a world community of like-minded youth and provides an opportunity for Scouts to wear badges that show what they have accomplished.

**We strongly recommend that all articles of clothing be labeled with your son's name and "Troop 26".**

**Class "A" uniforms**, which consist of a Scout hat, a Troop 26 neckerchief (given to each Scout when they join the Troop), slide, BSA shirt with proper insignia and BSA pants or shorts (or other khaki or green pants or shorts) are to be worn to most Scouting events, including weekly Troop meetings, Boards of Review, Courts of Honor, parades, summer camp and other activities as specified by the Scoutmaster. If shorts are worn, the Scout should also wear BSA socks.

Uniforms are available on-line at [www.Scoutstuff.org](http://www.Scoutstuff.org) and at authorized Scout Shops and resellers which can be found by clicking on "Find a Store" at the bottom of the web page.

**Class "B" uniforms**, which consist of a Troop 26 green T-shirt (given to each new Scout who attends summer camp or an event that requires a Class "B" uniform and available for purchase from the Scoutmaster), Scout hat and BSA pants or shorts (or other khaki or green pants or shorts) may be worn to certain activities, such as local campouts, only when authorized by the Scoutmaster.

## ***Conduct and Discipline***

We expect our Scouts to strive to uphold the principles of the Scout Oath and Law, while also recognizing that Scouting is a learning experience. Mistakes will be made and unacceptable behavior will manifest itself from time to time. Scouts should, as much as possible, be given the opportunity to learn from their errors in judgment.

Troop 26's policy is to ensure a measure of orderliness and control that is necessary for:

- The safety of Troop members and others
- Assuring that meeting and activity goals are met
- Delivering a fun and meaningful experience to all participants

Scouts are expected to follow the Troop Rules, as outlined below, and to be responsive to directions given by youth and adult leaders. Failure to comply will result in the following sequential measures:

- A verbal warning from the Patrol Leader or other youth leader for the first infraction.
- A second verbal warning from the Patrol Leader or other youth leader for the second infraction and a 10 minute "time out" away from the Troop.
- A third warning, which will require the Scout to review his actions with the Scoutmaster.

**Dangerous activity will not be tolerated and will be stopped by the Scoutmaster or any adult leader(s) by any means necessary as soon as it is discovered.**

Whenever a situation requires that the Scoutmaster get involved he will, after consultation with the Scout, decide on an appropriate course of action that may include:

- Temporary isolation from the Troop or activity
- Removal from the activity by asking the Scout's parents to take him home
- Scheduling a parent conference to work together to solve the discipline issue
- Recommending to the Troop Committee that the Scout be suspended or ejected from the Troop

Certain actions will be cause for a Scout's immediate removal from a Troop activity:

- Willful violation of Federal or State Laws
- Threats or actions that could result in harm to himself or others
- Threatened or actual damage to equipment, property, or the environment

In this situation, parents/guardians will be notified and are responsible for arranging to transport the Scout home promptly. Any extra costs involved are the responsibility of the parents/guardians. The Scout will not be allowed to leave the meeting/activity until the parents/guardians, or their designated representative, arrive.

## ***Troop 26 Rules***

The following rules apply to youths and adults at all Troop 26 functions:

- Show respect for others, verbally and physically (e.g., no obscene language or gestures, keep your hands to yourself, no fighting, no disruptive behavior)
- Obey the Scout Sign
- Follow directions given by youth and adult leaders
- Do your best to follow the Scout Oath and Law
- Adhere to the Outdoor Code when outdoors

Prohibited items:

- Firearms, oversize, sheath or stiletto-style knives and firecrackers
- Electronic devices of any kind, except as specifically authorized by the Scoutmaster
- Alcohol and any other controlled substances are not permitted at any Troop activity where Scouts are in attendance, or at any time when in uniform.
- Smoking by Scouts is prohibited. Adults are encouraged not to smoke and may do so only when outdoors and out of the view of Scouts.

## ***Finances***

The Troop Treasurer maintains a checking account at a local bank and uses a software program called TroopLedger to manage the Troop's finances. This software enables us to track income and expenses, prepare and monitor an annual Troop budget and manage and report on individual Scout Accounts.

**Dues and Fees:** Troop 26 will collect a nominal amount each year to cover registration with our Council, insurance and to "jump start" each Scouts Scout Account (see below). Other than that, the Troop and each Scout are expected to be self-sufficient through group and individual fundraising efforts. The Troop pays for a subscription to Boys Life for every member family.

**Fundraising:** Fundraising is vital to the success of Troop 26's active program. It helps us pay for equipment, awards and badges, costs associated with special events and administrative expenses. Our main fundraiser is providing parking for the Hamburg Fair in August and we expect all Scouts to support this annual effort. Depending on our resources and needs, there may be an additional Troop fundraiser during the year. We also provide at least one individual fundraiser so that Scouts can raise money to deposit in their Scout Account (see below) to pay for individual expenses. Last, but not least, we actively seek and greatly appreciate donations and grants from citizens, local businesses and employers.

**Scout Accounts:** While all monies received by the Treasurer are deposited to the Troop bank account, each Scout has his own “virtual” account, which is tracked by the Treasurer via our TroopLedger software. A portion of the Scout’s annual dues are deposited to this account, as are any monies he elects to deposit, the results of his individual fundraising efforts and, on occasion, a pro-rated share of Troop fundraisers. Scouts can make withdrawals from their account to pay for uniforms, Scouting equipment and Troop-sponsored events, such as summer camp and high-adventure trips. Scouts are encouraged to develop financial management skills by learning to pay part of their way and they are provided with individual fundraising opportunities to help them. When a Scout leaves the Troop, any balance remaining in his Scout Account reverts to the Troop’s general account.

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Other documents that should be distributed with this handbook:

- Current listing of Adult Leaders
- Current Troop calendar

# Troop 26 Membership Agreement

This agreement summarizes the mutual expectations of our Scouts, Parents and Troop.

The Troop, comprised of the adult and youth Leaders, Scouts and their families, agrees to do its best to provide a meaningful and exciting program that supports the Aims and Methods of the Boy Scouts of America and benefits our community by producing leaders and outstanding citizens. We will make every effort to provide each Scout with opportunities for physical, mental and emotional growth.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scoutmaster

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As a member of Troop 26, I understand that my enthusiastic participation in Troop activities is vital to the success of the Troop, my Patrol and my fellow Scouts. I agree to regularly attend meetings and activities, to do my best to live by the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan, to wear my uniform in support of the worldwide brotherhood of Scouts and to challenge myself to achieve higher rank and leadership goals. I reviewed the Troop 26 Handbook with my parent/guardian and agree to abide by the rules in it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As my Scout's parent/guardian, I understand that his participation in Troop activities is at least as important as being a member of a sports or other team and that his fellow Scouts are counting on him. I will do my best to support his participation and to encourage his advancement in rank and leadership responsibility. Though it is his ultimate responsibility, I will do my part to ensure that he is on time, in uniform and has his Scout Handbook with him. I also agree to assist the Troop in some way each year. I have read and understand the Troop 26 Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date