

## **Troop 458 - Information for Families**

### **2024**

Welcome to Troop 458! We are a boy-led, adult volunteer-supported troop chartered by Woodcrest Church (525 Cliff Road) on the border of Eagan and Inver Grove Heights. We offer an active troop calendar, where scouts choose the activities and can participate in as many as they wish. In addition to scouting, many of our scouts are active in community and high school sports, band, robotics, speech and debate, as well as many other extracurricular groups and activities.

Our troop was formed over 20 years ago and currently includes approximately 40-50 active scouts. More than 100 of our scouts have earned the Eagle rank. We own 2 trailers and all required tents, patrol boxes and group gear for weekend and summer outings.

This guide covers the key information every new scout and family needs to know as they join our troop. For questions or clarification on any topic, contact one of our youth or adult leaders.

### **Expectations for Scouts**

As they mature and become Life and Eagle rank, Scouts are expected to take on leadership roles and assist the troop and younger scouts to grow as scouts. Scouts are encouraged to maintain an active role in the troop until they age out and even beyond that.

### **Expectations for Parents**

Every parent should take on a job within the troop. The success of the unit depends on active adults who all pitch in. There are many jobs. We need Scoutmasters, Committee members, trailer haulers, merit badge councilors, car pool drivers, pack liaisons, potluck planners, adult camp leadership, etc etc. Reach out to the Committee Chair or the Scoutmaster for what you can do for the troop.

### **Monthly Meeting Schedule**

- Troop (all scouts) – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at Woodcrest Church, 6:30-8:00 pm
  - Woodcrest is located at 525 Cliff Road in Eagan, MN
  - If a holiday falls on a meeting day, we meet unless announced otherwise.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday: Troop meeting 6:30-8:00
  - Location: Woodcrest Church, 525 Cliff Road, Eagan
  - If a holiday falls on a meeting day, we meet unless announced otherwise
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday: Leader councils at Woodcrest Church
  - Patrol Leaders 6-7, (PLC required, all scouts welcome)
  - Scoutmasters 7-7:45
  - Committee 7:45-8 (all adults welcome)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday: Troop/Parent meeting 6:30-8:00 pm

### **• Troop Meetings**

- Scouts and Scouters wear the Class A shirt (tan) as only dress code requirement. Boy Scouts of America (BSA) olive pants, shorts, socks, and caps are completely optional. Clothing is available at the Scout Shops
- Following the flag ceremony, weekly announcements and upcoming events will be highlighted
- Each meeting then has a skills time, patrol breakout and a game
- We also plan for camping trips and also do special activities like Merit badge sessions as well during our meeting time depending on what is decided by the PLC.

## **Critical info for your first meeting**

- Troop meetings begin promptly at 6:30pm, and end at 8:00 pm; arrive early to review sign-ups and help set up the meeting room.
- Scoutbook holds nearly all info you need: list of scouts and parents, calendar and more. [Scoutbook \(scouting.org\)](https://scoutbook.scouting.org)
- Rank advancement is at your own pace; however, regular attendance at troop meetings for the first 4 months and participation at 3 outings in the first 6 months will allow for steady progress on rank advancement. Prioritizing our initial outings will set your Scout up for a successful and engaged transition: Intro to Scouting/First Year Camp (March), April, May, June camps, and week at Tomahawk summer camp (July).

## **Troop Activities**

- At least one activity is planned each month, outside of meetings
- Activities include campouts, service projects and other outings, voted on and planned by Scouts
- Health forms are required before the scout can participate in any overnight activity. This includes scouts and all parents who attend. Send forms to Health form Administrator.
- We try to have scouts plan activities as much as possible, with at least one adult supporting planning and logistics
- Troop coordinated weekend camps generally cost \$30 and are billed to the scout's account; scouts cancelling their sign-up (even if due to illness or family emergency) will be charged the fee if not cancelled at least 1 week prior to the outing, as planning and purchases are already underway and/or complete
- Activities are selected for the upcoming calendar year by the scouts in our Annual Planning meeting, normally in October

## **Service Projects**

- Examples of past annual troop projects include Salvation Army Bell Ringing, St Paul Farmers Market, Scouting for Food, Feed My Starving Children, Adopt-a-Highway (Cliff Road)
- The troop will perform at least one service project at summer camp
- There may be numerous Eagle projects during the year – participation at Eagle Scout projects is highly recommended but optional and counts as a troop activity toward service hours or troop activity

## **Patrol Leaders Council (PLC)**

- The monthly troop planning meeting attended by Scouts in leadership positions: chaired by the Senior Patrol Leader, with support from the Scoutmaster
- Troop officers (Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Quartermaster, Scribe) and all Patrol Leaders must attend
- If a leader cannot attend, he is responsible for finding a delegate and letting the Senior Patrol Leader know
- All scouts are organized into patrols, and Patrol officers include the Patrol Leader, Assistant Patrol Leader and Patrol Quartermaster; however, only the Patrol Leader is a member of the PLC
- Each patrol chooses its own patrol name

## **Troop Communication**

- Announcements are made at the beginning of every troop meeting
- The troop's public website is <http://www.troop458.org/>
- Make sure the troop has your email and home/cell phones in Scoutbook
- Parent meetings are hosted by the Troop Committee for all parents on a quarterly basis – the intention is to provide a forum for parents to receive information about upcoming activities and ask questions about gear, carpooling, or anything else required to support a Scout's attendance at upcoming activities

## **Troop Elections**

- Elections are held twice annually, in September and March
- Troop officer and Patrol-level elections take place at this meeting
- All elections are for a 6 month term, except OA Rep, which may serve for a year
- The ASPL is elected, serves for 6 months, and becomes the SPL at the end of his ASPL term
- Only active troop-level leadership positions as well as Patrol Leaders count toward rank advancement (refer to the rank requirements in the Boy Scout Handbook)
- Since holding leadership positions is required for higher level rank advancement, scouts that are elected but do not fulfill the obligations of the position, which may be due to poor attendance, will not receive credit, at the SM's discretion (coaching will be provided along the way)

## **Camping & Gear**

- We travel in Class A shirts when going to camps
- The troop provides group gear (tents, tarps, stoves, fuel, etc.); however, personal gear is each scout's responsibility (sleeping bag, rain gear, mess kit, toiletries, flashlight, knife, etc.)
- A recommended personal gear list is available on the troop website
- A good pair of waterproof boots is highly recommended along with wool socks
- We camp all year round; scouts should avoid cotton at camps where cold or wet weather is expected – wicking and wool are better options
- Cheap rain gear (vinyl/PVC, ponchos) often does not survive one campout; good rain gear is key to being prepared for any weather
- The Scout Shops do have cost-effective equipment available for purchase
- REI guarantees you will like your equipment and will take back equipment you are unsatisfied with, even if used
- Scouts can use fundraising profits for gear by providing a receipt
- Fees are assessed for each camp and are not refundable if the camper cancels less than 1 week in advance. Camps such as Tomahawk, Snow Base, and High Adventure have their own policies for cancellation.

## **High Adventure Trips**

- High Adventure outings are planned for 1-2 weeks in July-August for scouts age 13 and older; a higher minimum age may be required for some outings
- Outings may include trips to national scout reservations (Philmont, Summit, Sea Base), Boundary Waters Canoe Area, national parks, regional trails and other back country destinations
- Trips are decided by the scouts 2-3 years in advance to allow ample time for planning and fundraising

## **Rank Advancement**

- Scouts may advance through rank at their own pace; it is not a race
- It is recommended that new scouts prioritize the First class rank requirements before merit badges (especially eagle required merit badges)
- For new scouts, considerable time is spent on requirements for the Scout, Tenderfoot and Second Class ranks in March – June troop meetings, as well as First Year camp (March), Fred C. Anderson camp (April) and Tomahawk summer camp (July); active participation at these meetings/camps allows many scouts the opportunity to achieve First Class rank by the time they have been in the Troop for a year
- To obtain sign-off for a rank requirement, scouts are responsible for following up with the adult or scout leader in charge of a rank requirement. Due to the importance of the skill, a leader may require the scout to perform the requirement multiple times on different occasions to demonstrate proficiency
- Rank advancement is achieved upon successful completion of the Board of Review
- Parents do not sign off on any rank requirements; only Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, Committee members and approved scout (youth) leaders may sign off on requirements

## Merit Badges (MB)

- Merit badges can be earned at any time once your scout becomes a Boy Scout but are not required for rank advancement until after a scout reaches the First Class rank
- We encourage Scouts to focus on requirements until they achieve First Class rank, then they can focus on merit badges
- Prior to beginning work on a MB, scouts must request an MB card (blue card) from the SM or Advancement Coordinator and have it signed by the SM; the SM will discuss the scout's readiness for the work, counselor selection, etc. and answer any questions at that time
- Only an approved MB counselor can sign off on MB requirements. The Troop has many of the most frequently earned MB books available in our library – additional books are available for purchase at the Scout Shop at a Scout's expense (fundraising profits can be utilized for reimbursement)
- It is recommended that scouts download and print a MB worksheet ([www.meritbadge.org](http://www.meritbadge.org)) and do pre-work (if any) assigned by the MB counselor; the MB book is an easy source of the answers required on the worksheet. Upon completion of MB work, the MB counselor will sign-off the MB card and retain one-third of the card; the scout brings the remaining portions to the SM for his final sign-off – once signed by the SM, the scout keeps one-third of the card and submits the final portion to the Advancement Coordinator
- Merit badges are awarded at the next Court of Honor
- There are merit badge offerings periodically. Here are some common places:
  - [www.scoutmasterbucky.com](http://www.scoutmasterbucky.com)
  - [www.nssm.org](http://www.nssm.org)
  - Northern Star Council (<http://www.northernstarbsa.org/>)
- 3 Eagle-required MBs require activities to be executed and tracked over a 90 day period – plan accordingly
- Some badges are best taken at Tomahawk summer camp – talk to the Scoutmaster or Advancement Chair if you have questions how a badge is most easily or frequently completed

## Troop 458 Court of Honor (COH)

- Scout-led ceremony to celebrate scouting achievement
  - Held quarterly: January (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday), April (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday), July (camp), October (3<sup>rd</sup> Monday)
- Troop 458 will recognize and award rank advancement and merit badges earned since the last COH whether or not a scout is present. Recognition will only occur one time (except in the case of the Eagle Scout COH).
- Scouts who miss the COH should request their awards from the advancement chair at a later meeting
  - Class A shirt and merit badge sashes should be worn by all scouts. The sash sits on the scout's right shoulder – the front is reserved for merit badge patches, the back can be used to display other special awards and patches – an (optional) pin is available at the Scout Shop for purchase if you want to attach to the Class A
  - BSA Bolo and neckerchiefs are appropriate to wear at Court of Honor ceremonies and other special events.

## Order of the Arrow (OA)

- BSA's national honor society, offering camping 'conclaves' and service opportunities to members, with youth membership continuing until age 21; participation in activities is optional
- New members are elected at a troop meeting annually and elected candidates are announced ('tapped out') at the opening campfire program at the following TSR
- To be eligible for the OA ballot, scouts must be active in the troop, have obtained First Class rank or higher, have camped at least 15 nights during the past 2 years including no more than one week of resident (summer) camp; eligible candidates are approved by the SM.
- Scouters meeting the same OA eligibility criteria can be nominated for membership
- Election is by secret ballot, and all scouts in attendance may vote for as many candidates they feel represent the values of Scouting
- The election is conducted by an election team consisting of OA members from a different troop
- Once elected, candidates must attend an Ordeal weekend, consisting of service projects and the OA induction ceremony; once the ordeal is completed, the scout/scouter is an OA member
- OA members should wear their OA sash to the election meeting and tap out

## Annual Planning

- At a designated meeting each year, the leaders of the troop meet to plan the future troop calendar. This meeting is led by the SM and SPL
- Goals for the planning meeting are:
- Receive input from youth and adults on what activities and camps are desirable for the upcoming year:
  1. Each regular patrol will be expected to sponsor one activity and one camp.
  2. PLs represent their patrols and should receive input from patrol members and come prepared with a recommendation to the troop
  3. Recommendations will be reviewed for appropriateness.
- SM and SPL should defer to the recommendation as much as possible
- Begin the selection process for the high adventure trip trek to be taken 3 years out.
- Youth and adults can propose high adventure treks at the planning meeting.
- The SPL, will receive recommendations from the group to take the most compelling trek proposals to a vote by the full troop at a later troop meeting SPL will then inform the PLC of the top 3 proposals and the PLC will make a decision on what the trek will be.
- Scout leaders are encouraged to be ambitious when proposing campouts and activities.
- Boy Scouting is meant to be a time for youth to challenge themselves and explore and appreciate the outdoors. Troop 458 will follow the outdoor guidelines and the Guide to Safe Scouting when determining campouts and activities.

## Dues, Fees & Fundraisers

- Each scout has an account maintained by the Troop Treasurer – the Scout Account shows all payment and expense activity from the time a scout joins the troop until they leave, including fundraiser profit, parent payments, activity fees, and expense reimbursements
- To finance the troop, we use a dues system to fund shared expenses, such as adult registrations, software licensing, equipment and supplies, and individual expenses such as annual rechartering.
- Dues are typically assessed twice per year and are in addition to any event fees, such as weekend outings or Tomahawk summer camp. Dues are payable twice annually, roughly \$30 June 1, and \$30 December 1.
- Dues are determined each year by the troop committee and will be communicated to the troop.
- The Troop is committed to offering at least two fundraisers annually ahead of each billing period – 100% of all revenue from these fundraisers will be deposited into the Scout Account based on their personal sales effort and profit per item – the Troop no longer takes a cut of the profits
- When you fundraise, you tell your customers that you are fundraising for Scouting – fundraising is to be solely used for any scout expense: uniforms, activities & camps, books and materials from the Scout Shop, or Eagle Scout Project fees. Personal camping gear can also be funded as long as the scout is registered and attends an activity where the gear is used
- Participation in fundraisers is encouraged, but voluntary; Scouts not participating will need to maintain a positive Scout Account balance by depositing money to cover troop dues and activities they will participate in
- Camperships (camping scholarships) may be available to families who need it. No scout should miss camping due to lack of resources.
- We are a cash-free troop – checks should be made out to BSA Troop 458; in the case of a scout receiving cash from fundraising efforts, the parents should keep the cash and write the troop a check for the amount collected – this helps us keep traceable records of all incoming funds
- Summer camp fees cover the TSR fee, trailer towing, and supplies for the week, etc. and can be \$310-\$365 annually
- High Adventure Trips, which are offered annually, can range in cost from \$700-\$2500 each, plus gear. Consider using the Scout Account as a way of saving for these trips by fundraising early in your scouting career
- Eagle Projects are often funded as part of the project itself. Options include project specific fundraisers, donations from the beneficiary, and money paid from the scout account from troop annual fundraisers. Scouts can use fundraising to save up money to fund their future project. Payment for eagle projects with a significant amount of personal or family funds is discouraged.

# Youth Protection Training

We are always very focused on the safety of all of our Scouts. Parent engagement is critical, as we need a minimum of two adults with Scouts at any event. You will hear us refer to this as two-deep leadership. All parents, adults, and adults leaders are required to take Youth Protection training. Training can be found at:

<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/>

Once you have completed the training, please email the Committee Chair or Scoutmaster, or you may bring a copy of your training certificated to a troop meeting. Youth training is required every two years.

## Scout Jargon

BSA Boy Scouts of America

Northern Star Council (NSC) BSA assigned Council for Troop 458, serving central MN and western WI

Chief Black Dog (CBD) NSC assigned District for Troop 458, comprised of all scouting units chartered in Eagan and Apple Valley

Scout BSA-registered youth member of the troop

Scouter BSA-registered adult volunteer of the troop

Committee Registered parent leaders responsible for troop administration

SPL Senior Patrol Leader (scout)

ASPL Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (scout)

QM Quartermaster (usually refers to Troop-level position, not Patrol QM)

SM Scoutmaster

ASM Assistant Scoutmaster

PLC Patrol Leaders Council

COH Court of Honor

MB Merit Badge

BOR Board of Review

SMC Scoutmaster Conference

OA Order of the Arrow

Class A BSA approved uniform (tan shirt)

Class B Troop 458 specified t-shirt for casual public events

Tomahawk (TSR) Council scout camp in Birchwood, WI (week-long summer camp)

Chippewa Sub-camp at TSR that Troop 458 uses annually

Comanche Campsite within Chippewa, TSR that Troop 458 uses annually

## Supporting Organizations

Troop 458 is part of District O and Northern Star Council

<http://www.northernstarbsa.org/>