

New Scout Parent Guide



Boy Scouts of America
Troop 4 Hopkinton

<https://www.troop4hopkinton.com/>



Important Information

Troop Meetings

DATE Thursdays

TIME 7:00pm-8:30pm

LOCATION YMCA Outdoor Center

New Scout Assistant Scoutmaster (advisor to patrols)

NAME Fred Chaloux

PHONE NUMBER (603) 714-5499

EMAIL mrc@troop4hopkinton.com

Assistant Scoutmaster

NAME Kul Thapa

PHONE NUMBER (617) 803-4781

EMAIL kthapa@troop4hopkinton.com

Committee Chair (supports Troop activities)

NAME Beth Peace

EMAIL beth@troop4hopkinton.com

Additional Notes & Contact Information



Welcome to Troop 4!

This guide will help you as the parent of a new Scout joining Troop 4 regardless if the Scout is transitioning from Cub Scouts or coming straight into Boy Scouts. It is a general overview of Troop 4's organization and structure, meetings, advancement, activities and additional information that can help you and your son get the most out of Boy Scouts in Troop 4.

Troop 4 is a member of the Headwaters District in the Mayflower Council.

Your son will be a member of Troop 4...

- A Troop consists of several patrols and meets weekly.
- Troop 4 is made up of about 50 Scouts, ages 11 - 18.
- Hopkinton has three troops – Troop 4 (boys only), Troop 1 (boys only), and Troop 11 (girls only)

Your son will be a member of a Patrol...

- A patrol is made up of about 5-10 boys in the same age group.
- Patrols remain consistent throughout your son's journey in Boy Scouts.
- Patrols select a patrol name 2-3 months after a Patrol is formed.
- One or two older Scouts will be Troop Guides to assist the first year scouts on advancement.
- After the first year, the Scouts will elect a patrol leader amongst their peers.



What is the time commitment?

For Scouts to get the most out of the program, they need to be active in the Troop - participate in meetings and outings in order to facilitate rank advancement, reinforce scouting skills and have fun with their patrol. Senior Scouts are expected to attend activities, be a role model and mentor younger Scouts.

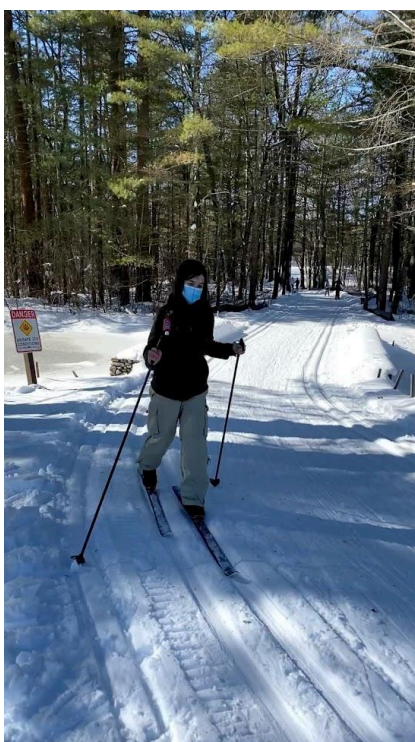
It is understood that certain circumstances and family events may prevent a Scout from participating from time to time. Our Scouts are well-rounded and we appreciate that they are involved in sports and other activities. Scouts should reach out to the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters when they are unable to attend activities.

Meetings

The Troop meets during the school year on Thursdays at 7:00 pm. Troop meetings usually last about 1.5 hours. If the weather is good, meetings will be outdoors. The Troop meets at the YMCA Outdoor Center for meeting locations. There are typically no Patrol Meetings outside of the Troop Meetings (but patrols can meet if they choose to do an activity such as go on a hike or work on a merit badge together).



Outings



The Troop offers plenty of opportunities for adventure. These include activities like hiking around Lake Whitehall, snowshoeing on local trails, and biking the Milford Rail Trail. All outings are optional, but we highly encourage Scouts to participate to get the most fun out of Scouting. It is up to your son to determine which outings and activities to participate in based on his comfort level, interests, and schedule.

Camping Trips

The Troop offers one camping trip per month. Past outings have included overnight camping at Nobscot Reservation in Sudbury or Camp Resolute in Bolton and an outing to Herkimer Diamond Mine in NY.

An [Activity Consent Form](#) is required for each trip. Medical forms are required to go on any trip and must be updated annually. Visit our [Medical Forms Page](#) for details.

Summer Camp

Scout camp is an awesome, fun, week-long, overnight camping experience at Hidden Valley Scout Camp in Gilmanton, NH. Newly joined Scouts can work on many rank requirements and earn a merit badge (Swimming is a great first year summer camp Merit Badge). They'll also enjoy swimming, canoeing, sailing, fishing, nature, archery, shooting sports and much more.

High Adventure Trips

The Troop offers one high adventure trip each summer. Some may be restricted by age (e.g. only older Scouts). The Boy Scouts of America operates four national high-adventure facilities and numerous local council high adventure bases that provide outdoor adventure opportunities.

Troop 4 has ventured to [Philmont Scout Ranch](#) in New Mexico, [Kandersteg International Scout Centre](#) in Switzerland, [Sea Base](#) in St. Thomas US Virgin Island, canoeing in Maine, and Sequoia National Park.



Community Activities

Service is a part of Scouting and Troop 4 participates in many local service projects.

Scouting for Food - Every fall, all Scouts in Hopkinton participate in a town-wide Scouting food drive for Project Just Because.

Memorial Day - Scouts participate and provide an honor guard in the Town's Memorial Day parade and ceremonies.

Flag Retirement Ceremonies - Scouts participate with local veteran groups to retire damaged or unserviceable American flags.

Service projects – Scouts volunteer for other service projects (e.g. trail maintenance, community litter clean-ups, placing veteran grave markers, or support Eagle Scout projects).

What does my Scout need?

Boy Scout Uniform

The uniform is an important part of scouting. Here are some key items to the Scout's uniform:

- Class-A uniform is required at Troop Meetings, for Board of Reviews, community events, and at Summer Camp. The Class-A uniforms consists of:
 - o Khaki shirt – purchased through Scout Shop or hand-me-down from older Scouts with dark green loops (epaulets) on shoulders.
 - o Patches – American flag (should be already on shirt), World Scout Crest (small purple circular patch, should be already on shirt), Mayflower Council patch, “4” troop numeral (provided by Troop), patrol patch (provided by the Troop), Rank Badge (provided by Troop). Check handbook for proper location of patches on uniform.
 - o Neckerchief – provided by Troop
 - o Neckerchief slide
 - o Scout pants – purchased at Scout Store, but any olive color hiking style pant will work.
- Scout Handbook
- Class-B uniforms are more relaxed and are worn during activities when the Scouts are more active and likely to get dirty. The Class-B t-shirt or sweatshirt is maroon with “Troop 4” in yellow lettering. Class-B uniforms are optional and can be ordered through the Troop store (available online about twice a year).
- Scout sash (recommended for formal events such as Courts of Honor). The sash is a convenient way to display the merit badges awarded to the Scouts as they advance through their ranks. The sash is worn over the right shoulder.

NEW ENGLAND SCOUT SHOP
23 Turnpike Rd
Southborough, MA 01772
(508) 229- 2396
newenglandscoutshop@scouting.org

Equipment

Take time to decide what your Scout wants or needs. Troop 4 is well-equipped to support new Scouts. The Troop maintains camping and hiking gear which can be leant to Scouts as needed including: tents, tarps, backpacks, cooking gear, and additional items.

New Scouts are encouraged to borrow equipment for the first couple of outings. Don't go overboard purchasing top-of-the-line equipment that you may rarely use. Before making expensive purchases, talk to some older Scouts and/or adult leaders – they will have valuable advice about what to buy and avoid. Personal equipment we do recommend purchasing for your Scout are good hiking boots, a day pack, and rain jacket.



What will Scouting cost?

Scouting is for everyone! Our goal is for all boys to participate as much as possible. We realize that although we do our best to keep costs down, these costs may be difficult sometimes for some families. Troop 4 has been fortunate in past fundraising and has funds available for any family who may need assistance with these costs. With our [Campership program](#), all information is strictly confidential.

- **\$133 - Registration fee** - Annual fee for youth and leaders collected at the beginning of the School and Scouting year
- **\$20 - Scout Handbook** – Required - some packs provide Handbooks at Crossover. Recommend a zipped cover and writing name clearly on the book with marker.
- **Uniform** - The uniform and its cost vary. Uniforms may be purchased at the Scout Shop or online.
- **Camping/trips** - The costs vary and trips are optional. Overnight camping trips are usually about \$20 - \$40 to cover food expenses. Weekend trips are usually \$50 - \$100 depending on planned activities. High Adventure trips can be \$1,500 - \$2,000 per person to include travel, lodging, and meals.
- **Summer Camp** – 1-week summer camp usually costs about \$500. (Optional, but strongly recommended).

Fundraising

The Troop raises funds through fundraising to supplement costs of activities and trips. Troop 4 has two annual fund raisers: Christmas Tree recycling in late December/early January and a pancake breakfast with silent auction in April. Fundraising is used to offset costs as much as possible.



Advancement

Advancement can be broken down into two basic categories: Rank and Merit Badges.

Troop 4 uses scoutbook.org, available online or by an app, to track progress and completion of requirements for rank and merit badges. The Troop will provide training to new parents on how to use Scoutbook.

What are the ranks?

The boys will advance at their own pace through the ranks. Rank advancement is not done by grade/age. Typically, if a boy attends meetings and outings regularly and puts forth some effort, he will advance. It may not be as fast as the parent would like or expect, but he will advance through the ranks.

A Scout advances from Scout to Tenderfoot to Second Class to First Class to Star to Life and finally to Eagle. Please see the Boy Scout Handbook for more detailed information on the requirements for each rank.



Note: Most Scouts can get to Scout rank after a few Troop meetings. We hope boys can achieve First Class within about a year and a half of membership. Eagle Scout requirements must be completed by their 18th birthday.

When the Scout has completed all the requirements for the next rank, he should schedule a conference with the Scoutmaster. During the conference the Scoutmaster will review the rank requirements and merit badges needed for advancement. He may question the Scout on any activity he has completed. The Scout may be asked to explain how he demonstrated "Scout Spirit" since his last rank advancement. Plans for working on the next rank may also be discussed. The Scoutmaster alone cannot advance a Scout to the next rank.

Advancement requires passing a Board of Review. A Board of Review is a meeting between the Scout and three Troop 4 adult committee members, either virtually or in-person. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters do not sit on boards of review. At the Board of Review the adults will ask the Scout about his progress and confirm the Scout has completed all of the individual requirements for the rank. Once the Board of Review is complete, the Scout can earn their rank. Scouts are recognized with their rank at the next Court of Honor.

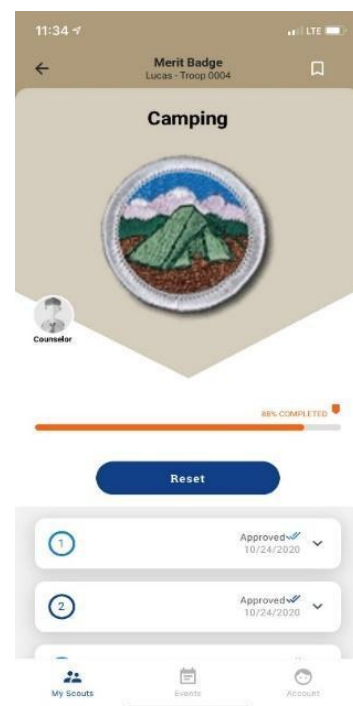
What about merit badges?

Scouts are encouraged to pursue their own interests with Merit Badges. Merit badge requirements are sometimes completed in a Troop setting, but are mostly considered an individual exercise in Scouting. Merit Badges are not needed until higher ranks, starting with the Star rank. Therefore, most Scouts don't need to start working on merit badges until they've been in the Troop for over a year. However, many Scouts like to start working on them early.

The Troop website has step-by-step instructions on how to earn a merit badge at: <https://www.troop4hopkinton.com/advancement-merit-badges>.

The process is generally:

- The Scout obtains permission from the Scoutmaster (SM) to start the merit badge. There's an easy "Start a Merit Badge" google form on the website to request permission. This is done for multiple reasons, including to make sure the Scout is not "over his head" on a merit badge and that he meets the minimum requirements.
- The Scout requests a merit badge counselor. This can also be done through the "Start a Merit Badge" google form or by emailing the Troop's Merit Badge Coordinator (currently Mrs. Hanna). There are many merit badge counselors within the Troop and other local Troops that can assist Scouts.
- The Scout is assigned a "blue card" to begin working on and track progress on the merit badge. In 2020, Troop 4 started moving away from paper files for tracking progress and is using ScoutBook through scouting.org, a digital program used to track progress. You can access it online and through an app. Learn more about ScoutBook on the Troop's website at:



<https://www.troop4hopkinton.com/advancement-merit-badges/scoutbook>. Your Scout should be fully digital.

- The Scout works through the requirements and gets his merit badge approved through his merit badge counselor. This gets reported to the Troop and the merit badge award will be recognized at the next Court of Honor.

Coordinating with merit badge counselors is often intimidating and challenging for new Scouts, who often aren't as comfortable initiating conversations with adults or managing their own schedules. These are skills that Scouts develop. This is another reason why merit badges aren't required until higher ranks.

To obtain the rank of Eagle, there are 21 Merit Badges required: 14 Eagle specific (they have silver around the edge of the badge) and 7 chosen by the Scout. The 14 Eagle required ones are:

1. Camping
2. Citizenship in the Community
3. Citizenship in the Nation
4. Citizenship in Society
5. Citizenship in the World
6. Communications
7. Cooking
8. Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving
9. Environmental Science or Sustainability
10. Family Life
11. First Aid
12. Personal Fitness
13. Personal Management
14. Swimming or Hiking or Cycling

Summer camp is a great opportunity to work on merit badges. WPI offers a very popular "merit badge university" which is usually a weekend (in person or virtual) in November with registration in September. It fills up quick! New England Base Camp also offers merit badge programs, both virtually and in-person.

Court of Honor

Troop 4 holds a court of honor 3-4 times a year. This is a formal recognition for Scouts who have moved up to any rank (except Eagle Scout which has a special ceremony), or who have earned merit badges since the last court of honor. Families and friends are encouraged to attend.

Communication

Boy Scouts use “2-deep” communication. At least 2 adults are included on any communication with Scouts. This includes in-person conversations and digital communication (email, chat, text). As the rule, there should never be 1-1 direct communications between a Scout and an adult leader unless it is in plain view of others.

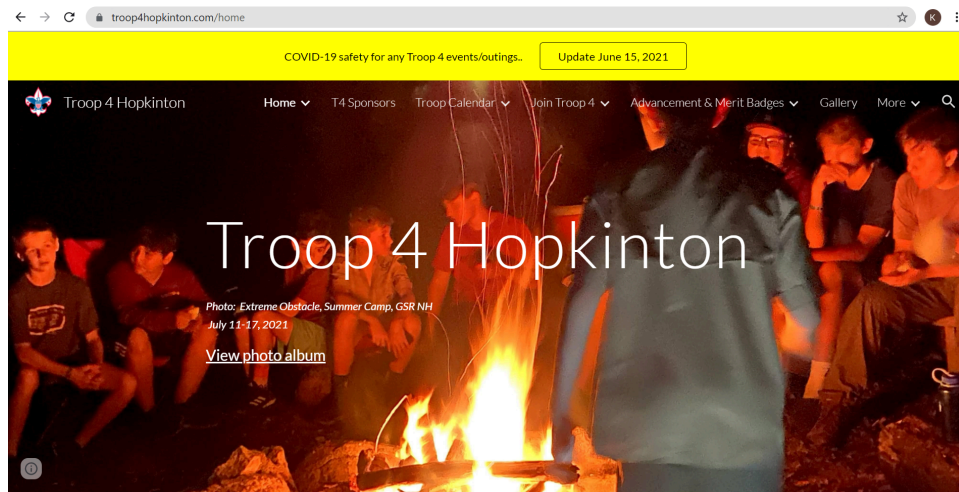
Newsletter – Troop 4 publishes a weekly newsletter via email. The newsletter includes information about upcoming events and special projects and links to register for outings. The newsletters are usually sent Wednesdays.

Email – Troop 4 tries to limit the amount of emails sent by using the newsletter. Email will be used to communicate specific Scout or Patrol requirements or detailed information about camp or trips.

Website – Our [website](#) includes links to the calendar, merit badge information, forms and sign-ups, and lots of photos of our Scouts doing awesome things. Pictures from our trips are posted on the website, so you can pull them up at anytime and get a better idea of what to expect.

For reference, you can find our Troop website along with the Council websites at the following:

- Troop 4 <https://www.troop4hopkinton.com/>
- Mayflower Council <https://www.mayflowerbsa.org/>



Facebook – Troop 4 maintains a Facebook presence. Facebook is mostly used to share photos of recent activities, outings, and Scout accomplishments. Facebook is not the primary method of communication.

Troop Meetings – At in-person Troop Meetings, there are usually committee members available. There may be a table with flyers for upcoming outings or camp. A Scout can turn in his permission slips and any monies for an upcoming outing.

Parent Involvement

Adult Leadership

Troop 4 is Scout-run, adult-supported. Adult leaders provide direction, coaching, and training that empowers our Scouts. A few key adult leader positions are explained below.

Scoutmaster (SM): The Scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the program and health & safety of the Troop. The Scoutmaster is helped by Assistant Scoutmasters and is supported by the Troop Committee. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters work directly with the Scouts.

Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM): Assistant Scoutmasters are recruited by the Scoutmaster and approved by the Troop Committee to assist the Scoutmaster in the operation of the Troop. He or she also provides the required two deep leadership (two adult leaders present at every Boy Scout activity). ASMs help with activities at meetings, oversee troop equipment, assist with camping trips, provide instruction and guidance.

Troop Committee (Chair & Members): The Troop Committee supports the Troop and actively seek comments, insights and/or concerns regarding the Troop's program from parents and Troop leaders. The Troop Committee coordinates travel for trips, assists with community events, assists with Courts of Honor, manages budgets and finances, organizes fundraisers, secures meeting facilities, reserves campsites, obtains permits, and maintains equipment. The Troop Committee meets monthly.

Merit Badge Counselor: If you have a specific skill or knowledge related to a merit badge, please volunteer to be a Merit Badge Counselor. Merit Badge Counselors mentor Scouts to meet requirements and confirm when a Scout completes the requirements with the Troop using scoutbook. Any adult can request and be approved to be a Merit Badge Counselor.

How to get involved

There are numerous ways to help the Troop and be involved. Training and mentorship is available for any new volunteers. You can become a registered adult leader where you can fill an Assistant Scoutmaster or Committee Member roll and participate in outings if desired. You can also participate in numerous non-registered ways to help the Troop, with a few listed here:

- Be a driver for an outing
- Sit on a Board of Review as a board member – no experience necessary!
- Be a merit badge counselor for your profession / interests
- Help at a Court of Honor by providing refreshments, setting up, etc.
- Help with the annual Christmas tree recycling program
- Help with the annual pancake breakfast
- Contribute to the monthly Newsletter or Troop website
- Share photographs from Troop events
- Help plan behind-the-scenes for a trips
- Assist with Medical records keeping and Health/safety issues

- Coordinate for a Service project
- Assist the quartermaster with equipment
- Assist with an Eagle Ceremony (lots of pre-ceremony items to do)
- Help out with Membership

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the Troop, we encourage you to reach out to the Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, or any other adult you see hanging around the Troop meetings!

