

# Troop 356

## Boy Scout Handbook



Boy Scouts of America  
Spanish River Christian Church  
Osceola District  
Gulf Stream Council  
Boca Raton, Florida

Effective July 14, 2009

## **Statement of Policy**

All Troop 356 Scouts are expected to exhibit "Scout Spirit"...the daily living of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. All Scouts and BSA Registered Adults should help build Troop unity and an effective, enjoyable program. Scouting should be fun and challenging while providing a safe and supportive environment in which Scouts can learn and grow.

The "Spirit of Scouting" establishes high expectations for the behavior of all Troop 356 Scouts. Participation in the BSA program is a privilege, which carries responsibilities of all involved in order to carry out our objectives. The policies contained in this Handbook are for ensuring safety and enjoyment for all scouting members.

All BSA Registered Adults are expected to lead by example and conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner.

Adults should be ever mindful that Boy Scouts is a boy-run, adult-supervised organization.

All Scouts, BSA Registered Adults and parent participants are representatives of Troop 356, Spanish River Christian Church, the community, family and the local Scouting Council. Troop 356's Handbook applies to the Boy Scouts, BSA Registered Adults and all Parent Participants as well as other family participants.

The Troop 356 Handbook is to be reviewed by all Scouts with their parent(s)/guardian and an acknowledgment to abide by the rules, regulations and Code of Conduct of the Troop 356 Handbook is to be signed by the Scout and parent(s)/guardian. The Troop 356 Handbook may be revised as needed.

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## General Information

1. Every Scout is expected to understand and comply with the Scout Oath, Motto, Slogan, the Outdoor Code and Troop 356 Code of Conduct. Any Scout not doing so to the best of his ability is not considered a Scout and may be asked to leave the Troop.
2. Any Scout who misses four consecutive Troop meetings without an excused absence will have his Troop office (if any is held) recalled. Any Scout with 6 consecutive unexcused absences will be considered inactive. To ensure successful Patrols, regular attendance is strongly encouraged. Rank advancement depends on the demonstration of “Scout-Spirit”--a large part of which is a commitment to Scouting as evidenced through regular attendance and participation.
3. The Chain of Command is (in ascending order):
  - Assistant Patrol Leader
  - Patrol Leader
  - Assistant Senior Patrol Leader
  - Senior Patrol Leader
  - Assistant Scoutmaster
  - Scoutmaster
  - Troop Committee
4. Every Scout should use the above Chain of Command when he needs:
  - an excused absence
  - any written appeal to Troop Committee
  - information concerning Troop activities
5. The Board of Review will be held a minimum of once a month unless otherwise scheduled. Boy Scouts may only advance one rank per Board of Review.
6. Each participating Scout and adult should furnish a valid email address, phone number, emergency contact number including cell number and mailing address to the troop committee. In turn, this information will be shared with those active in Troop 356.

However, we expect every participant in Troop 356 to respect the privacy of Troop 356 participants and only use the information for Troop 356 purposes.

## Behavior & Discipline

1. Every Scout is expected to understand & comply with the Scout Oath, Motto, Slogan, Outdoor Code and Troop 356 Code of Conduct. Any Scout whose behavior at Troop meetings, campouts or other Troop activities is not in accordance with the Scout Oath, Motto, Slogan, the Outdoor Code and the following Troop 356 Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action and may be asked to leave the Troop:

- A. Each Scout shall show respect to BSA Registered Adults/Parent participants, as well as to his fellow scouts at all times.
- B. Each Scout shall do his best to be cooperative with the adult and scout leadership.
- C. Each Scout will exhibit leadership by following rules and asking others to do the same.
- D. Each Scout will wear the proper uniform, as designated, at all Scout events.
- E. Each Scout will become quiet when the “sign” goes up.
- F. Each Scout will follow the rules established for all outings including those for personal safety, fire safety, and Outdoor Code.
- G. Each Scout will be responsible for keeping his tent and personal gear labeled, clean, and neat.
- H. Each Scout will observe designated times to return to camp, lights out, and quiet time as scheduled and will be courteous of his neighbor and others.
- J. Each Scout will demonstrate respect for Troop equipment, public property (natural and man-made), and will be personally responsible for cleanliness and any loss, breakage, or vandalism of property.
- K. Physical violence, inappropriate physical roughness, shoving, punching, kicking, stick fighting, throwing rocks or any other object, hazing, bullying, verbal insults, foul language, swearing, inappropriate games/behavior, gambling, hurtful comments, jokes at other people’s expense have no place in the Scouting program, ***will not be tolerated***, and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the troop.

If confronted by threats of violence or other forms of harassment or bullying, the Scout should seek immediate help from the adult leaders or parent(s).

- J. Inappropriate material is not to be part of any Scouting activity. Any BSA Registered Adult may confiscate and/or destroy any item deemed inappropriate or dangerous.
- K. Sexually explicit materials shall not be brought to Scout activities. If found such materials will be confiscated and returned to the parent(s)/guardian of any Scout involved.
- L. Each Scout will respect the property of others at all times. Nothing will be taken or used without the permission of the other person. If a Scout damages or loses another person's property, he will pay for it, regardless if he had permission to use it or not.
- M. During meetings/outings Scouts will be confined to the meeting/outing area. Permission to leave the area must be obtained from an Adult Leader, noting the specific need to leave the area, and must follow the buddy system. The meeting area must be kept neat and left clean.
- N. With the exception of flashlights or medically required devices, no electronic devices are allowed in tents or other outing areas unless by special permission of the Scoutmaster.
- O. The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances at encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by the Boy Scouts of America, or at any activity involving participation of youth members. (Prescription drugs must be checked according to BSA policy.) Scouts may not use tobacco products of any kind. ***Any violation will not be tolerated and will result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the troop.***
- P. No guns, weapons or fireworks can be brought to a scouting event. Except each Scout who has a valid totin chip card is able to carry an approved knife with a blade length of 4" or less as long as he follows the proper safety procedures.

Each Scout will be allowed to have only one valid totin chip card at any time. Each time a Scout acts in an unsafe way with his wood tools he will have a corner cut off his totin chip card. Once all corners are cut off, the Scout will have his totin chip card removed from his possession and prohibited from carrying or using totin chip allowed tools. Only after the Scout takes a new totin chip session and has earned a new valid totin chip card can he carry or use wood tools.

Scouts wishing to get their totin chip at an event may bring their knife. When they get to the event, they must hand their knife to an adult leader.

When going to the totin chip session they must ask a fellow scout who has their totin chip to carry it to the totin chip session.

- Q. Lying and stealing will not be tolerated under any circumstances and have no place in Scouting.
  - R. Scouts must attend the merit badge classes they have signed up for. If a Scout wishes to drop a class, it must be cleared with the Scoutmaster (or his designee) and an alternative activity must be chosen. Many merit badge classes fill up and non-attendance is simply unfair to those who were wait-listed or denied access to a class.
  - S. Scouts will not light unauthorized fires and will not have any fire, flame or heaters in tents.
  - T. Scouts will maintain and leave any campsite or place of activity in better than original condition.
2. All discipline is the responsibility of the Scoutmaster with input from the chain of command and Scoutmaster Team.
3. The purpose of disciplinary action is to foster an understanding of “Scout Spirit” as outlined in the Scout Oath, Motto, Slogan and the Outdoor Code. Discipline may include, but is not limited to:
- Sitting out of activities (the person who handed out the discipline will be the one who decides when the disciplined Scout may rejoin the activity)
  - Special reports (written or verbal)
  - Extra projects reflecting the values and purpose of the Scouting program
  - Monetary reimbursement for any damages caused
  - Written or verbal apologies
  - Probation from current or future activities or campouts
  - Expulsion from current or future activities
  - Conferences with the Scoutmaster
  - Conferences with the Troop Committee
  - Expulsion from the Troop
4. Scouts who act in a manner that is not in the best interest of the Troop (including but not limited to dangerous or destructive behavior, persistent disruptions, misbehavior, or inability to follow instructions) may be requested to leave the activity without refund of fees and his parent(s)/guardian will be called to come and get him - regardless of time of day or location. At that time, the Scoutmaster or the Adult in Charge will discuss the reasons for expulsion with his parent(s)/guardian. A flagrant act of disobedience or misbehavior may result in immediate expulsion.

5. The second time a Scout has been asked to leave a Troop activity; he will be put on probation following a meeting with his parent(s)/guardian and the Scoutmaster.
6. The third time a Scout has been asked to leave a Troop activity, he will appear before the next Troop Committee Meeting to describe his behavior and explain a plan of action to repair any damage he may have caused and prevent it from happening again. At this time, the Troop Committee will make a decision about whether he will be allowed to remain active with the Troop.
7. The goal of disciplinary action is to integrate the Scout into the Scouting program. However problems may arise that will necessitate the permanent removal of a Scout from the Troop. Together the Troop Committee, parent(s)/guardian and Scoutmaster will work toward a solution with the Troop's and the Scout's best interest in mind. If a Scout is asked to leave a Troop activity a fourth time, he will be expelled from the Troop.
8. An appeal of the Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team's decision will be in writing to the Troop Committee Chair who will convene with two (2) other members of the Troop Committee as soon as reasonable to hear the appeal.

## **Troop Meetings**

1. Troop 356 meets every Tuesday (unless changed by the Scoutmaster) at 7:00 p.m., at the Spanish River Christian Church. Troop meetings will conclude at approximately 8:30 p.m. All Scouts are expected to be present, on time, and in complete uniform.
2. The Troop Meetings and other Troop activities will run using the “Patrol Method”. Monthly meetings are to be planned and executed by the Patrol Leaders. The monthly meetings are to be approved by the Patrol Leaders and the Scoutmaster.
3. Once attendance has been taken, anyone not present will be considered absent for the entire meeting. (In other words, a “tardy” will be considered an “absence” for attendance purposes).

## **Troop Uniform**

The Boy Scout uniform makes the 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 gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.

1. Troop 356's basic uniform consists of the "Class A" tan Boy Scout shirt tucked in, (we suggest the short sleeve shirt) with shoulder loops, proper insignia, and the Troop 356 neckerchief. A tie slide is strongly encouraged. The full uniform includes official BSA trousers or shorts, belt, official scouting socks, and BSA cap.
2. "Class B" uniform consists of the Troop 356 T-shirt and includes the official BSA trousers or shorts, belt, and official scouting socks.
3. Scouts must be in "Class A" uniform at the beginning of every meeting, unless designated otherwise by the Scoutmaster. The "Class A" uniform is also required for transportation to and from any Troop activity. No exceptions!
4. During the time a Scout is in any given rank, they may be out of uniform only 10% of that time. (For example, if a Scout is "Tenderfoot" and the Troop has 20 meetings before he advances to "2nd Class", he may be out of uniform only 2 times.) If a Scout is out of uniform more than 10% of the time, he will not receive the Scout spirit sign-off or the Scoutmaster's Conference. A Scout may make up any "out of uniform" by working 2 hours of community service. These hours will not apply to any rank advancement or Order of the Arrow Credit.

## **Troop Dues, Fees & Finances**

1. Dues (**\$100** per year plus an annual BSA registration fee of \$20 that includes a subscription to *Boy's Life* magazine) are collected annually or when a boy first joins the troop. Dues pay for advancement supplies, registration fees, insurance, and a subscription to *Boy's Life*. Until dues are paid, Scouts cannot go on campouts because of insurance requirements. Troop 356 will make every effort to help Scouts in financial need.
2. If dues, fees and fund-raising monies are not up-to-date before each campout, a Scout may not attend the campout. Exceptions to this rule are noted in paragraph # 9 of this section.
3. Camp Accounts may be set up for each Scout's fund-raising efforts (such as BSA Popcorn Sales). 100% of the Scout's portion of sales is distributed to his Camp Account. Camp Account funds may be used to pay Troop dues, camping fees and Summer Camp registration.
4. If a Scout's registration expires and he does not re-register at the time of re-Charter, he will be considered "inactive".
5. If a Scout is classified as "inactive" due to unexcused absences (6 consecutive) or expired registration, his Camp Account will be automatically liquidated back to the Troop's General Fund.
6. If an active Scout transfers out of Troop 356 & into another Troop, it is the responsibility of his parent(s) to make a request to transfer his camp account funds into the new Troop's treasury within the first 6 weeks following his departure. Requests must be made to the Troop 356 treasurer in writing - providing a name, address, phone number & Troop number to which the check may be mailed. If the new Troop is not yet known, a 7 month extension will be given (upon request) to give time to locate a new Troop. Please note that individual Troop policies vary greatly regarding camp accounts - not all Troops have them nor are they administered the same. Camp Account funds are considered property of Troop 356 and will be transferred to a new Troop only - not to the parent(s)/guardian. After 6 weeks of inactivity for any reason, a Scout's camp account is liquidated back into the General Troop Fund.
7. Fund-raising proposals must go through an approval process via the Chain of Command. An application must be submitted, filed & approved by the Council Office. Fund-raisers must have a pre-planned purpose and money collected from fund-raising efforts will go directly into an account set up for such purpose. Fund-raising may be planned by the Patrol, Troop or Committee.
8. Money collected from fund-raising events is considered the sole property of Troop 356. The "split" of fund-raising money between the Troop 356 General Fund and the boys will be 50% to 50% unless a different "split" is reviewed and approved by the Troop 356 adult committee. Any alternate "split" approved will be reported to the Troop.

Money collected will be disbursed at our discretion following Troop policies. Fund-raising money must be paid in full on or before the date it is due. Outstanding fund-raising money will prohibit a Scout from participating in Troop activities until such time as the money is paid in full.

9. Exceptions to the rules in this section may be made by the Scoutmaster under special circumstances following a request by the Scout and/or his parent(s)/guardian. The Troop intends to include the Scout in Troop activities during such time as active efforts are being made to eliminate his debt. Every effort will be made to accommodate hardship and/or debt repayment.

10. All dues and miscellaneous collected funds, unless specifically designated by the Troop Committee, will go into the Troop's General Fund and be dispersed at the discretion of the Troop Committee for general equipment and Troop needs.

## **Troop Campouts**

1. Parent/Guardian Permission Slip will be available on Troop 356's web site prior to the scheduled Troop activity. This slip will give the details of the event, the estimated cost, and the name of the Adult in Charge for the activity.
2. All Scouts must have attended at least two meetings in the month prior to the campout and be classified as "active" status Scouts in order to be eligible to attend campouts.
3. All annual dues, all camping fees and outstanding fund-raising money must be paid in full and a completed Permission Slip turned in on or before the Troop Meeting prior to the scheduled campout. Exceptions to these rules may be made by the Scoutmaster under special circumstances following a request by the Scout and/or his parent(s)/guardian. All money applied to the campout is non-refundable.
4. The Troop will function in the Patrol Method; all cooking will be done by the Patrol Method.
5. All members must be in "Class A" uniform when leaving for and returning from the campout.
6. All Scouts attending a campout must be prepared to earn rank advancement. Campouts are not just for fun.
7. No one is to leave camp without permission. Scouts must inform their Patrol Leader or Adult Leader when they wish to leave the campsite. The Buddy System must be used in Camp.
8. All Scouts must be prepared as per the Scout Handbook prior to leaving for the campout. Any gear needed from the Quartermaster must be reserved at the previous Troop Meeting.
9. If parental requirements dictate, the Scout may be picked up before the end of the campout. However, arrangements for early pick-up must be made between the parent(s)/guardian and the Adult in Charge prior to departing for the campout--except in case of emergency.
10. In accordance with BSA philosophy, non-denominational religious services will be held either as part of the group activity in which the Troop is participating (i.e., Summer Camp, etc.) or Troop services will be held at the local campsite.
11. All purchases for food will be by the Patrol Method. Menus for the campouts are to be planned by the Patrol and approved by the Senior Patrol Leader or his Assistant. Patrols will purchase food for trips based on the budget provided by the

Scoutmaster. Reimbursement of funds is available through the Committee's Treasurer upon submission of receipts.

## **Advancement & Merit Badges**

### **A. Advancement**

1. Advancement is an important part of Scouting. It is a measure of a Scout's growth and progress. Each Scout is encouraged and guided through the ranks of TENDERFOOT, SECOND CLASS, FIRST CLASS, STAR, LIFE, and EAGLE by the adult and youth leaders. Through participation in troop activities the scout will learn new skills, complete requirements for rank advancement, and have fun. Eagle Scout is within reach!
  
2. Each Scout keeps his personal advancement record in his Boy Scout Handbook. The troop also keeps records (advancement, camping, Scout Account, service hours) on each Scout. Scouts of at least Senior Patrol and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, and the Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster Team, may sign most rank requirements, through 1st Class. Requirements for 1st Class #3 & #4a-e, Star, Life, and Eagle must be signed by an authorized BSA Registered adult leader.
  
3. Parent(s) or guardian may not sign their son's book. Therefore, no credit will be given to an advancement signed off only by a Scout's parent(s) or guardian.
  
4. Each Scout will have a chance to talk with the Scoutmaster at a Scoutmaster Conference. This conference is used to discuss your goals and accomplishments and is required for each rank advancement.
  
5. A Board-of-Review is held for each Scout as a requirement for rank advancement. It is a review by at least three members of the Troop Adult Leadership (not the Scoutmaster) to make sure the Scout has met all the requirements of rank, and to learn how the Scout feels he is doing with the troop and with Scouting. This is not a retest. Its purpose is to help the Scout progress in his Scouting adventure. Scouts are to contact the troop Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team to arrange their Board-of-Review.
  
6. A Court-of-Honor is a formal ceremony, held two (2) to three (3) times a year as designated, where a Scout is recognized for his accomplishments in front of family and friends. This is a family activity and we respectfully require your attendance at each one.
  
7. After attaining the rank of Life, the Scout meets with one of the adult leaders to discuss his Eagle Project.

## **B. Merit Badge**

1. Each Scout may work on any merit badge at any time. Ask the Advancement Chairman for a blue card and the name and phone number of an approved counselor. Make an appointment with the counselor. The merit badge counselor will help you pass the requirements. A minimum of two (2) Scouts (or a Scout and a buddy) must be present at any merit badge counseling session. Merit badges can also be earned at summer camp, at District and troop events. Return the completed blue card to your Advancement Chairman.

2. Troop 356's view of the merit badge process is that maximum benefit is obtained when the Scout initiates the process of earning a merit badge by personally contacting the merit badge counselor and mutually scheduling the completion of requirements. Boys learn how to communicate, to schedule, to organize, and to complete requirements with an adult merit badge counselor.

3. Troop 356 monitors and will pre-approve participation at certain Merit Badge functions such as Merit Badge College. However to take a class for an Eagle required merit badge at a Merit Badge College or other merit badge event, the Scout must obtain pre-approval in writing from the Scoutmaster or designee. Therefore, unless prior permission of the Scoutmaster is obtained, no credit will be given to a Troop 356 Scout who claims to have earned an Eagle required merit badge at a Merit Badge College or other merit badge event. The only exception to this rule is Summer Camp.

## **Adult Guidelines**

1. For the protection of our youth, Troop 356 will abide by the guidelines set forth in “Guide to Safe Scouting”. Following BSA requirements for two deep adult leadership no scout will be alone with an adult unless the adult is the Scouts parent or guardian. For the protection of the leaders and boys in our troop, every adult associated with the troop should attend Youth Protection Training. Contact our local council district executive for the next training session.
2. Only BSA Registered Adults who have a current Youth Protection Training Certificate will be allowed to attend campouts or outings.
3. All adults attending the campouts will camp and function in the Patrol Method. Adults will camp and eat as a separate Patrol near or adjacent to the Troop. No boys will be allowed to sleep with adults. All money for food purchases, etc., will be handled the same as the Scouts. Adult Leaders may be asked to participate with the Scouts at mealtimes from time to time, or eat with their sons at mealtime. Participation like this is welcomed. One should use good judgment in this matter as the Patrol funds and food are limited on each campout.
4. The Boy Scouts of America prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances at encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by the Boy Scouts of America, or at any activity involving participation of youth members. Adult leaders should support the attitude that young adults are better off without tobacco and may not allow the use of tobacco products at any BSA activity involving youth participants. All scouting functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants.
5. BSA Registered Adults who wish to become an Adult Leader should:
  - A. Attend regular Troop meetings observing, respecting and supporting the boy-led leadership style.
  - B. Apply for Troop Committee membership and attend Committee meetings.
  - C. “Shadow” one or more Assistant Scoutmasters in a mentoring program as approved by the Assistant Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster. This may include merit badge instruction and skill instruction and will provide an opportunity for feedback from ASM/SM.
  - D. Meet with the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster for ongoing critique and feedback.
  - E. Attend District & Council training opportunities. These include Youth Protection Training, Boy Scout Leader Training, Woodbadge, District Roundtable, University of Scouting and more.

Upon a favorable report from the Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team, the Troop Committee can choose to extend an invitation to the interested adult asking them to become an Assistant Scoutmaster.

6. An Adult Leader who uses excessive vulgar language or inappropriate behavior (as defined by Scouting Law) may be asked to leave the scouting function, placed on probation or asked to leave the Troop at the discretion of the Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team or Troop Committee.

## **Troop Committee**

1. All interested adults are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the Troop 356 Committee.
2. Troop 356's Committee meets as designated at Spanish River Christian Church.
3. The chief responsibilities of the Troop Committee are to keep current the Troop's registration, support the Troop as needed and provide monetary support to the Troop and Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team. The Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team is responsible for development and operation of the Troop program to ensure its success.
4. The Troop Committee meeting will conduct business that includes but is not confined to Chairman's report, Secretary's report, Scoutmaster's report, Treasurer's report and any Committee report as necessary. Reports such as rank advancement, membership, outdoor program, leadership issues, equipment and facilities, and old and new business will also be included.
5. Committee business will be conducted at the regularly scheduled monthly meetings. A minimum of three Committee members are required to conduct committee business. Decisions will be made by a majority vote of the members present. All Committee members will be notified in advance of meetings held outside the regularly scheduled time.
6. All Troop expenditures are to be pre-approved by the Scoutmaster/Scoutmaster Team. For camping, a petty cash reserve of up \$150 per campout is set up for use at the Quartermaster's discretion. All other requests must be supported by pre-approval or receipt. Only the Treasurer and his/her approved alternate, may sign Troop 356 checks.
7. All receipts should be submitted with 45 days after purchases are made so that an accurate budget may be determined. Reimbursement for approved expenses will be made at the monthly committee meeting.