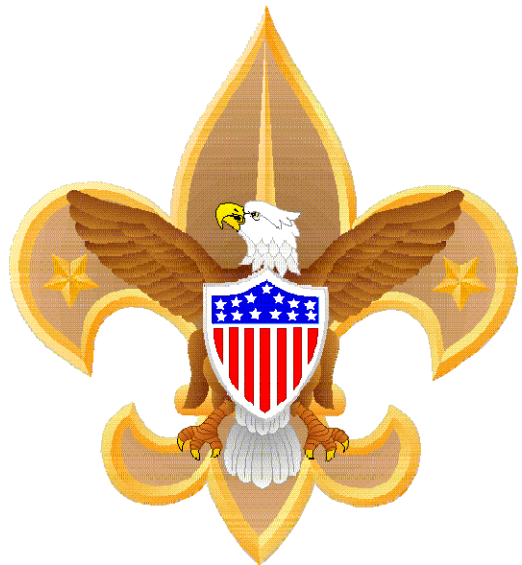
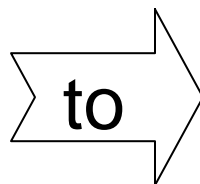


SILVER COMET DISTRICT







**WEBELOS / TROOP
TRANSITION AND
OPEN HOUSE**



Transition Information

CONTENTS

WEBELOS-to-Scout Transition

-  Transition Timeline
-  WEBELOS Transition Tracking Form
-  Troop Visit Checklist
-  Troop Visit Sample Questions
-  Troop Visit Parent Guide & Concerns
-  Troop Information Sheets (separate packet)

For a complete listing of Silver Comet Troops, their Scoutmasters and Charter Organizations go to:

<http://www.silvercometdistrictbsa.org/node/1001>

Webelos to Scout Transition Timetable

August

- Get names, addresses, and telephone numbers of second-year Webelos.
- Plan a joint Boy Scout troop/Webelos den camping trip for October.
- Plan a program of upcoming events to present at a Webelos den meeting visit in November.
- Select a den chief for each Webelos den.

September

- Mail a letter of introduction from the Boy Scout troop to second-year Webelos Scouts to introduce them to the troop.
- Put second-year Webelos Scouts on the mailing list to receive the troop newsletter.
- Continue planning the joint camping trip for October.

October

- Conduct the joint camping trip with the Webelos den.

November

- Attend a Webelos den meeting to teach the Webelos Scouts how the Boy Scout troop works.
- Have den chiefs attend a local council or district training course.

December

- Set a date for Webelos Scouts and their parents to visit a Boy Scout troop meeting in January.
- Send a form of information or greeting, letting Webelos you look forward to them joining the troop.

January

- Host Webelos Scouts and their parents at a Boy Scout troop meeting.
- Plan a bridging ceremony for the blue and gold banquets in February to welcome graduating Webelos Scouts to their new troop.

- Attend a meeting for first-year Webelos Scouts to introduce them to Boy Scouting.

February

- Hold the bridging ceremony at the blue and gold banquet.
- Get new Scouts actively involved with the troop through troop activities.
- Recruit parents of new Scouts to become assistant Scoutmasters or troop committee members.

March

- Plan a troop activity for new Scouts to get them involved with their new troop.

April

- Conduct summer camp orientation to encourage troop involvement.
- Attend a meeting of Bear Cub Scouts to introduce them to Boy Scouting.
- Sponsor a troop activity for new Scouts.

May

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Boy Scout troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun.
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts.

June

- Ensure that all new Scouts attend summer camp.

July

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Boy Scout troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun.
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts.

CHECKLIST FOR WEBELOS' SCOUT TROOP VISIT

Call the Scoutmaster before the visit:

- How many Webelos and parents are coming?
 - Will need a joining application for each boy
- What is the evening's program/theme?
 - Will the Webelos fit in?
 - Would another meeting be a better time?
- Who is the ASM for Webelos transition and will he address the Questions listed below to the parents?

Prepare the Webelos and the parents:

- Parents' attendance is as important as the boys'
- Meetings are not as controlled as den meetings (boy vs parent run!)
- This is a snapshot of one troop-long term perspective may be different

Things to Look For:

- Boy** Leadership--from Patrol Leader through Senior Patrol Leader
- Program for the meeting--is it planned, is the SPL following the program?
- Uniforms--especially on the older boys (they set the example)
- Boys' attitude towards Scouting, each other, visitors
- Boy - Adult relationship
- Other parents participating in the program
 - Advancement
 - Mentoring new boy patrol
 - Boards of Review
 - Helping administer the outdoor program

Questions to Ask:

- Troop's Long Range plan?
- Camping/Outdoor Program?
- Summer camp plans?
- Fund raising program?
- Troop's Youth Leaders trained? (Council NYLT and/or troop ILST?)
- Troop's Adult Leaders trained? (Boy Scout Leader Basic and/or Wood Badge?) New
- boy patrol or spread new boys among patrols?
- Joining fees?
- Minimum equipment to join?
 - Any camping equipment for loan?
- Published by-laws?
- Opportunities for parents to participate?

Troop Questions

Choosing the right Boy Scout troop for you is an individual decision. Troops vary in their focus and the personalities in each troop differ. You need to think about what will make scouting a fun, rewarding experience for you and then find a troop that appears to best fulfill your needs.

If you're a Webelos scout, having completed five years of Cub Scouts, you may feel that you've experienced all there is in the program. But Boy Scouts is a very different program full of new experiences. Make a commitment to try it for a year to observe the differences and then decide if you want to continue on or not.

A boy needs to visit at least one troop meeting before joining Boy Scouts. You really should visit several troops to learn the uniqueness of each. Select a troop that fits the needs of your family.

When you visit troops, try to get answers to these important questions to help you decide on a home troop:

- How many registered scouts? (30-50 is generally recognized as a good troop size, but there are many larger and smaller troops)
- How many of those registered scouts are active? (some troops have lots of names on the roster, but the scouts don't participate. Count how many are at the meeting you visit and if it doesn't match what you are told, visit again before deciding to join.)
- How many assistant Scoutmasters, Committee members, other troop positions? (a strong troop committee supports the plans created by the scouts. Assistant Scoutmasters are needed to support scout advancement and troop events. One assistant Scoutmaster for every 8-10 scouts is good.)
- What would a chart of the age distribution of the 'active' scouts look like? (a few older and lots of 11-12 year olds indicates a troop that is either recently growing or is having problems keeping scouts active. More older scouts indicates there's something for them to stay for.)
- How many scouts have earned Eagle in the past few years and how many are still active in the troop? (often scouts reach Eagle and stop participating. Hearing that scouts stay in the troop until the age out at 18 indicates a strong program.)
- How are the patrols organized? (new scouts should be kept together to start, but then either continue on as their own patrol or get integrated into existing multi-age patrols.)

- What goes on in troop meetings? (you should see this when you visit. Some troops spend most troop meetings doing merit badge work - this is not the BSA model for merit badges. Some troops run around in chaos at meetings. The agenda for each meeting should be prepared and run by the Senior Patrol Leader. Meetings should have an opening, time for scout skills, fun time, planning for events, a scoutmaster minute, and closing. The key thing is that you should see the troop being run by the scouts, not the scoutmaster or other adults - even if it seems inefficient.) □ What service projects does the troop do? (service is a key part of scouting. There should be many opportunities for service throughout the year.)
- How is the rank advancement managed? (There should be support in place for new scouts to advance up to First Class. The most important thing you should hear is that the troop has good Troop Guides for the new scouts. These are helpful scouts in a leadership position tasked with guiding new scouts in their first year. Some troops force-feed advancement up to First Class in a new scout's first year while others let the scout flounder with no direction - both tend to lose scouts.)
- How are Merit Badges managed? (the BSA merit badge program is intended for scouts to seek out and complete merit badges that interest them, as well as 12 required badges for Eagle rank. A troop that schedules merit badges and scouts just attend similar to school is not following the program. A troop that spends their troop meeting time on merit badges is not following the program. Scouts need to take responsibility to select merit badges and complete them with a merit badge counselor advising and guiding them.)
- How is troop leadership managed? (The troop should really be 'boy-led'. Every troop will say it is 'boy-run' or 'boy-led', but you need to see if that is true. Who is in front of the troop? Who is corralling the scouts to start the next activity? Who is teaching? What are the older scouts doing? These should all be scouts in leadership roles. A Senior Patrol Leader runs the meetings with assistance from his Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. Every patrol has a Patrol Leader responsible for leading his group of 5-9 scouts. These scouts should meet every month to plan upcoming activities. There should be an annual scheduling session where the scouts plan campouts, high adventure trips, and other events for the future.)
- When and how often does the troop meet? (A troop should have an outing scheduled for every month. Troop meetings should occur on a regular schedule at least twice a month, and preferably three times. Troops should not stop meeting for the summer - the troop meetings should continue but with less expected participation due to family vacations.)
- How is family communication handled? (email, phone trees, web site - depending on the type of communication and your preferences, any can work. A troop roster should be kept updated and distributed to all scouts.)
- What camping has the troop done and what is planned? (This question will probably affect your choice since you can relate to the answer with no prior BSA background. There should be a wide range of outing themes, not the same 12 events every year. There should be a week-long summer camp, and an outing every month.)

- What high adventure trips have been done recently and are planned? (many troops will rattle off Philmont, Seabase, Northern Tier, and National Jamboree as their high adventures - these are all great trips, but they are very expensive and pretty much a pre-packaged deal. If a troop tells you their scouts are planning a trek in the Rockies, or whitewater rafting, or hiking the Grand Canyon, or some other self-directed high adventure, that shows a broader view of scouting. Ask if the scouts or adults are planning those outings - scouts CAN do pretty much all of it, with just guidance as needed.)
- What participation and training is expected of parents? (You should expect that parents are needed to make the troop's plans succeed. The most important thing a parent can do is ask the scout how a meeting or outing was and to support him in scouting. Many troops would like each family to help with transportation to 2 or 3 campouts each year, some require less. You should hear that adults are required to complete Youth Protection Training before interacting with the scouts. Troops also need a few adults to take on troop roles each year, such as Asst. Scoutmaster or Committee member - these are required to offer a complete scouting program. They should be expected to complete training for their position.)
- What fundraising is done?
- How are the funds managed? Does each scout have his own account?
- What equipment is provided by the troop and the scout?
- What uniforms are required?
- How often are Roundtables attended and by who? (district roundtable meetings should be held each month and the adult troop leaders should attend to find out district and council information.)

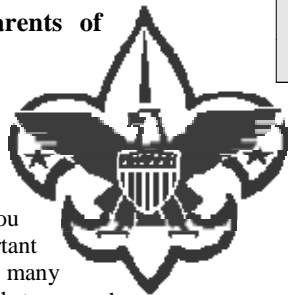
Some additional questions to ask:

- What district and council events has the troop attended recently or planning to attend?
- How will new scouts learn what to do as Boy Scouts?
- How much will a year of scouting cost?
- How are conflicts between scouting and sports/theater/music/... handled?

Dear Webelos Leaders and Parents of Webelos:

This year your son will be making a decision that will have an impact on his Scouting career: the choice of which Boy Scout Troop he will join. We are providing this guide to help you assist your son as he makes this important decision. It includes brief answers for many of the questions you may have for each troop and suggests other questions you and your son might want to ask.

Remember: The choice of a troop is a personal decision.



Here are some questions that you should ask when visiting a troop:

How many registered Scouts are in the troop?

How many registered Leaders?

While troops will vary in size, there should be a cadre of Leadership appropriate to the number of boys in the troop. Do the boys tend to stick with the program year to year? Does the troop hold a “Quality Unit” award?

What is the age range of the Scouts? Is the troop currently able to hold the interest of the older as well as younger Scouts? Do they offer (or plan to offer) any “High Adventure” Scouting?

Younger Scouts traditionally work on their Rank Requirements so they can advance through the Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class Ranks in their first year in Scouting. Much of their attention in meetings and on campouts is devoted to their basic Scout skills for these requirements. As the Scouts get into their teens, it is necessary to challenge them in order to hold their interest. Scouting has established “High Adventure” programs for Scouts who are 13 years of age or older. They may begin high level canoeing, rock climbing, or sailing. Troops may travel to Philmont Scout Ranch for rugged mountain backpacking or to a national or international Jamboree or to other high adventure sites.

Who are the Scout Leaders in the troop? Are the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and Committee Chairman trained? What training have they attended and when?

This is a very important part of your consideration of a troop. A trained leader should know BSA policies on programs, safety, and youth protection. To be considered “Trained”, Leaders must have taken training courses offered by the district and council. They may then wear a “Trained” patch on their sleeves. Ask what level of training the troop leadership has and when the training course was taken. Most training courses (except Woodbadge) should be renewed every 2-5 years. High levels of training are desired. Boy Scout Leader Training offered in our Council includes:

- Fast Start* (instructional videotape) The Basics of the Boy Scout Program and Patrol Method
- Youth Protection* (90 minutes video and discussion) (note: this training is available for all adults in the troop, and should be encouraged of all who camp with the boys)
- Scoutmaster Fundamentals/Adult Basic Leader Training* (weekend course including overnight)
- Woodbadge* (Highest level of Scout Leader Training: one full week or three full weekend campout/class sessions)



Is the troop “boy run”? What is their feeling about boy leadership?

In Boy Scouting, most troops aim to train their boys for leadership. Each troop has a Senior Patrol Leader, elected by all the boys in the troop, who with his Assistant Senior Patrol Leader takes the helm for leadership within the troop. The troop will also be organized into Patrols, units of 5 to 8 Scouts who function together, similar to a Cub den. They will have an elected Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader. In a young troop, the boys will obviously need more adult assistance in running meetings, etc., but in an established troop with older Scouts, you should see evidence of “boys leading boys”, not adults running the program.

What is their activity program like?

Ask to see a copy of their yearly program schedule. You’ll want to see how often they camp out. The outdoor program recommends 9-12 campouts per year, including Summer Camp. Do they camp in the winter? Do they participate in the District/Council activities such as the Camporees and Expo? Do they offer special activities at meetings? Do they invite speakers on certain topics?

What is a “typical” meeting like?

Is it “boy run”? Is it upbeat? Are the boys kept busy? Is it fun? Do they show respect to the flag ceremony, to the program, to the adults, to each other? Is good discipline evident within the program?

What are their uniform requirements?

Most troops require full uniform for all meetings and for District- or Council sponsored campouts. Others require only the uniform shirt. Others have designated uniform meeting days. Others wear the activity (red polo) shirt, or a specially designed troop t-shirt. You will probably want to choose a troop that feels the same about the uniform as you and your son do. Ask if there is a uniform ‘bank’ of uniform parts available until you can get the entire uniform, or if there is assistance for purchasing a complete uniform.

Does the troop attend Summer Camp? What percentage of the troop attended last year? Where do they go? Do they always go to the same camp? How many Leaders attend camp with the Scouts? Are those Leaders trained?

Summer camp offers a tremendous opportunity for Scouts to experience the fun and excitement of camping while affording the chance to achieve rank advancements and merit badges. Some troops have a tradition of returning to the same camp every year, while others rotate between Scout Camps in nearby Councils for a change of pace.

Do I need to join the troop my Webelos leader joins?

No, all members of a den need not join the same troop. Nor is there a “designated” troop that your boys must join, although some packs have a close affiliation with a brother-troop. Most troops welcome any new Scout that would like to join them.

What about the Arrow of Light Requirements?

The Webelos Arrow of Light requires your son to visit at least one Boy Scout Troop, attend an outdoor event with a troop, and complete an application to join. We recommend he visit several troops, so he can see how different troops do things. Every troop has its own traditions, activities, and level of adventure. You need to find one that is right for your son. If possible, you and your son should attend an overnight campout as a guest of a troop. Contact the troop(s) you are interested in to set up a visit and go with your son to help him assess the troop.

How do I contact a troop?

Troop contact information is available at the Scout office. It lists the contact phone numbers, location, and meeting nights for the troops in your school district. You may choose any troop in any school district to visit or join. If you need more information on troops, please contact the Scout Office.

The troops do have one request of you - please call one of the contact persons before visiting the troop. Sometimes troops have meetings off-site, and calling ahead will assure that you don’t miss them.

What should I ask when I visit?

During your visit, there are things to ask and observe. There is no “right” answer to these questions, but you want a troop you and your son will feel comfortable with. Don’t be afraid to ask about the troop. They will be proud to tell you about themselves.

How do they utilize the Advancement & Merit Badge Program?

Some troops use the Advancement and Merit Badge Program as the cornerstone of their program. Their campouts and meetings center on helping the boys advance within the format outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. Some focus meetings on merit badge work. Other troops may feel that the advancements and merit badges are secondary and plan activities independent of them. Their Scouts earn all merit badges on their own. Clearly, either system can function well, and boys can work with either one to advance all the way to Eagle Scout.

What can a parent expect in terms of fees?

Fees vary from troop to troop. Most Troops have an annual fee, which covers membership and basic materials, including badges and awards. It usually does not include uniform, camping fees, meals, travel or other special activity costs. You'll want to know what additional fees will likely be charged during the course of the year.

Observe how the boys interact.

How do they treat the visitors? You'll want to join a troop where your son feels comfortable. Does your son need a group where he already knows some boys? If he does not know other boys initially, do they seem like a group that will treat a newcomer well?

What can I do to help?

Troops require lots of adult support. There are many different levels of involvement in a troop, from leadership roles, to serving on the Troop Committee, to helping with campouts, to driving to events, etc. We hope you can get involved with your son as he continues on in Scouting. It's been our experience that successful Scouts and successful troops have parents who can make time to be involved.

Obviously, there are many other questions you may wish to ask of a troop relative to your son's interests or goals in Scouting. We hope this information gives you a starting point to help you assess the troops you visit. Good luck!



Webelos To Scout: The Transition from Pack to Troop

**A Guide
for
Parents and Leaders**

