

# ***New Scout/Parent Introductory Guide Troop 278 – Ahwatukee***

***Salt River District, Grand Canyon Council, Boy Scouts Of America  
A Chartered Organization of Corpus Christi Catholic Church***

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## **Welcome to Troop 278!**

By becoming a parent of a Boy Scout, you are setting your son out on the grand adventure of Scouting. This is a tremendously important and rewarding endeavor that you will be able to share with him.

## **Summary:**

This document is a very brief overview of the Scouting program as implemented in Troop 278. We believe our program has a very good balance of Scouting advancement, skills training, public service, regular outdoor events, leadership opportunities and Fun!

## **Regular Troop Meetings:**

Troop 278 usually holds 2-3 regular Troop meetings per month on Monday evenings – usually held in the multi-purpose room at Centennial Middle School, Ahwatukee. Start time is usually 7pm for about an hour. Meetings are not held on Public Holidays nor during the summer break (July/early Aug).

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

Once per month a PLC meeting is held instead of the regular Troop Meeting - most Scouts do not attend these meetings it is for Scoutmasters, Patrol Leaders and appointed positions for Troop planning discussions & decisions.

## **Courts of Honor (CoH):**

Approximately three times per year the Regular Troop meeting slot will be used instead for a Court of Honor to recognize Scout advancements and awards. The Court of Honor is a public ceremony, and is a chance for Scouts to be awarded merit badges and rank insignia they have earned and be recognized for any other achievements. Families and all other interested individuals are encouraged to attend.

## **Uniform and Handbook:**

Each Scout is required to have the Boy Scout Handbook, and the following Boy Scout "Class A+" uniform items:

- Tan Scout shirt with Troop insignia and patches
- Neckerchief slide\* (can be purchased or made by Scout).
- Scout Shorts AND Scout Socks OR Long Scout Pants
- Scout Belt/Buckle
- Our Troop does NOT require any kind of hat/headwear

\*Troop 278 provides each new Scout with the required Troop 278 neckerchief at no extra charge.

All other uniform items above are available at the local Scout shops, see the yellow pages or [Boy Scouts Of America - Grand Canyon Council Web](#) site for addresses.

Class A+ Uniform is taken to mean the wearing of all of the above items (e.g. CoH)  
Class A Uniform is as Class A+ but without the neckerchief (regular troop meetings)  
Class B Uniform - Yellow Troop 278 T-shirt with Troop emblem (outdoor activities)

For Class B - you may wear any other clothing combined with the T-Shirt

Class B shirts are available for purchase at most regular troop meetings.

Class B is optional but recommended for all less formal troop activities - we use this uniform for most hiking & camping and recommend several class B shirts for use at the week long summer camps – this helps to keep the Scout's Class A uniform clean. Uniform requirements will be specified for Troop events. In general wear Class A for regular troop meetings, Class A+ for CoH/BoR and Class B for outdoor activities.

**Adult Supervision:**

A minimum of two registered adult leaders, or one adult leader and a Scout parent, both of whom must be at least 21 years of age, are present at all troop meetings, trips or outings. This is a BSA requirement and we usually strive for 3 or more adults and for all adult leaders to have completed Youth Protection Training. We have usually far exceeded these requirements.

**Outdoor Activities:**

The Troop plans typically one or more outdoor activities per-month. These will include many camping, hiking & backpacking trips while other activities such as swimming, skiing, boating, rock climbing may also be offered. Fees and requirements for these activities will vary.

**Activity Departure Location:**

Troop 278 activities always depart from the parking lot on the corner of Warner Rd and 48<sup>th</sup> Street between the Burger King and Taco Bell. This is a conveniently quiet location with Bashas supermarket (supplies & ice), gas stations, fast food, coffee & bagels all to hand... With the I10 Freeway quite nearby - what more could you want? Most weekend activities depart early Saturday mornings – punctually!

**Fast-Start Campout:**

In the late spring after most of our new Scouts have joined the Troop from Cub Packs we hold a special campout called 'Fast-Start'. This is usually a 2 day 1 night campout that is focused on introducing new Scouts to the Troop, teaching them the basics of Troop organization and some basic skills training allowing them to quickly earn their Scout rank. Older Scouts and Scoutmasters will teach the new Scouts and there will be plenty of time left to have some fun. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend to also become introduced to the Troop.

**Summer Activities:**

Each summer, Scouts can attend a week-long camp at Camp Geronimo in the Arizona Rim Country near Payson. We usually have one of the largest troop attendances of the summer Geronimo program. Most years the Troop is also able to secure a limited number of positions at the Philmont Scout Ranch program in Cimarron, New Mexico for older Scouts (14 and older). Regular Troop meetings are not held during the summer break (July/early August).

**Parental Participation in Activities:**

Parents are strongly encouraged to get involved in the activities of the troop – there are many regular and occasional ways to do this.

Parental participation is encouraged at all Troop events - although some activities may have specific limitations to numbers or specific (e.g. medical) requirements for participation. The troop will try to maximize opportunities for Scout participation within acceptable BSA Adult Supervision limits (and with extra consideration to

safety issues depending on the type of activity). However it is rare that the troop has to limit desired parental participation.

**Summer Camp Participation:**

The week long summer Scout Camp is often the first extended period away from parents for many of the new Scouts. Parents are encouraged to consider how to best prepare their son for this. Many choose to spend one or a few nights at camp at the beginning or end of the week. Others send several letters to arrive through the week, or provide a reassuring emergency letter to the Scout or Scoutmaster in advance.

Phone communication is unreliable into the camp, although possible outbound if needed for an emergency. Cell phones are not usually operational in camp and are not permitted for Scouts (risk of loss/damage). In any case communications to home for new Scouts is most likely to lead to a greater sense of homesickness...

Scoutmasters recommend you rely on their judgment – they will call you if they feel it is warranted and provide you with details to make your own decision on whether to talk to your son or even to directly come and collect him from camp. Virtually all who stay at camp end up overcoming their homesickness and enjoying the summer camp experience.

**Costs of Boy Scouting:**

How much does Boy Scouting cost? There are several fees: the annual registration fee is a nominal fee paid each fall to officially enroll the Scout in the local Troop and the national Boy Scouts of America (BSA) organization, we also voluntarily fund the local BSA council. Other costs through the course of Scouting include fees for special activities, uniform purchases and monthly meeting dues.

**Annual Registration Fee - \$12**

As part of the annual re-chartering the troop collects an annual BSA membership fee for each Scout. This breaks down as follows:

National BSA membership	- \$10
Insurance costs	- \$ 2 (actual cost \$1.20 rounded up)
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Total per Scout	- \$12

The Troop does not assess any additional annual fees for Troop funds as part of the annual re-chartering (as many other Troops do).

**Friends Of Scouting - \$25**

At the same time as re-chartering we ask each Scout family to contribute \$25 to the Friends of Scouting campaign this goes to the local BSA councils to fund their operation and are the only council funding we directly collect.

**Adult Registration - \$12**

Adults registered with the Troop also pay a \$12 annual registration fee. This applies to assistant Scoutmasters and to Adult volunteers on the Troop Committee or in other roles. As a registered member you have voting rights at the Troop Committee.

**'Boys Life' Magazine Subscription - \$12 (optional)**

Boys' Life is a monthly magazine popular with Scouts, and filled with ideas for activities and outings. Subscriptions are optional and are processed with the annual registration.

**Monthly Meeting Dues:**

The Troop Scribe collects monthly dues from individual Scouts of usually \$1.50 per month. It is intended that Scouts pay their dues themselves from their allowances to learn the responsibility of budgeting paying their way.

**Fees for Outings / Activities (Varies):**

Campouts and other troop activities may have fees associated with them. These fees will be announced as part of the published activity details and typically reflect anticipated actual activity costs (food, access fees, site fees, activity fees) and/or transportation costs. Occasionally overpayments may be credited back to individual Scout accounts. Usually payments will be due at the time of departure in cash but for some events - including summer camp - advance deposits/payment are required. Details will be published.

**Summer Camp:**

Fees for summer camp programs cover food, running costs & transportation for the camps. They are usually payable as a booking deposit and final payment both due well before departure and these can be offset by funds earned by the Scout in Troop fundraising activities.

**Hardship:**

In the event of financial hardship limiting the ability of a Scout to participate in Troop activities and summer camps please contact the Troop Committee to evaluate support options that may be available.

**Council Activities:**

Our Troop is part of the Grand Canyon Council & Salt River District who sponsor several activities we participate in as a Troop. Several times a year there are **Advancement Days** – usually on a Saturday where Scouts are able to complete most of the requirements (there are usually some pre-requisites to complete in advance) for one or two merit badges in a single day. With appropriate planning this is a very convenient & quick way to earn additional Badges.

We also participate in '**Scout-O-Rama**' a one day promotional Scouting event in the Phoenix area at which we man an event booth with a theme related to Scouting. More significantly this event is open to the public through ticket sales which are the largest annual fundraiser for the Troop.

**Troop Fundraising:**

Additional funds are raised by the boys through various fundraising activities. The Troop plans to do two to three major fundraising projects a year. Fund-raisers are designed so that a portion of the funds raised by your son (usually 50%) will be put into his individual Scout account to directly defray Scouting costs (e.g. primarily summer camp).

Troop funds are used for administrative costs, insurance, Scout registration, rank insignia and merit badge purchases (these are funded and provisioned by the troop), registration for advancement days, adult leader training, advance purchases for fundraising and advance registrations e.g. for summer camp sites/programs.

**Organization:**

Troop 278 is a participating member of the Salt River District of the Grand Canyon Council, Boy Scouts of America. The Troop's organization consists of the Chartered Organization, a Troop Committee, the Scoutmaster & Assistants, the Troop's parents and the Troop organized by Patrols.

**Chartered Organization (Sponsor):**

Every BSA Troop belongs to an organization. The Chartered Organization for Troop 278 is Corpus Christi Catholic Church, Ahwatukee, AZ. The Chartered Organization shares our objectives for the boys and insures that there is adequate, trained leadership. A Chartered Organization Representative acts a liaison between Troop 278 and the Church.

**Religion:**

Although our Troop is sponsored by a Catholic Church, Scouting is a non-sectarian & non-denominational organization where members of all faiths, beliefs, races and national origins are welcomed.

**The Scouts**

The Troop is made up of Boy Scout Patrols. Each Patrol usually consists of a Patrol Leader and four to eight Scouts. The Scouts in a patrol elect their Patrol Leader who in turn appoints the Assistant Patrol Leader.

The Troop as a whole elects a Senior Patrol Leader who appoints an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and other official Troop positions in consultation with the Scoutmaster.

The Patrol Leaders, with the Senior Patrol Leader as their head, form the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC), which plans the activities and runs the Troop meetings.

During summer camps and some other special activities new temporary patrols and patrol leaders may be created to ensure more balance in patrol size & leadership.

Troop 278 is a 'Boy Led Troop' – although adult leaders are there to supervise, support and facilitate activities the boys under the leadership of the SPL and PLC are encouraged to select, plan & run the activities of the Troop; including the annual calendar, regular Troop meeting themes and camp activities.

**The Scoutmaster:**

The scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the troop. The Scoutmaster works with the Scouts to develop their skills using the resources of the more experienced Scouts, Assistant Scoutmasters, Scout Parents and his own knowledge. The Scoutmaster guides the annual program of Troop events proposed by the Scouts to ensure balance in the program and effective opportunities for learning to support rank advancement, leadership opportunities and Troop community service.

The importance of the Scoutmaster's job is reflected in the fact that the quality of guidance provided will affect every boy and adult in the troop. The Scoutmaster is selected and recruited by the troop committee and approved by the chartered organization representative.

### **Troop Committee:**

The Troop Committee functions as an administration and support organization for the Troop. The Troop Committee takes care of non-program issues surrounding the Troop. For example: newsletters, Troop finances, fund raising activities, membership drives and Troop coordination, activity permits, advancement records, procurement and maintenance of Troop equipment. The Committee meets monthly except for the summer. Meetings are open and attendance by all parents is encouraged.

### **Parental Responsibility & Opportunities:**

The role of parents within Troop 278 is to be supportive of the Troop's efforts and to provide the atmosphere Scouts need to learn and excel. Parents should try to:

1. Read their Scout's handbook & understand the purpose and methods of Scouting.
2. Actively follow their Scout's progress & offer encouragement as needed.
3. Support both the individual Scout & Troop by attending all Courts of Honor.
4. Be aware of the Troops Event Calendar.
5. Support Troop Activities by assisting in some of the following possible areas:
  - Assist with Troop fund-raising logistics
  - Facilitation for Service Projects
  - Support the Troop's Board of Review process
  - Event Transportation (in compliance with the Troop's registration policies)
  - Assist as adult leaders supporting hiking, camping & other outdoor activities
  - Attend the Troop Committee as a parent or serve as a Committee Officer
  - Serve as a Merit Badge Counselor in areas of specialized knowledge / skills
  - Join Scouting as a Troop Assistant Scout Leader

### **Scout Rank Advancement**

The Boy Scout advancement program provides a ladder of skills that a Scout climbs at his own pace. As he acquires these skills he moves up through a series of ranks, for which he is awarded rank insignia. These are in sequence:

Scout  
Tenderfoot  
Second Class  
First Class  
Star Scout  
Life Scout  
Eagle Scout

The higher he climbs the more challenging his tasks -- and also the more rewarding.

Details for advancement are contained in the Boy Scout Handbook, which every Scout should obtain as soon as possible after joining the Troop. Take a look at Chapter 1. This short chapter has an advancement summary through First Class.

### **Scoutmaster Conference**

When a Scout feels he has met some or all the requirements for rank advancement he should schedule a conference with his Scoutmaster (or a designated assistant scout master) to review his completion of some or all the requirements. If the Scoutmaster is satisfied with the completion he will approve these items in the scout

handbook. On completion & Scoutmaster approval of all the items for a given rank the Scout schedules his participation in an upcoming Board of Review. The Scoutmaster also uses these conferences to discuss general expectations & progress within the Troop and to provide guidance & individual encouragement to Scouts.

### **Board of Review (BoR)**

When a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, he appears before a Board of Review (BoR) composed of volunteer parents from the Troop acting for the Troop committee. The purpose of the review is to determine the Scout's attitude and acceptance of Scouting's ideals; to ensure that the requirements have been met for advancement, to discuss the Scout's experiences in the Troop and the Troop's program, and to encourage him to keep working towards advancement. Scouts should attend the BoR in Class A+ Uniform, bring their Scout handbook and spend some time reviewing the requirements for the current & previous rank advancements. A BoR may also be scheduled for a Scout who is not progressing on his advancements to encourage him and to understand any issues he may be facing.

### **Merit Badges**

The goal of the merit badge program is to expand a Scout's areas of interest and to encourage the Scout to meet and work with adults in a chosen subject. Merit badge completions form a part of the requirements for higher rank advancements. Merit badges are earned by a Scout working with a registered merit badge counselor.

All parents of scouts are encouraged to become Merit Badge Counselors. The troop has a Merit Badge Coordinator whose role is to pair Scouts with appropriate counselors for Merit Badges they would like to pursue. Please contact the Merit Badge coordinator with any badges you can support as a Counselor. Merit Badge requirements are available on the Internet as well as being included along with many more details of the required content in individual merit badge books available from local Scout shops.

### **Communication**

The troop sends out a monthly newsletter by email with details of upcoming events, contact information and other troop information. The troop also publishes an annual calendar late Aug/early Sept and occasional updates; these are distributed by email as well as in hard copy form at troop meetings.

The troop maintains a web site ([www.Troop278.net](http://www.Troop278.net)) with updated contact information, current & recent newsletters, annual calendar, upcoming event details, troop committee minutes and troop specific documents for download. Informational flyers for upcoming events are available at Troop Meetings in the weeks prior to an event along with sign-up forms and permission forms.

Advance information on events is often communicated at PLC meetings so Patrol Leaders are also encouraged to communicate directly with their patrols for Patrol & Troop meeting reminders and other requirements e.g. special patrol preparations for meetings, flag ceremony uniform requirements etc. Patrols control the mechanisms for their own communications (e.g. 1:1, phone, email, web, handouts...).

Open communication between Scout parents and the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters and Troop Committee is encouraged on any and all issues related to program events, Scouting in general and any individual Scout progress or satisfaction issues. See the contact & roles information on the Troop website.