



Webelos to Scout Transition

The most important decision for a Webelo to make is one that will impact the rest of his future in Boy Scouting: which troop to cross over into. For many, this task can seem daunting but being equipped with the right information can help ease the minds of Cubs and parents during this time of transition. The following information was taken directly from San Jacinto District of the Sam Houston Area Council and is distributed with their permission. As members of the Order, consider how you can play an integral role in distributing this information throughout your councils and serving as a facilitator to start your own program.

Webelos must make a decision that will have an impact on his Scouting career: the choice of which Boy Scout Troop he will join. Webelos are encouraged to visit several different troop meetings before selecting a troop to join. Below is some information to help make the important decision on which troop to join including questions a Cub or parent may want to ask each troop. We encourage your lodge to distribute (or edit to fit your council's needs) these helpful questions to cub packs in your council or district. **Remember: the choice of a troop is a personal decision.**

Questions that may be helpful for a Cub or parent searching for a troop to cross into are as follows:

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 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 you. If possible, you and your son should attend an overnight campout as a guest



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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.

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.

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?

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 activities? 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. High levels of training are desired.



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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 (SPL), 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 Scout 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 and council activities such as the district camp-o-ree, council Scout Fair, council Scouting for Food? 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?

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 the 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.

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



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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.

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