

# Arrow of Light To Scout



# PACK TRANSITION GUIDE

Scouting America  
Susquehanna Council



Dear Pack Leadership,

It's hard to believe that the little, excited youth who joined your pack as a Lion or Tiger has now grown and matured, and is now ready to transition and begin their trail to Eagle! Ensuring a smooth Arrow of Light to Scout transition is a great responsibility for the pack where the youth started their journey and call home.

The Arrow of Light to Scout process should not be an afterthought or merely a spring ceremony. It is a responsibility to help Scouts find and join the troop that is the right fit, the one that will help them thrive and grow just as they did in your pack. An Arrow of Light Scout can choose any troop they want. The more you can do to help each Scout and family make the right decision for them, the greater the likelihood they will successfully take the next step on their journey to Eagle.

Troops should be reaching out to connect with your Scouts and their families. This transition is a team effort. Just as you work annually to recruit new Scouts, this is a Scout BSA troop's recruitment push. Please use the included resources to guide your families through this process.

Thank you for all you have done for the Scouts in your pack and their families. And thank you for making the Arrow of Light to Scout transition a priority for their Scouting year!

Yours in Scouting,

Susquehanna Council Membership Team



# Arrow of Light (AOL) to Scout Transition

All eligible youth in the Susquehanna Council should have the opportunity to benefit from a Scouting program.

The transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts BSA is often a critical point where youth may leave Scouting. This can be due to several reasons, including fatigue from five years in the Cub Scout program, increased competing activities, or simply not being invited to continue. While the first two reasons are more challenging to address, the last one should never be a barrier to continuing Scouting.

It is vital for packs and troops to collaborate to ensure Scouts and their families are aware of local Scouting opportunities. Scouts should be given the chance to visit and experience these opportunities before committing to a specific troop. The crossover ceremony should not be the Scout's first introduction to the troop but rather the culmination of "getting to know you" opportunities. This way, the Scout and their family will be excited about the next big step in their Scouting journey.

The Arrow of Light to Scout transition shouldn't be a time when troops sit back and wait for Scouts to come to them. Just as packs actively recruit Scouts and families, troops should do the same. In fact, troops that assist packs in their recruitment efforts benefit from making positive impressions and building good relationships with families earlier in their Scouting journey.

This guide is designed to help packs support Scouts and their families in finding the troop that is the right fit for their future Scouting adventures. The Arrow of Light to Scout transition is a shared responsibility among Arrow of Light Leaders, Cubmasters, Parents, Scoutmasters, Commissioners, District Membership Committee, and Council Membership Committee. Everyone must work together to ensure Webelos, and their parents are aware of the fun and adventure awaiting them in Scouts BSA.

Just as youth transitioning between schools, moving from AOL to Scout is a normal and expected part of the program.

## Eligibility

- Youth can join Scouts BSA if they have completed the fifth grade and are at least 10 years old **OR** have earned the Arrow of Light rank and are at least 10 years old **OR** are age 11 but have not reached age 18.
- All Arrow of Light Scouts joining a Scouts BSA troop must complete a new youth application for the unit they are enrolling



## Responsibilities of the Pack

- The Committee Chair and Cubmaster should ensure that the Arrow of Light Den Leaders are properly motivated and focused to ensure that Arrow of Light Scouts are prepared to and do crossover.
- The Committee Chair and the Cubmaster will ensure that the pack has a New Member Coordinator who will fulfill the pack responsibilities or guide and assist the Arrow of Light Den Leaders in fulfilling their responsibilities.
- Develop a working relationship with the leadership of all of the Scouts BSA troops in the community. Troops should have an Assistant Scoutmaster assigned to new Scouts and a Committee Member (New Member Coordinator) who can help new families.
- Compare calendars of troop and pack activities to coordinate activities. Community events can be done together.
- Work with troop leaders to secure den chiefs for each Webelos den and Arrow of Light den.
- Work with troop leaders to plan and conduct an overnight activity for the AOLs with a troop.
- Work with troop leaders to plan visits to several troops during their meeting time.
- Invite the Scoutmaster and troop youth leaders to special pack activities. This will help create familiarity and a level of comfort for the Arrow of Light Scouts and their parents as they ease into the troop.
- Plan a meaningful crossover ceremony. Have troop leadership from all troops where your Scouts will transition present to accept the Arrow of Light Scouts as they graduate to a Scouts BSA troop.
- Arrow of Light Den Leaders should be strongly encouraged to move into the troop with Scouts, either as Assistant Scoutmaster or troop committee member. This will give the new Scouts a familiar face at troop meetings and a connecting link to Scouts BSA.
- If a troop does not exist in your community, discuss with the District Executive the possibility of organizing a troop. A graduating Arrow of Light Den can form the nucleus of a new troop.



# Arrow of Light Den Leader Responsibilities

- Be enthusiastic about the coming crossover of your Scouts to the troop!
- Speak to your Scouts and their parents about troop visits at your first meeting of the year. Discuss options such as: various troops and their different programs; crossing over as a group or to different troops is based on personal preference; troop location and its impact on participation; existing/historic pack/troop relationship and the fact that no youth is required to crossover to a particular troop, rather youth should crossover to the troop that is the best fit.
- It is very important that every Scout and parent know that completion of Arrow of Light is not the end of Scouting. It is just the beginning and that the real adventure is to be found in Scouts BSA.
- Ensure parents have copies of the forms at the end of this packet ("Questions to Ask When Visiting Troops", "Arrow of Light Troop Visit Check List", and "Parent Troop Visit Checklist").
- Ensure that parents understand that they are welcome and encouraged to participate in the troop their child chooses.
- Ensure parents understand the difference between Scouts BSA and Cub Scouts, particularly the different roles of parents.
- Plan for your transition to a leadership role in the Scouts BSA unit.





## Differences Between Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA

The difference between Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA encompasses critical categories like unit structure, leadership, parental involvement, advancement, and camping.

Both programs are built on Scouting's time-tested values. That's evidenced by the fact that members of both programs recite the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Beyond that, though, you'll find more differences than similarities -- for good reason. You wouldn't teach a third-grader the same way you'd teach a ninth-grader, right? By the same logic, the approach to Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA shouldn't be the same either.

Below are examples of how Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA differ:

### Unit Structure:

**Cub Scouts:** Cub Scouts are in dens, which are part of a pack. A den is made up of girls or boys of the same rank (age/grade).

There are two kinds of dens: all-boy / all girl or Coed. Arrow of Light Den/Patrol is not coed.

A pack can be all-boy, all-girl, or coed, mix of all-boy and all-girl dens. Dens usually meet weekly or biweekly; packs meet monthly.

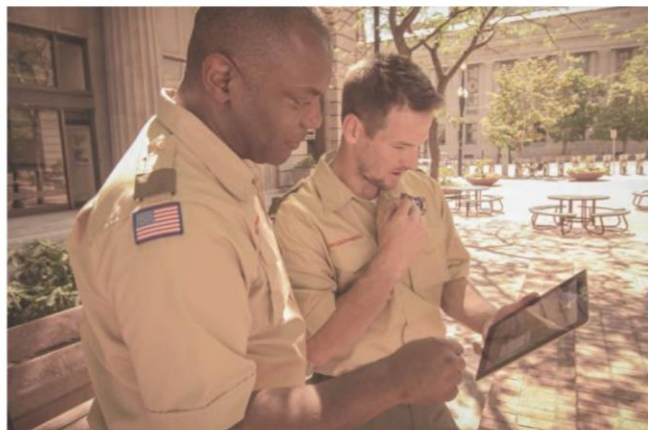
**Scouts BSA:** Scouts BSA members are in patrols, which are part of a troop. Troops are either all-boy or all-girl. Some leaders form linked troops, which means an all-boy troop and an all-girl troop share a chartered organization and troop committee. Some troops prefer mixed-age patrols (in which an 11-year-old and a 17-year-old could be in the same patrol), while others prefer to keep Scouts of similar ages together. Troops meet weekly. Patrol meetings typically are part of the weekly troop meeting, but patrols are welcome to meet on their own with appropriate adult leadership.

### Leadership:

It's pretty simple: Cub Scout dens and packs are led by adults; Scouts BSA patrols and troops are led by the youth.

**Cub Scouts:** Adults plan and conduct the meetings and promote Advancement, teamwork, fun and character-building.

**Scouts BSA:** The Scouts plan and conduct meetings and outings. Adults step in when necessary for safety and they model good behavior. Youth-led troops might not be as organized or successful as if adults were running things, but the youth are able to learn from their mistakes and grow.



## Parental involvement

Parents are a critical part of both Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA.

**Cub Scouts:** The parents are expected to assist the pack with planning or helping with at least one activity or event annually. They may also take a leadership role in the pack or den. Parents are usually required to accompany their child on overnight campouts.

**Scouts BSA:** The parents are expected to continuously assist the troop by supporting the Scouts and participating in those tasks that the Scouts cannot do. This may include transportation to an activity, shopping for a trip or chaperoning a trip. It also may include assisting with fundraisers (finances and organization) and coordinating special events. It is expected that each family take an active role in the troop. Unlike Cub Scouts, parents aren't required to camp with their child.

## Camping:

**Cub Scouts:** Limited to Scout and parent camping in tents or cabins. Campouts have a very structured schedule.

**Scouts BSA:** Monthly or bimonthly camping trips as well as additional outdoor day activities. Much of the program involves activities that can only be done in the outdoors (nature, ecology, pioneering, orienteering, conservation, etc.) Also available to the Scouts is at least one week of camping each summer. Not every minute of the campout is scheduled. Free time is important. Scouts normally get a couple of hours of free time to hang with friends, walk in the woods, work on advancement, sleep, play sports, or do nothing at all.



## Top Ten Things to Look for in a Troop

When looking for a troop, this is a great list of some of the best things to look for in a local troop.

1. Fun -- It's got to be fun! Most of the activities within the troop have to be understood by the Scout as a fun, friendly, pleasurable, and rewarding experience. If a troop is too strict and regimented the Scout will lose interest.
2. Program – This is key to a well-run troop. The program has to be planned out by the Scouts. This should be done annually. The program needs to include all the elements of Scouting: weekly troop meetings, monthly outings/events, weekend campouts, and yearly summer camps. The activities have to be new, exciting, and fresh to keep the Scouts interested.
3. Adult Leadership—All troops should have Trained Adult Leadership. Trained leaders are crucial to any well-run troop. The training provides the leader with the knowledge to understand the aims and methods of the Scouting program. When you visit a troop, look for the trained patch on the leader's uniform.

4. Youth Leadership – The Scouting program is designed to have the youth elected and appointed into leadership roles. A troop should have periodic elections to fill those positions. In addition, the troop should provide leadership training for those roles. The troop should conduct Junior Leadership Training (JLT) and/or send Scouts to council JLT training. Look for the trained patch on the youth leader's uniform.

5. Scout-Run Troop – The whole philosophy of Scouting is for the Scouts to run the troop. The adult leaders are there to provide guidance and support. The weekly meetings, troop campouts, and troop activities should be planned and executed by the Scouts. The troop should encourage and strive to have its junior leaders run the troop. When observing a troop in action, see if the Scouts are running the program or the adults. Ask who choose and planned the last campout or activity.

6. Patrol Method – A troop should divide its Scouts into patrols of not more than eight. These patrols act like a team within the troop. They will elect a patrol leader and have periodic meetings either at the troop meetings or at a separate time and place. The troop should provide competitive activities at meetings and outings for the patrols to work as a team. This allows them to demonstrate their Scouting skills and plan for camping events or camporees. The troop should also have a functioning monthly Patrol Leaders Council, which plans the troop activities.

7. Meetings – Weekly troop meetings are pretty much the norm in Scouting. The troop should have a calendar for the year with the dates established for regular meetings and events.

8. Uniform -- The field uniform is an important part of Scouting and should be required in troop functions, like: ceremonies, religious activities, troop dinners, and district & council events. An activity uniform, which usually consists of a scouting T-shirt and scout shorts or pants, is commonly used for troop/patrol meetings, day activities, and weeklong camps. Troops may define or require uniforms in different variations but should have some defined requirements and periodic inspections.

9. District & Council Involvement -- A troop should have representatives attending monthly district roundtable meetings. The district and council provide a wealth of experience and knowledge to help the troop run a great program. They are a wonderful resource of information on training, activities, advancement, planning, and ideas.

10. Recruiting – A troop needs to bring in new Scouts. New Scouts provide the older Scouts with opportunities to mentor and teach them what Scouting is all about. It helps them build leadership and character. The best source for new Scouts is from the Cub Arrow of Light program. A troop should have established a working relationship with local Cub Scout pack(s) to help bridge graduating Arrows of Light Scouts to Scouts BSA. They should also have the Scouts in the Troop invite friends to join Scouting.



## **Suggested Timeline**

This timeline should be adjusted to accommodate Arrow of Light dens that complete all requirements and are ready to cross over to Scouts BSA, with some as early as December. It is the responsibility of the Troop Membership Chair and the Pack Membership Chair to ensure that Scoutmasters, Cubmasters, and Arrow of Light Leaders are informed about and adhere to the timeline.

### **June**

- New Arrow of Light Den Scouts receive "Arrow of Light to Scout Transition Guide for Scouts and Parents"

### **July**

- Troops assist with Pack Sign Up Nights. Troops can be great for organizing games for incoming Cub Scouts while their parents sign registration forms and get information. It also helps with recruitment to see where they may be in the future.
- Scoutmaster attends a Pack Committee meeting to explain the Den Chief program and find out how to work together to secure a Den Chief. This gives the Scoutmaster adequate time to recruit Den Chiefs from their older Scouts and send them to Den Chief training.
- Troop leadership works with packs to set a date for Arrow of Light Scouts and their parents to visit a troop meeting.

### **August**

- Contact packs to request names, addresses, and phone numbers of Arrow of Lights and parents to recruit.
- Work with packs to plan a joint Troop/AOL Den camping trip for October.

### **September**

- Encourage Arrow of Light Scouts and their families to join the mailing list of your troop. This is a great way to see how active the troop is and how well they communicate.
- Mail a letter of introduction from Scouts BSA troop to AOLs to introduce them to the troop.
- Help with Pack Back to School Recruiting Nights.



## October

- AOLs participate in a joint camping trip with a troop.
- Arrow of Light Leaders go through Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS).
- Encourage/invite Arrow of Light Den to visit troop meetings.
- Discuss with packs fundraising opportunities in which the Arrow of Light Scouts may participate with the Troop so they will have funds for camp next summer with the troop.
- Begin discussion with potential crossovers about Scouts BSA summer camp for the AOLs. Troops should provide printed material for Arrow of Light Leaders to distribute.

## November

- Troop leadership attends a den meeting to teach AOL Scouts how the troop works. They can show pictures of summer camp, tell what first year Scouts will do at camp, give dates and other summer camp information. They can also give the AOLs their annual troop program plan.
- The Scoutmaster should prepare a basic list of Scouting equipment the new BSA Scouts will be needing so these items might be able to be Christmas gifts. Help the parents by giving tips on the best prices, best brands, etc.

## December

- The Troop Committee Chair, Membership Chair, and New Member Coordinator should attend a Pack Committee meeting to introduce themselves to the Arrow of Lights, parents, and Leaders. From December until the crossover, the Troop New Member Coordinator will work closely with Den Leaders to ensure that all Scouts are on track to earn the Arrow of Light and that youth applications for troop membership are completed. Additionally, they should attend a Den Meeting in January to explain troop operations, answer questions, and build a good relationship with all Arrow of Light parents.
- Send a Christmas card to potential recruits. Let them know you are excited for them to join the Troop.



## January

- Plan a crossover ceremony.

## February

- Hold the crossover ceremony.
- Get new Scouts actively involved in a patrol and in troop activities.
- Troop leadership attends a meeting to meet the Webelos Den and begin introducing them to Scouts BSA as they prepare to transition to Arrow of Lights.

## March

- Ensure all new Scouts are planning to attend summer camp.
- Follow-up with the family by phone, email, and letter of every youth that did not crossover into a troop. Assure them it is not too late, describe the fun events scheduled, and work with them to visit additional troops or to help make the right decision for them.

# The Troop Visit

Visiting a troop is a crucial part of the rank requirement and is vital for a Scout aiming to join a troop that fits them well. Whether through an invitation or independent research, it's essential for an Arrow of Light Scout to visit the troop(s) they are considering. Since each troop is unique, AOL Scouts are encouraged to visit multiple troops to make an informed decision.

The Council Membership Committee is in the process of compiling some helpful resources in order to prepare AOLs for their troop visits. Given that they will spend considerable time with the troop they choose, it is important to approach the visit seriously and ensure all questions are answered before they make a decision. While a Scout can transfer to another troop at any time, conducting thorough troop visits increases the likelihood of finding the best fit from the start.





# Questions to ask when visiting Troops

## Arrow of Lights should ask:

- Is the Troop active?
  - Do they do things I would enjoy?
- What size is the Troop?
  - What size of a Troop would I like?
- Are there other boys/girls my age in the Troop?
- Does the Troop go to a summer camp?
  - Which summer camp?
  - Is it important to me where they go?
- Should I/ Could I go to summer camp?
- Does the Troop participate in any Honor Camper programs (e.g., Order of the Arrow)?
  - Do they matter to you?
- How often does this Troop do outdoor activities (e.g., Camping)?
- Will I have a say in decision making?
- Does the Troop have advanced programs for older Scouts?
- How often does the Troop meet?
- Do I have a good chance of advancing to Eagle with this Troop?
- Will I have fun?

## Parents should ask (Troops should tell parents if they don't ask):

- What values/skills will my son/daughter learn?
- What are the other adult leaders like?
- Can I participate in leadership if I desire?
- Is this a Scout run Troop? Is that important?
- Where, when, and how often does the Troop meet?
  - Is it convenient for transporting my child?
- What is the age ratio of the Scouts? Do the older Scouts help the younger Scouts?
- How much will it cost? Camping? Summer Camp? Fundraisers? Uniforms?
- How often does the Troop camp?
  - Do I have to camp with them?
- Does the Troop go to a summer camp?
  - Which one(s)?
  - Is it important to me where they go?
- Does the Troop participate in the Order of the Arrow?
- Is the Troop active?
  - Do they do activities my son/daughter will enjoy?
- Will my son/daughter be encouraged/able to advance to Eagle in the Troop?
- How can moms/dads participate?
- Can this Troop provide a quality Scouting experience for my son/daughter and his/her friends?
- What is expected of the parents and family by the Troop?
- Will my child have fun?

# **Arrow of Light Troop Visit Checklist**

## **Information about the Troop**

Troop Number:

Meeting Place:

Scoutmaster's Name:

Senior Patrol Leader's Name:

Troop Contact Information:

My Evaluation of this Troop:

Are all the Scouts in uniform?	Yes	No
Was the meeting organized?	Yes	No
Is the meeting run by Scouts?	Yes	No
Did I feel welcome?	Yes	No
Did their campouts sound like fun?	Yes	No
Do they have a calendar?	Yes	No
Do I already know Scouts in the troop?	Yes	No
Will I enjoy the activities they have planned?	Yes	No
Were the older Scouts helpful?	Yes	No
Did they answer my questions?	Yes	No
Did they have a program for New Scouts?	Yes	No

Things I like about this troop:

Things I did not like about this troop:

# Parent Troop Visit Checklist

Troop Number\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit:

Sponsored by:

How Long.

Scoutmaster's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Place:

Meeting Run by:       Mixed                               Youth                               Adults

Was the meeting organized?

Does the troop produce a calendar of events?

Does the program schedule:       remain similar from year to year  
  change yearly  
  remain similar with different summer camps

What special events does the troop participate? (i.e. Scouting for Food, Camporees, Merit Badge College)

## **Youth Leadership:**

Does the troop have active Scout Leadership?

How often does the Scout leaders meet?

How many Scouts are in the youth leadership?

How is the youth leadership decided?

Elected by youth                               Decided by adults  
combination                               other

How often does the troop hold elections?

## **Camping:**

How often does the troop camp?

What type of camping does the troop do? (check all that apply)

Summer camp:   In Council                               or                               Out of Council

Winter camp

Camporees

High Adventure Backpacking

Canoeing



Most popular camp is located:

Do all the Scouts get to go on all of the outings?

Do campouts have a theme, merit badge or rank requirement focus?

Were Scouts in uniform? Were the adults in uniform?

What are the uniform requirements of the troop? How many uniforms will each youth need?

**Costs:**

What are the joining costs? What are the local troop costs?

Are there additional costs to join the troop?

What fundraisers are available for the Scouts?

How are fundraiser earnings used in the troop?

Support troop needs

Applied to reduce expenses of Scouts

**Notes:**

Things I liked about this troop are:

Things I did not like about this troop are:

# Webelos or Arrow of Light Den Chief

## Job Description

The Webelos/Arrow of Light Den Chief is a current Scouts BSA Scout who gives leadership to the den in the pack. It is recommended that this be a Scout who has achieved First Class rank. Upon request by a Cubmaster, this Scout is selected by the Scoutmaster to represent the troop as a valuable source of guidance. The den chief has the following duties and responsibilities:

Know the purposes of Cub Scouting and help the den achieve those purposes. Serves as a rank advancement and/or elective assistant for the den leader.

Set an example for the Webelos with proper attitude and proper uniform attire. Be a friend to the Webelos den.

Help the den leader lead the weekly den meeting and help the den participate in the monthly pack meeting.

Meet regularly with the den leader to review the meeting plan.

Help Webelos/AOLs earn advancements.

Teach the Denner and Assistant Denner leadership skills. Attend den chief training.

Help plan and carry out den outdoor activities including joining programs/meetings with the troop, campouts, etc.

Work with the Scoutmaster and Cubmaster to plan a crossover ceremony for the den.

Attend all den meetings and pack meetings.

scout.



# The Unit's New Member Coordinators



[Note that a unit is encouraged to have co- or multiple holders of this position.]

Sustaining strong membership in a unit depends not only on having new members join the unit but also on engaging youth and their families in the unit experience so that they stay. The role of the New Member Coordinators is to ensure that both of these keys to success take place.

## **Appointment and Support:**

The **New Member Coordinators** are appointed by and report to the Unit Committee Chair.

The **New Member Coordinators** work with and are supported by the District Membership Chair as well as by unit leadership, the sponsoring organization, and commissioners.

## **Responsibilities:**

**In general, all** New Member Coordinators:

Serve as welcoming ambassadors for the unit.

Work with the unit committee in developing and implementing the Unit Membership Plan.

Participate in New Member Coordinator training and collaborate with the district membership team.

**Specific responsibilities** for each New Member Coordinator should be determined by the unit's New Member team depending on individual interests and the needs of the unit. The tasks and opportunities listed below should help to guide the planning for individual and shared responsibilities.

**Each of the three action elements listed should be included in the Unit Membership Plan developed with the leadership of New Member Coordinators:**

### **1. Share the benefits of Scouting.**

- a. Develop and share your own Scouting story, showing the impact of Scouting on your family.
- b. Identify and access research data and local examples confirming the fun and value of Scouting to youth, families, and the community.
- c. Promote Scouting benefits through social media and other avenues of communication.
- d. Showcase Scouting through engagement in local community events and service.

### **2. Coordinate unit recruitment.**

- a. Oversee unit recruitment efforts such as joining events, informational presentations, and peer-to-peer initiatives.
- b. Appeal to potential youth members and their families through well-designed and widely-distributed invitations shared through electronic media, handouts, and personal contacts.
- c. Ensure that the unit's BeAScout pin is up-to-date and that prompt follow-through takes place.
- d. Collaborate with local school representatives and community leaders, particularly in the chartered organization, to foster promotion of Scouting opportunities.

### **3. Guide the joining and welcoming process for youth and their families.**

- a. Help youth and adults to greet newcomers warmly and to establish friendly, enjoyable relationships so that new members form a strong sense of belonging.
- b. Develop a unit welcome packet, electronically and/or in print, to answer frequently asked questions and to provide resource and contact information.
- c. Ensure that youth and adult applications, transfers, and payments are promptly submitted to the council service center.
- d. Build fun and excitement about the unit program and encourage youth and their families to take pride in Scouting accomplishments.
- e. Promote feedback and sharing of ideas through customer satisfaction surveys and other means.