



Part 3: Scouts BSA Troop 959 Advancement Blog for Families!

Supporting Advancement at Home: Scoutbook Dos (and Just a Couple of Please Don'ts)

Today's Advancement Blog shares great ways to use Scoutbook or the Scouting app to support and encourage your Scout's advancement at home. As a bonus, these suggestions will help you better understand the program and your child's experience in Scouting.

As your Scout may be able to tell you, there are four steps to advancement:

1. A Scout **learns** new skills/information at a meeting or campout, at home, at school, or out in the community. The handbook is always a great resource.
2. He is **tested** on a requirement, either by a youth leader, adult Scouter, or merit badge counselor.
3. After completing each rank's requirements, a Scout **reviews** his progress and experience in the troop, first with his Scoutmaster and then with a small group of committee members. Because the troop belongs to the Scouts, these adults are always eager to hear Scouts' feedback and suggestions.
4. Scouts are **recognized** for all their hard work! This happens at troop meetings as well as with their families at a Court of Honor!

As a parent or guardian, Scoutbook assigns you full control of your Scout's account. That's entirely appropriate, but there are some opportunities for pitfalls there, too, if we're not all on the same page.

We have a few requests to help us track advancements for all the Scouts. There are a couple of "please don'ts", but a whole lot of "dos" you can enjoy with your Scout. Listed below the bullets is the philosophy behind our requests. Together, we'll help ensure your Scout grows through his journey and feels a ton of Scout pride at the next Court of Honor.

DO—

- Log in regularly to Scoutbook or the Scouting app to stay aware and current.
- Enjoy reviewing together your child's progress in Scoutbook. Select his Advancement and Awards options under the Awards heading in his profile to explore all the cool awards and achievements that are available to work on, and ask him about his goals for himself.
- Encourage your Scout to see his Patrol Leader, another boy leader, or a Scouter when he feels ready to have requirements reviewed or signed off in his handbook.
- Encourage him to refer to his handbook and ask for help if he's struggling with a skill, has questions, or wants to suggest something for the patrol or troop to work on together.
- Help your Scout take note of requirements that require prior approval before embarking on something done individually outside of Scouting, and remind him to include/copy you,

another Scouter, or another Scout when communicating about these things via phone, messaging, or email.

- Remind him to approach the Scoutmaster *before* starting work on a merit badge that interests him. This is an important, big-picture conversation for both, and some requirements require advance approval before digging in. After that, ask your Scout what assistance he'll need from you to work on the merit badge requirements.
- Recommend that your Scout mark off in Scoutbook (or the Scouting app) Advancement requirements *that are already signed off in his handbook by a youth leader or Scouter*. He will mark these as **Completed** with the date each was signed off in his handbook. An adult leader (such as an Assistant Scoutmaster, the Scoutmaster, or the Advancement Chair) will then verify these with your Scout and mark them **Approved**.

Tenderfoot Rank Requirements

- ☐ 1a. Present yourself to your leader, prepared for an overnight camping trip. Show the personal and camping gear you will use. Show the right way to pack and carry it.
- ☒ 1b. Spend at least one night on a patrol or troop campout. Sleep in a tent you have helped pitch.
completed Feb 25, 2020
Marked Completed on Feb 25, 2020 by Catherine Kaser
- ☐ 1c. Tell how you practiced the Outdoor Code on a campout or outing.

- Your Scout may also mark as **Completed** Award requirements that correspond to rank requirements, merit badges, etc. that have already been signed off, earned, or awarded in some way. Suggest he share awards that catch his eye; maybe the troop or his patrol wants to work together! If he has questions, encourage him to ask, as we love helping Scouts achieve their goals.
- Let us know if you have any questions about anything presented here or other ways to support your Scout and the troop!

Please don't—

- Mark requirements or achievements as Completed that have NOT yet been signed off in your Scout's handbook by a youth leader or Scouter. Even if *you* know your child is ready to be tested on a skill or requirement, following the process is important not just for your Scout, but for the Scouts in positions of leadership.
- Mark requirements or achievements as Completed without your Scout's participation or knowledge, even if they're signed off in his handbook. When a Scout does this for himself or with you, he experiences the pride of recognizing his accomplishments, noting his progress, and reflecting on his experience. It also lets him explore what comes next and set some exciting new goals for himself and maybe for his patrol, too.
- Mark requirements or achievements as Approved or Awarded. The Advancement Chair coordinates this step with other Scouters and youth leaders, which keeps our administrative reports accurate so Courts of Honor run smoothly and joyfully.
- Mark a new Merit Badge as started in Scoutbook together before your Scout has requested a blue card from the Scoutmaster.

Why?

The most important reason for these guidelines is this: *Scouting is at its best and most effective when it's Scout led*. The Scouts learn to rely on themselves and one another when we empower them to take initiative for their progress, individually and as a group.

But families do have a role! We can absolutely keep them motivated and involved by taking an interest at home. If the “Dos” above are fun and helpful, great! If you feel they create more pressure, stress, or expectation on your child and risk taking the fun out of Scouting, though, these are only suggestions, not requirements. Use any of them to the extent you think is right to ensure a positive Scouting experience.

Taking a guiding and encouraging role as parents and Scouters allows the magic to happen, even if it means the boys' progress through the program is slower than we might think it could

be. It's something that's been a mental shift for many of us! Trust us, though; the rewards to the Scouts are worth the wait!

Next week's final topic: Using Logs to Record Activities

Explore Scoutbook

Thanks for reading, and please let us know if you have any questions! We would love to have your support and enthusiasm in working with the Scouts or on our committee! Should you be able to take on a role—big or small—to help sustain the troop, please email us at info@troop959.com.

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