

Guide For Newbie Campers and What to Expect



We are very aware that for some this will be their first ever time camping or camping as part of anything other than a Family Camp through scouting. Here's some basic information we thought we'd share with apprehensive Cubs and nervous parents alike! Whilst aimed at those new to nights away with Scouting it might help a few more experienced campers too.

In preparation

- If your young person has not yet slept anywhere except with family then why not have some fun at "practice" events with fellow Scouters? One weekend at your home and another at theirs....
- For those booked to attend (and who have never camped before) maybe see if you can fit a practice in, any back garden is ideal!!! But not essential as many of the Cubs have had their "first ever" Camp with us 😊

Kit

- Unless otherwise stated it's traditional that all members (adult and child) arrive and depart in uniform.
- Please, please, please, please resist the temptation to pack their bags for them! Believe it or not even at 6 years old most young people are quite good at getting things together, even if they aren't the neatest packers in the world. In letting them pack it helps them remember where things are when looking for them, and at the end of camp they will be expected to pack their own things anyway! Nothing to stop you checking it once they are asleep of course... "Skills for Life".
- All equipment and clothing must be clearly marked with the owner's name, and we take no responsibility for loss or damage of any personal property.
- Electronic games, phones, radios, mp3 players etc are all banned items unless otherwise stated ~ the only thing they should bring with batteries is their torch!
- We do normally carry on in the rain, all be it with an amended programme, so please make sure footwear / clothing is appropriate if the forecast is soggy. When we say waterproof please note that's what we mean—not "can cope with a shower on the walk to school" proof 😊
- Suitable sleeping bags need to be provided. Please note that it is highly unlikely that the ones sold in supermarkets with characters on will be of sufficient warmth. If camping Sept -June then a 3 season, with a 2 season minimum for summer.
- Exact kit required will vary from camp to camp but please see the generic list at the end as a guide.

All about tents

- Prepare them for noises they may hear, and find a bit strange at first—sharing with others can be noisier than you think anyway, and if camping then even rustling leaves in the wind, the howl of fox cubs, the hoot of an owl can be quite different when it's dark outside and everyone else is fast asleep. We will talk about how awesome it is just to listen to nature. Note: There will be **No** Scary stories told.
- Tents have very thin walls, so that means remembering other people may be able to hear what they say!
- Adults cannot sleep in the same tents as the Cubs, for child protection & safeguarding reasons.
- We have a selection of tents that we can use, most have a dedicated area for Kit storage. There will be separate tents for Boys and Girls.
- We know that everyone will ask who will be in each tent.....this will be finalised on arrival (in case someone is poorly and unable to attend) so we never state in advance. Based on years of experience that we can never please everyone all we will say is that we try and make sure where possible that everyone is with at least one of their friends—after all part of scouting is also about making new ones.



- We expect the Cubs (and families) to help put up and take down the tents used. If the weather has been wet, we may ask families to show support and if practical take a tent home to dry out, as we simply don't have anywhere big enough to dry them all out—and if we don't they will go mouldy.

Night Time

- Before bed time we do get them all to clean their teeth and pop to the toilet.
- Lights out varies from camp to camp, but we always make sure they know what time they have to be in their beds by, and what time they then have to be quiet by.
- Out of courtesy to other campers (especially the leaders!) and any neighbouring residential properties we also explain what time they have to remain quiet until, and what time they can leave their tents / get up. Some sites have specific rules covering this.
- If they need to go to the toilet during the night that's fine (but a reason why they need to sleep with their torch close to hand). They don't need to ask permission but are simply expected to try hard not to wake the others, and to make sure they do their tent up properly when leaving / getting back in (especially when it's raining!). Sometimes they will be going into a building and sometimes using toilet tents—but we always ensure they know!
- When pitching tents, we arrange them so that the Cubs know exactly where the adults are, so that if they need to wake us during the night they can (although some of us don't sleep much anyway). We will have Duty Leaders on-call 24/7.

On Camp

- Respect for fellow campers is important. For example, we do not walk through other people's camping areas, we do not go into other people's tents and we do not wake people up early by running around outside when we should at least be quiet if not asleep.
- Everyone is responsible for clearing up after themselves, from washing their own kit up after a meal to clearing up something they drop or spill. The Cubs will set up a Cleaning/washing Station.
- We always operate a "leave no trace" policy—the site should be left exactly as it was found. Any items moved (natural or man-made!) should be returned to where they came from, all rubbish should be disposed of correctly.
- When catering for large numbers we do not factor in "likes" and "dislikes" (only food intolerances and allergies) as to do so would be impractical (we're sure many of us also know that when on camp it's amazing what young people will eat when they are hungry and away from parents...). Rest assured there will be something they will eat!

Communication

- If you do get a call from us during a Nights Away event please do not panic! Quite often it can be something as simple as your son or daughter can't find something, and not because of any issue requiring them to be collected.
- Please do not contact any of the adults taking part during the event unless there is an emergency, such as a sudden medical problem with a close family member which means you will need to collect them, or "pop in" outside the times stated for the event. Both of these can distract the adults present from the children in their care. We have a "In Touch" system in place and the allocated Member will be included in the Nights Away Information Form.

FAQs

- **Why are Sleepovers / Camps offered?** They often give young people their first experience of a night away from home without their parents / guardians. They are the young person's first taste of residential Scouting. They offer the fun and excitement of spending time with friends, more time for extended activities, completing part of the Outdoor Challenge, contributes towards the Nights Away Activity Badge, helps prepare them for further camps in older Sections and gives a sense of independence.
- **What are the basic rules about running Sleepovers / Camps?** There is first aid and catering provision. There is a minimum ratio for children to adults at such events, and all those sleeping overnight have full Scouting PVG



clearance. The person responsible for the event must hold a valid Nights Away Permit. We follow the Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of the Scout Association in all that we do. We do not plan anything we are not happy for our own children to do.

- **How do I know you will cope with the fact my child?** There are very few “issues” that we have not already dealt with whilst away. Examples include bed wetting, night terrors, sleep walking, home sickness, allergies, behavioural issues, sickness and(not to mention some serious snoring!) But we can only help if you tell us so when you fill in the form please list everything, no matter how minor it may seem.
- **What happens if they want to come home?** We have never made a child stay at sleepover if they really haven't wanted to, although we have a wide range of tried and tested distraction techniques that normally work well anyway! That's why we always need an updated contact number for an adult available to drive, just in case we need you to come and collect your young person at any time day or night.
- **My son or daughter would love to come but we just can't afford the cost.** We are very aware that as a Scout Group we offer lots of opportunities and are keen for everyone to take part irrespective of parental ability to pay. Please use the Discretionary Fund to help your child join in with their friends as there is no point us having the fund if it is not used! (Speak to GSL for further info and too apply).

And a final few words.....

- We give you advance warning now that they will probably come home tired, grubby, smoky smelly and may say very little until they have had a good sleep. The question “What did you get up to?” will probably only be answered with the word “**Stuff**” for at least 24 hours.....
- The majority of the adults taking part have children so please believe us when we say that we will care for your child like our own, we know it's often the parents who worry whilst the young people have an absolute blast!

Nights Away Kit List - Guide

All young people will need to bring their personal equipment and should be encouraged to pack themselves. This list is only a guide. The List for Camp will be issued with the “Nights Away Information Form” prior to the event.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Complete uniform | <input type="checkbox"/> Scarf, hat and gloves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm sweaters, jumpers or sweatshirts | <input type="checkbox"/> Sun hat, sun cream and sun glasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts or similar | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trousers or shorts | <input type="checkbox"/> Foam roll / karrimat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare underclothes (one pair per day) | <input type="checkbox"/> Plate, bowl, mug and cutlery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare socks (one pair per day) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tea towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nightwear | <input type="checkbox"/> Torch and spare batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hike boots or strong shoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal first aid kit (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof (coat and trousers) | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinks bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polythene bags (for dirty clothes) | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal washing requirements and towel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teddy (Compulsory) | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket |



It is best to pack a rucksack or sports bag that you can carry on your back. Suitcases are not suitable for tents.

All items should be clearly labelled with the young person's name.

