

Newbie Campers



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 really basic information we thought we'd share with apprehensive Beavers 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 child 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!!!

Kit

- Unless otherwise stated we expect all members (adult and child) to arrive and depart in uniform.
- Please, please, please, please (got the message yet!?) resist the temptation to pack their bags for them! Believe it or not even at 6 years old most boys and girls 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...
- 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 (in Cubs and Scouts too) 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 on our website

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 or the howl of fox cubs can be quite different when it's dark outside and everyone else is fast asleep.
- Tents have very thin walls, so that means remembering other people may be able to hear what they say!
- Adults can not sleep in the same tents as the Beavers, for child protection reasons.
- For Beavers (and normally for Cubs) we camp them in tents that have two sleeping areas, with a third for their kit etc. this means anything from 3 to 5 boys and girls in one tent depending on overall numbers, location etc. To see an example of the tents we use do an internet search for something like a Vango 350 or 400.
- 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 Beavers (and families) to help put up and take down the tents used. If the weather has been wet we will ask families to show support to each take a tent home to dry out, as we simply don't have anywhere big enough—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.
- 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 our Group toilet tents—but we always ensure they know!
- When pitching tents we arrange them so that the Beavers 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).
- Leaders are normally up after / before the children so check all is ok before going to bed / on getting up. If an adult gets up during the night we do the same sort of walk round to check. We do not stay up all night (although sometimes it can feel like it!).

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 round 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.
- 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.

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 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. The minimum ratio for children to adults at such events is 1 to 6 plus the leader in charge, and all those sleeping overnight have full scouting DBS 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.

- What happens about sleeping arrangements given there are boys and girls attending?

You hopefully all remember this bit—which is on the registration form you filled in when your child joined us— " Due to the accommodation arrangements and provision of facilities at some camp sites, or gender ratios of participants, it may be necessary for boys and girls to share tents / dormitories for reasons of practicality and/or safety. Where this option is required, young people will always have access to private washing and changing areas. Any concerns on this matter should be addressed with the section leader prior to the event." In effect what this usually means is we, for example, may place two girls in one "room" of a tent and two boys in the other.

- 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, behavioral 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 son or daughter 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!

And a final few words.....

- We give you advance warning now that they will probably come home tired, grubby 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.....
- All 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 boys and girls have an absolute blast!