

Cub Scout Program Updates

Frequently Asked Questions Updated 1/3/2024

Overview of the Cub Scout Program Updates

Effective June 1, 2024, the Cub Scout program will be updated to ensure that Cub Scouting is Fun, Simple, and Easy. Fun for Cub Scouts, parents, and leaders. Simple to understand and explain. Easy to deliver as designed.

These updates are the result of feedback from over 23,000 Cub Scout parents and volunteer leaders along with subject matter experts.

The following are key updates to the Cub Scout program effective June 1, 2024.

Cub Scout badges of rank

Each badge of rank is associated with a grade level.

Webelos is the Cub Scout program for 4th graders and Arrow of Light is a stand-alone program for 5th graders. Arrow of Light is no longer associated with Webelos. Arrow of Light is the program that prepares Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA.

To earn each badge of rank Cub Scouts complete six required Cub Scout Adventures and two elective Cub Scout Adventures. The six required Cub Scout Adventures for each rank are based on the aims and focus areas of the BSA. Character & Leadership, Outdoors, Personal Fitness, Citizenship, Safety, and Family & Reverence.

Bobcat will become a required Adventure for each rank with a focus on character & leadership. It is designed to be the first required Adventure to be completed each year. The requirements for the Bobcat for each rank are different and designed to be age-appropriate.

Cub Scout Adventures

New elective Cub Scout Adventures are introduced, doubling the number of elective Adventures previously available. Cub Scout awards have been reimaged into elective Adventures simplifying the program and making the content and topics accessible to more youth.

General Questions

Q: Why are the updates taking effect on June 1?

A: In the BSA systems all Scouts are automatically moved from one grade to the next, this is called “roll-over”. The effective date of June 1 coincides with grade roll-over. As a practical matter, June 1 is the beginning of the Cub Scout program year.

Q: Our schools get out past June 1st, will our Cub Scouts be able to complete their badge of rank that they are currently working on, past June 1st?

A: Yes. Scoutbook will allow you to enter the advancement of the current program between June 1 and August 31st.

Q: When will position-specific training be updated?

A: Before June 1, 2024, all Cub Scout position-specific training will be updated.

Q: When will ScoutBook reflect the updated Adventures and rank requirements?

A: On June 1, 2024, ScoutBook will have the updated requirements for all Adventures and badges of rank.

Q: Will I be able to enter advancement for the current Adventures or badges of rank past June 1, 2024?

A: Yes. You will have until August 31, 2024, to enter any advancement for the current Adventures, Cub Scout awards, or badge of rank.

Q: How did you get feedback from 23,000 parents and volunteer Cub Scout leaders?

A: Data was collected over several surveys including Voice of the Scout and a feedback survey on Cub Scout Adventures that was sent to all registered den leaders at the time.

Q: How reliable is the data and research used?

A: All survey data was collected through the official BSA Research Department. The survey data used has a 95% confidence level. A confidence level is a statistical figure that indicates if we were to ask the same questions to another sample group there is a 95% chance we would receive the same or similar responses.

Q: Who was involved in making these updates?

A: Primarily the National Cub Scouting Committee which is made up of volunteers from across the country. Updates were based on feedback from over 23,000 parents and leaders from various surveys in addition to other available data. The committee also utilized subject matter experts, inside and outside of Scouting, to ensure requirements are age-appropriate, consistent with the best methods, and aligned with Scouting values.

Q: Who are members of the National Cub Scouting Committee?

A: During the development of these updates the members of the National Cub Scouting Committee have changed as we try to keep a healthy rotation of members who are willing and able to actively participate. Over ¾ of the members of the committee are active in a Cub Scout pack or with their local council supporting Cub Scouting. Other members of the committee are active in their council in key council leadership positions.

Q: What subject matter experts were used?

A: Subject matter experts inside and outside of Scouting were used to help develop the requirements for the Adventures. Internally the Outdoor Program Committee and the following sub-committees were

consulted; Aquatics, Camping and Trekking, Conservation, Fishing, Outdoor Ethics, Range and Target Sports, and Wheels and Board Sports. Additionally, the Disability Awareness, Safe Scouting, and Scouts BSA committees were integral to the development of the updates. External subject matter experts included reviews from professors at four universities – Prescott College, Morningside College, University of Wisconsin, and Baylor University.

Bobcat Questions

Q: Is the Bobcat badge going away?

A: Yes. The Bobcat badge is updated to a required Adventure for each rank.

Q: Why change the Bobcat?

A: Originally when the Bobcat was introduced into Cub Scouting it was a pin that was not to be worn on the uniform, it was designed for “civilian” wear. The purpose was to introduce new members to the ideals and methods of the Cub Scout program. During this time Cub Scouting only served three ages so one set of requirements was adequate. Later the Bobcat was changed to a cloth badge to be worn on the uniform. Now Cub Scouting serves youth from kindergarten to 5th grade and one set of requirements is ineffective in meeting the objectives. How to effectively introduce the values of Scouting (character & leadership) to a Cub Scout in Kindergarten is vastly different than how to do so with a Cub Scout in 4th grade.

Q: Do Cub Scouts earn the Bobcat one time?

A: No. Cub Scouts earn the Bobcat Adventure for their rank each year. The requirements for Bobcat are similar yet different for each badge of rank to make them age-appropriate.

Q: Can we continue to do Bobcat ceremonies?

A: Yes. We strongly encourage celebrating the accomplishment as this will be the first Adventure most Cub Scouts will earn at the start of the program year.

Required Adventure Questions

Q: Are the required Adventures changing?

A: Yes. All required Adventures have been updated and new required Adventures have been added across all the badges of rank. There are six required Adventures for each badge of rank. These six required Adventures for each badge of rank are focused on Character & Leadership, Outdoors, Personal Fitness, Citizenship, Safety, and Family & Reverence.

Q: Why do the required Adventures topics repeat each year?

A: The required Adventures are based on the aims of the BSA and focus areas. The aims of the BSA are character development, leadership, citizenship, and personal fitness. The focus areas are the outdoors, safety, family involvement, and reverence. We want to ensure that we are fulfilling these aims every year in Cub Scouting regardless of when a child joins. Requirements for these topics change each year to be age-appropriate.

Q: How will the updated required Adventures make it easier for Multi-rank dens, small packs or new packs?

A: Cub Scout Packs that do not have full dens of each grade have formed *multi-rank dens*. Multi-rank dens have Cub Scouts in different grades working on different ranks. After formal recruitment events Packs may struggle to find the right den leader in a timely manner. Required Adventures have fun hands-on activities that are a requirement across the ranks. For example, outdoor Adventures have a requirement to take a walk outside across the ranks. This makes it easy for the pack to plan a walk for all the dens. It will also help small or new packs get started as the pack could plan and deliver the required Adventures as den leaders are being identified. This change will also make it easier for den leaders of multi-rank dens to plan and deliver den meetings and activities.

Elective Adventure Questions

Q: Are the elective Adventures changing?

A: Yes. All current elective Adventures have been updated. Requirements for all Adventures have been simplified by removing optional requirements such as “Complete requirements 1 and 2 plus at least two others.” Requirements were also simplified to focus on the outcome. Adventures now have on average 5 requirements.

Q: How are Cub Scouts supposed to wear all those Adventure loops on their belt?

A: The number of Cub Scout elective Adventures is designed to give Cub Scouts, dens, and packs plenty of options to explore subjects that are fun, engaging, and consistent with Scouting values. The number of elective Adventures is not restricted to the waist size of an average Cub Scout. Cub Scout Adventure loops should only be worn for the current badge of rank the Cub Scout is working towards.

Q: Are Cub Scout awards going away?

A: Yes, but the subject matter that was part of the award is not. Cub Scout awards have been reimagined into elective Adventures. The important aspect of Cub Scout awards was that the content subject matter of the award was experienced by as many Cub Scouts as possible. The subject matter is staying but how we deliver that subject is changing. As elective Adventures, the subject will be in handbooks increasing the exposure to STEM, camping, and conservation.

Q: Why are the Cub Scout awards being reimagined into elective Adventures?

A: On average, only 1.5% of Cub Scouts will earn an award. On average, 15% of Cub Scout will earn any given elective Adventure in their rank. By reimagining awards as elective Adventures more Cub Scouts will be exposed to the content of those awards and make it easier for leaders to deliver the content as an Adventure that can count towards the Cub Scout’s badge of rank.

Q: What is happening to STEM Nova and Supernova?

A: In June 2022 the STEM Nova and Supernova awards were retired as national awards. Local councils had the option to continue them as local council awards. These awards are no longer supported nationally. New elective Adventures have been created in each badge of rank to ensure that there is an elective Adventures for science, technology, engineering, and math.

Webelos and Arrow of Light Questions

Q: Why the changes to Webelos and Arrow of Light?

A: The Webelos program confused parents, leaders, and even professional staff. Webelos officially referred to all Cub Scouts in 4th and 5th grade which was different compared to the other ranks where each rank is specific to one grade. Several leaders started using the terms Webelos I and Webelos II to identify which group was working on the Webelos badge of rank and which group was working on the Arrow of Light badge of rank. The purpose of the Webelos program was to prepare Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA. After reviewing the program, it wasn't clear how the current 2-year Webelos program was accomplishing this objective, aside from the required Arrow of Light Adventure – Scouting Adventure. It was also identified that it was not necessary to take 18 to 24 months to prepare a Cub Scout to join Scouts BSA. This is what led to the decision to make the Arrow of Light a stand-alone badge of rank to prepare Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA.

Q: How does the Arrow of Light badge of rank prepare Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA?

A: Many of the requirements for the updated required Adventures for Arrow of Light are designed to prepare Cub Scouts to join Scouts BSA. In the Bobcat Adventure for Arrow of Light, Cub Scouts learn about the patrol method, they learn the Scouts BSA sign, salute, and handshake. In the outdoor required Adventure, Outdoor Adventurer, are required to go camping. In Personal Fitness Cub Scouts are introduced to tracking their progress over a period of time.

Q: Will Webelos and Arrow of Light share elective Adventures?

A: No. Elective Adventures will be specific to the badge of rank. Elective Adventure pins will change from the current oval design. Electives for Webelos (4th grade) will be diamond-shaped and electives for Arrow of Light (5th grade) will be arrowhead-shaped.

Q: What will happen to the Webelos colors?

A: The Webelos colors will simply be renamed the Adventure colors and used by both Webelos and Arrow of Light Scouts to display their Adventure pins.

Q: What do we do with current 4th graders who are Webelos during the 2023-24 program year?

A: Current 4th grade Webelos should focus only on Webelos required Adventures and **not** start any work on Arrow of Light. It is suggested that they focus on the elective Adventures that will not be available to them next year as an Arrow of Light. Those elective Adventures are Aquanaut, Art Explosion, Aware and Care, Built It, Earth Rocks!, and Modular Design.

Q: What uniform changes are there for Webelos and Arrow of Light?

A: Webelos will remain in a blue Cub Scout uniform including the Webelos hat, neckerchief and neckerchief slide. Arrow of Light Scouts will wear the Scouts BSA uniform with blue shoulder loops. There will not be an Arrow of Light hat, neckerchief, or neckerchief slide.

Q: If I already purchased a Scouts BSA uniform for my Scout who is not yet in 5th grade do I have to revert to a blue Cub Scout uniform?

A: No. Uniform updates are intended to simplify the program not to create a burden on Cub Scout families.

Q: Why the change to 4th grade Webelos in blue Cub Scout uniforms?

A: The majority of 4th grade Webelos in Cub Scouting were active in Cub Scouting as a 3rd grader and already have a blue uniform. This allows Cub Scouts to get the most use out of their Cub Scout uniform. The Arrow of Light rank is designed to prepare a Cub Scout to join Scouts BSA making it the best time to convert into a tan Scouts BSA uniform. This also allows a family to get the most out of the tan Scouts BSA uniform.

Q: When should a Cub Scout purchase a tan Scouts BSA uniform?

A: When to convert to a Scouts BSA uniform is ultimately the decision of the family. It is recommended that a Cub Scout convert to a Scouts BSA uniform when they have either earned their Webelos badge of rank or when they complete the 4th grade and are now an Arrow of Light Scout. Another factor is any growth spurt during this stage of development. If a Cub Scout is in 4th grade and has outgrown their blue uniform it is perfectly acceptable for them to transition into a Scouts BSA uniform when purchasing a new uniform.