

# “Webelos Parents 101 or how I learned to stop worrying and love Cub Scouts”

with apologies to Peter Sellers

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## ***Introduction***

Some of you may be new to Scouting. Because of this you may not know how the Pack and Den works and what your son is expected to do and how he is to advance in Cub Scouting. This overview strives to begin to answer some of those questions. As a parent, you need to first read and understand pages 1-22 of your son's Bear handbook. Then read pages 25-37 with your son. This starts your son and you on the trail of Cub Scout and the Webelos/ Arrow of Light ranks. Please also read, understand, and utilize your son's Webelos handbook and help him with it. His handbook should also be brought to each Den meeting (not Pack meetings please).

Even if you are an "old hand" at Scouting as a parent you should please read this overview carefully as there may be some information that you may not know.

There is a lot of very important information contained here, so please read and reference this overview packet. I would like to call your attention to the following aspects as relates to the Den and to the Pack:

- Communication
- Advancement to Webelos and Arrow of Light ranks
- Uniform
- Attendance
- General thoughts

## Communication

It is very hard to properly communicate to everyone with today's busy lifestyle that we lead. However, communication in the Webelos Den is essential to its survival.

We are now going to primarily communicate with all of you through the Pack website. It is located on the Internet at [www.libertyvillepack72.com](http://www.libertyvillepack72.com). You should go to the site and make sure to bookmark it. You should also review it and see all the information contained in the website.



The most important part of the site for the Webelos Den is the “Calendar” section. In addition to Pack meeting and special event information, you will see “Webelos Den Meeting” notices. PLEASE READ THESE CAREFULLY and also make sure you are reading the notices for your Webelos Den (by name and/or number). Preferably you will read several meetings into the future. The reason for this is simple: The Den Leaders will post information about what the Den is doing for each Den meeting and more importantly, what Webelos rank requirements your son should be working on and when they are due. This is CRITICAL to your son's advancement and to working together as a member in the Webelos Den. They should also post those requirement areas that have already been due to enable each Webelos Den member to “catch up” as required, but it will be up to the Cub and his parents to keep up with their requirements as the leaders

will not have time at the meetings to individually work with each boy on their advancements.



Please make it a habit to check the Pack website at least weekly for updates and new information. Also, as the Leaders will be updating meeting information, DO NOT assume that if you have read a meeting notice that it has not changed!!!

The Pack and Den Leaders will also make announcements at the Pack and Den meetings but it has become obvious that it is very difficult for these announcements to often be heard and to “stick” and so they must communicate effectively to maintain such a large Pack.

### ***Advancement to Webelos/ Arrow of Light rank and Parental involvement***

#### **Webelos and Arrow of Light**

Over a period of two years, the Webelos works on first the Webelos rank and then the Arrow of Light. Webelos as a whole is the gradual change from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting and to a large extent it helps in the transition from one to another. The most obvious change is that the Webelos Den member can wear the Boy Scout tan uniform but wears the Blue Cub Scout epaulets on their shirt tabs instead of the Red Boy Scout epaulets.

The Arrow of Light award if attained allows the boy to smoothly transition to Boy Scouts. In fact it is the only Cub Scouting badge that can be worn on the Boy Scout uniform, and a representative square knot signifying Arrow of Light is the only Cub Scout award that can be worn by the adult.

Since Boy Scouts work on and achieve ranks at their own pace and go as far as they can and desire in Boy Scouts by rank, the Webelos Cub starts to learn to work as a team within the Den, but somewhat independently on their own advancement. This “middle ground” between the lower ranks of Cub Scouting and the individual ranks of Boy Scouting is what makes Webelos special. The general requirements for Webelos and Arrow of Light relate to knowledge necessary to become a Boy Scout. Additionally, the Webelos and Arrow of Light rank awards make use of “activity pins” which are like “mini merit badges” that are required for advancement in the more senior Boy Scout ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle.

While the Webelos will work on some of the activity pins and rank requirements with the other members of the Den, many of the activity pins are designed to be worked on at home individually. The general Boy Scout related requirements are often worked on as a Den so that the boys within the Den learn the Boy Scout essentials together.

As noted in “Communication”, the Den Leaders will be posting those general requirements or requirements for activity pins that should be done prior to a specific Den meeting as part of the Pack calendar under the “Webelos Den Meeting” notices as described above. The Den Leader will also note what requirements will be worked on as a Den at the Den meeting.

At the Den meeting, the Den leaders will work with the Den members to review the requirements and to help on any that may not have been clear. However, in general, the requirements will not be totally performed nor always “signed off” as part of the Den meeting. There is too little time and too many boys. Additionally, as noted, for many of the Webelos activity pins, the individual Cub Scout and their parent(s) is responsible for performing their own requirements and gaining “sign off” approval by the parent.

“Sign off” approval whether done by the Den leadership or the parent is recorded in the Webelos’ book. Please note that many of the activity pin requirements are done by you and your Webelos at home. Many others of the activity pins are done at Den meetings so it is important to attend all the Den meetings. Additionally, at the Den meeting the other requirements related to how to become a Scout are reviewed and achieved.

At Den meetings the Den leaders will check the Webelos’ handbook to see if the Webelos has obtained the proper approval (from the Den Leader or the parents) for the requirements that were assigned or for any prior requirements. This is why each Webelos Scout must bring their handbook to all Den meetings. This is not required for Pack meetings.

The Den leaders will maintain a record of what requirements have been completed by boy so that they will know who has completed what requirements for their Webelos rank advancement. The Den Leader gets this information from each boy's Webelos book. So having proper sign off in the Webelos book is vital to making sure that the Den can properly maintain its records and the Webelos will get their proper recognition.

We strive to have the boys obtain their Webelos rank advancement at the Pack's "Blue and Gold" banquet as a Den in the first Webelos year and the Arrow of Light at the following year "Blue and Gold". The Blue and Gold banquet is a special recognition Pack meeting and traditionally it is where the boys are most formally recognized for their efforts and major achievements. To meet this goal, it is imperative that the boys and their parent(s) know what requirements they should be working on and keep up with the other members of the Den. Otherwise it will be very difficult to have them attain their rank along with others in the Den and they may miss out on their recognition at the Blue and Gold banquet. While certainly they can continue on their Webelos requirements and attain Webelos rank after the Blue and Gold, it is a nice milestone to reach as an entire Den.

Since the Arrow of Light award allows the Webelos to "cross over" directly to Boy Scout and since this ceremony is performed at the Blue and Gold banquet of the second Webelos year, it is highly desirable that the Webelos attain their Arrow of Light prior to the Blue and Gold if they are going to attain it prior to going to Boy Scouting.

### **Webelos Specific**

Attainment of the Webelos badge is done during the fourth grade although conceivably it could be finished early in the fifth grade year. Webelos begins to work towards being a Boy Scout. Key aspects include:

- Understanding the meaning of Webelos and the Webelos uniform
- Attaining the Citizen, Fitness, and one other Activity Pin
- Lead a Flag ceremony
- Understanding of requirements to become a Boy Scout
- Faith requirements (optional this could be attainment of God and Country as a Webelos)

### **Arrow of Light Specific**

Attainment of the Arrow of Light badge is done during the fifth grade. The boy can be a member of the Webelos II den even if they have not attained the Webelos badge, but they must attain the Webelos badge prior to attaining the Arrow of Light badge.

The focus of the Arrow of Light badge is preparing a boy to join a Boy Scout Troop and become a Boy Scout. Key aspects include:

- Understanding of requirements to become a Boy Scout
- Attaining five more Activity Pins including Readyman and Outdoorsman.
- Interaction with a Boy Scout Troop including participating in a Webelos campout

## **Webelos Activity Pins**

There are 20 Activity Pins that can be earned. As noted previously, 3 of them are required for Webelos rank and an additional 5 for Arrow of Light rank. The other 12 are “elective” activity pins that are not required for Webelos or Arrow of Light badges but it should be stressed that learning about them and attaining as many as possible will only enhance the boy’s learning and mastery within Scouting.

The Table of Contents for the Activity Pins is on page 1 of the Webelos book.

Activity pins are not directly displayed on the uniform. Instead they are pinned to and worn on the “Webelos Colors”, a ribbon like device that is pinned to the uniform (page 35 of Webelos book). It is properly worn on the right sleeve pinned under the Den patch. Please “Uniform Insignia Placement” on the Pack website for placement information.

Upon completion of 4 activity pins beyond the 3 required for Webelos, the Webelos can be awarded the “Compass Points Emblem” which is worn on the right pocket button. A compass point pin is further awarded for each additional 4 activity pins attained. These points are attached to the emblem (page 60 of Webelos book).

## **Webelos Belt Loops and Pins**

Academic and Sports Belt Loops and Pins can be earned by any boy at any level in Cub Scouting. The Cub Scouts Academics and Sports Program is one method of addressing the third aim of Scouting: the development of physical, mental and emotional fitness. The attainment and awarding of these Belt Loops/ Pins is recognition of the “above and beyond” effort that a boy can do within this program.

HOWEVER, some of the Webelos Activity Pins have as parts of their requirements the attainment of Academic or Sports Belt Loops and/or Pins. It is **KEY TO NOTE** that a Belt Loop or Pin achieved during a rank prior to Webelos **CANNOT** be used to satisfy the Activity Pin requirement for a Webelos. If these Belt Loops/ Pins are needed to achieve a Webelos Activity Pin, they **MUST** be re-earned fully.

Since the attainment of the Academic and Sports Belt Loops and Pins can be reached at any level in Cub Scouting, the requirements for these are not in the handbook of any rank. However, a summary of the requirements and a link to the full requirements has been posted on the Pack 72 website under the Parents section and titled “Academic and Sports Pins”.

Belt loops can be worn on the blue Cub Scout belt (they don’t fit the green Boy Scout belt).

Academic and Sports pins are not worn on the Cub or Webelos uniform. Instead they can be worn on the brag vest affixed to a large letter “C” emblem that can be sewn on the brag vest and that is available at the Scout Store.

## Record Keeping

For Webelos, record keeping is a lot more complex due to the interrelated aspects of the Activity Pins and the Belt Loops and Academic/Sports Pins. So you need to properly log your son's requirements and electives so that the Den Leadership can properly note them for awards.

Please log your son's attainment of requirements as follows:

- Webelos
  - The requirements and sign off for Webelos are on pages 49-51.
- Arrow of Light
  - The requirements and sign off for Arrow of Light are on pages 63-64.
- Activity Pins
  - The requirements for each Activity Pin are located at the beginning of each Activity Pin's section and approval should be recorded there.
  - A summary of these requirements approval is located on pages 75-78 and this will be the log for you Den to review.
- Belt Loops/ Pins
  - The requirements for these are not captured in the Webelos book. So as the requirements are attained, it is vital that they be properly recorded by the Den Leader.
  - A good idea would be to print the summary requirements for these belt loops/ pins that can be found on the Pack Website under the Parents section and titled "Academic and Sports Pins". Then as a requirement(s) is met, sign the summary and show the Den Leader. Keep this summary with the Webelos book.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is NOT a requirement for continuation in Cub Scouting that a boy attain a rank whether Tiger, Wolf, Bear, or Webelos. Cub Scouting is grade dependent and the boy will move to the next Den level whether they have attained their rank or not. So as members of the Webelos Den, they will be members but will not be a "Webelos" until they have attained their Webelos badge. It is important to know this, but also to know that there is a feeling of accomplishment for the boys when they have attained their rank along with their friends.

The Webelos den works on the Webelos rank in fourth grade and the Arrow of Light in the fifth grade. If the boy does not attain Webelos in the Scouting fourth grade year, they can still move along to the Webelos II Den the following year. However, they cannot attain their Arrow of Light rank until they have earned their Webelos rank

**VERY IMPORTANT NOTE:** It is always possible in a Webelos Den that some members did not start as Tiger Cubs or the other junior Cub ranks. That is fine and Scouting always welcomes new Cub Scouts at any level. It is important to know that they are not required to "go back" and earn their Tiger rank (or Wolf or Bear rank) to progress as Webelos scouts. However, ALL Cub Scouts must attain the Bobcat rank, which serves as an introduction and basic training for Cub Scouts. If your son has not earned his Bobcat rank the Den Leaders and you as "Akela" will be working with him at home and at Den

meetings to teach him these basic skills. However, we have asked each of those working on Bobcat to read and perform the Bobcat requirements on pages 41-47 of the Webelos book. Your son will need Akela's OK on the 8 requirements and you will also want to review "A Parent's Guide pages 1-23 as the removable supplement to the front of the Webelos book with your son. This needs to be done as soon as possible.

## **Uniform**

The uniform is an important part of the Scouting experience since it represents Scouting in general and is worn to all Scouting events including Pack and Den meetings and other Scouting outings including fundraisers. The key is that a uniform should be "uniform" hence the name, and all members are to properly wear and maintain their uniform to provide a good example of pride in their Pack, in their Den, and in themselves.

The Pack has determined that the following components of the uniform are mandatory and all Webelos should wear the uniform with these components:

- Boy Scout uniform shirt with proper insignia and patches (see following section on "Uniform patches and insignia") with blue epaulets.
- Webelos Scout hat
- Webelos neckerchief and neckerchief slide – NOTE: the official Webelos neckerchief slide or sanctioned alternative should be used instead of rubber bands or just an overhand knot
- Blue jeans (please no sweat pants) – obviously official Scout pants would be the preferred uniform component, but with rapidly growing Webelos Scouts, buying Scout pants yearly or more can be impractical.
- Blue Cub Scout belt (belt loop awards don't fit on the green Boy Scout belt)
- Shoes and socks (no open toed shoes – preferably clean tied sneakers and/or hiking boots as appropriate)

The Cub Scout belt enhances the uniform and when worn with official pants or blue jeans, provides a very good-looking uniform and should be obtained and worn if at all possible.

Uniform patches and insignia. Proper patches and insignia including rank insignia are an integral part of the Webelos Scout uniform and should be properly placed and worn on the uniform. The following link provides instructions as to where the patches and insignia are to be worn: [www.scouting.org/forms/34282.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/forms/34282.pdf). These instructions are also contained on the Pack website in the "Parents" section.

The Pack initially provides the required patches and insignia. Your son should have the following Pack supplied patches and insignia on his uniform, and they should be applied per the instructions for location in the noted link:

- Council strip for the Northeast Illinois council – left sleeve
- Pack numeral "72" – left sleeve
- American flag (should have been already on the uniform when purchased) – right sleeve
- World Crest (purple compass point insignia) – centered over left pocket

- Rank badge(s) – the Webelos badge is a oval back and is centered on the left pocket. The Arrow of Light badge is a rectangle and goes at the lower part of the left pocket as shown.
- Den insignia – right sleeve – the Pack has decided to have Den names instead of numbers. So the Den patch is sewn on the sleeve just under but not touching the American flag patch.

## ***Attendance***

While perfect attendance is not a requirement for Cub Scouting, it is clear that involvement is key to the leading, learning, growing, and team experience provided by Scouting. Every effort should be made to have your son attend all the Pack and Den meetings. Additionally, throughout the Scouting year, the Pack and Den go on many outings and events as a unit. These will be listed far in advance on the Pack website calendar and typically announced at the Pack and often at the Den meetings. Please take advantage of these outings and events as they also form an important part of the Scouting experience. For every outing and event that your son attends, he will be awarded a “segment” piece that can be placed on an optional red “brag vest”. This brag vest is to be used (if desired) to place all non-uniform patches and segments obtained by the Cub Scout during their Cub Scouting career. Ask an adult leader about these vests and how to obtain one. You will undoubtedly see some of the Cubs wearing theirs at meetings and special events.

## ***General Thoughts***

The adult leaders of the Pack and Den are volunteers. They spend at least four days a month in direct Cub Scouting activities including a Pack meeting, one or two Den meetings, and a Committee meeting. Additionally, there is preparation time and often time spent attending other Scouting events including training and council events. It is imperative that you assist these leaders whenever possible and check the Pack website calendar to know what you and your son should be doing to prevent additional time being spent in individual calls, etc.

This is not to say that your leaders do not want you to call, far from it. But if the information is provided on the Pack website, it is a lot easier for everyone to find it and utilize it. Additionally, please feel free to speak to your Pack or Den leaders before or after the various meetings if you have questions or comments.

Also, PLEASE VOLUNTEER to assist on or with the Pack Committee, the Pack or Den itself. Speak to the adult leaders about this. The Pack Committee always has needs for additional help and it is the duty of all parents to provide at least some of their time to assist the Pack or Den directly as well as bringing their son to the meetings and events.

A primary purpose of Scouting is to teach boys and young men how to lead and how to lead proper lives. However, a huge measure of this is doled out with FUN. If it is not fun, they guys won’t participate and won’t learn. So as part of Scouting at the Pack and Den meetings, the adult leaders try to make it FUN.

However, our meetings cannot be solely “Fun and Games”. Learning and growing also need to take place. So we try to mix learning skills in with having fun, but we all must remember that we have a limited time and if there is too much “goofing off” then we don’t have fun and can’t learn. So please help your son to remember this important balance and it will help the adult leaders in their efforts!

As noted earlier, many of the Webelos/ Arrow of Light requirements are worked on and completed at home with the boy’s parent or parents. This is very important since it is impossible for the boy to attain his Webelos or Arrow of Light rank without this focus and assistance. There is not nearly enough time at Pack and Den meetings to work fully on all the requirements and many are designed to be family activities, which cannot be done at Pack or Den meetings. Let us know if this cannot be done at your home and we will need to work on how to best proceed with you and your son.

### ***Tiger vs. Cub vs. Scout***

The intent of Scouting all the way from Tiger Cub, to Cub, and on to Scouting is to teach the boys to be leaders and gain skills for life. This is done by activities and obtaining rank advancements. However, the rank advancements and how they are performed and attained are different at the different levels. This is important to know in helping your son.

#### **Tiger Cub**

Tiger Cubs are first graders and have very short attention spans. As such the “requirements” are typically done together as a Den and are relatively easy to accomplish. This is more a time to get to know each other and begin an easy transition into Cub Scouting for both the boy and the parent(s).

#### **Cub Scout**

Cub Scouts begin with attaining their Bobcat rank. This is “basic learning” and an introduction to Cub Scouting for all boys who join Cub Scouting no matter at what age/ grade they begin Cub Scouting. Bobcat is typically worked on and attained at the Den meeting and is fairly easy to attain. However, more emphasis is placed on the boy learning and being able to repeat various aspects of Scouting and perform various other aspects such as the salute and handshake. The boy begins to learn responsibility to know Cub Scouting.

Starting with Bear, much of the emphasis for advancement goes to the boy and his parent(s). Gradually the requirements become more difficult as the boy becomes better able to perform them. At first, especially in Wolf, the boy works mostly directly with the parent(s) to perform his requirements. Later, starting in Bear, the requirements are structured to allow the boy to be able to perform more of the requirements himself and show responsibility. However, they still require that the parent(s) sign off on proper attainment. The Den Leader will co-sign the requirement to verify that the boy has a working knowledge relating to the requirement.

It is key to note that Cub Scouts is grade dependent and the boy will be in:

- A Wolf Den in second grade
- A Bear Den in third grade
- A Webelos I Den in fourth grade
- A Webelos II Den in fifth grade and then graduate to Scouts

Because of this, it is not an absolute necessity for the boy to actually attain a rank in order to proceed. While everyone would like to gain recognition with the others in their Den, if it is impractical to attain all the requirements for the rank by the end of May of a grade year, then the boy can move to the next “Den level” without attaining the rank. In this manner, the boy can stay with their peers in the appropriate grade level of Cub Scouting.

## **Boy Scout**

By the time a boy moves from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting near the end of fifth grade, they are expected to be able to perform somewhat on their own and have a measure of responsibility. So Boy Scouts have a series of ranks but they are not age and grade dependent. The ranks are fully dependent upon the Scout earning them at their own pace if at all.

The ranks are:

- Tenderfoot
- Second Class
- First Class
- Star
- Life
- Eagle

Merit badges are also earned starting after First Class and the merit badges are an integral part of attaining Star through Eagle Scout. In fact, Eagle currently requires attainment of 21 merit badges, 11 of which are mandated.

The Boy Scout works on the requirements for each rank at their own pace with the assistance of others in their Patrol, their Scout leaders, and with their parents. However, it is up to the Scout to initiate this and to attain the rank themselves. Unlike Cubs where one age group moves along together in a Cub Den, a Scout Patrol can be made up of several ages and ranks. This allows boys to work together in a multi-functional and experience team, but it is up to the individual as to how fast and how far they progress in Scouting.

For instance, less than 2% of those who begin Boy Scouting attain the rank of Eagle so Eagle is a major challenge for boys and one that when attained is a very strong certification of their abilities and responsibility.

## ***Who Ya Gonna Call???***

So, with all of this new knowledge, what happens if you still need help???

First off, please ask and **DON'T BE SHY!**

On the website, the leadership adults are all listed with phone numbers and the ability to contact them directly by email by clicking on their name and sending a message. This is listed in the "Contact Us" section of the Pack 72 website.

Additionally, you should feel free to speak to your Pack and Den Leadership at any meeting. They are there to help and cannot help if they do not know you have a question of need.