Parent Handbook – Sea Scouts

Dear parents,

This is a very important document as it outlines the goals of our program and the expectations of every family to help us achieve those goals for your child. It also contains critical information for your section such as major camp dates, packing lists, your role and other crucial information.

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Introduction to the 403rd Toronto Sea Scout Group

Scouting is a program with a strong outdoor focus that develops youth leadership and independence.

Our group has grown greatly in the past 5 years and provides an expansive program following Scouts Canada standards with four sections: Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers.

We are a diverse group with members and families from many different backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, and economic circumstance.

Our program is varied and exciting but is only possible with volunteer leadership, financial donations, and inexpensive space provided by our sponsor and hosts.

Volunteers are Scouters and administrators for these programs. Your support and active participation are required to make it a strong and successful group. As the group has grown, the demands have grown, and our Scouters give a great deal of time and energy to the program. This means that we need more parent leadership in managing the group administration, fundraising, and non-camp events. We will say more below.

About Scouting & Scouts Canada

Scouting, the largest youth organization in the world, has over 40 million members in some 167 countries. Scouts Canada offers Scouting programs in Canada to over 42,000 young people, supported by 13,000 caring and dedicated volunteers.

The Scouts Canada Mission applies to all of our programs:
"To help develop well rounded youth, better prepared for success in the world."

Our Sponsor

403rd Toronto Scout Groups sponsor is Queen City Yacht Club (QCYC). They offer us support in sailing training, boat storage, and summer meeting space. In exchange, we provide use of our canoes, and volunteer labour for various tasks around the club.

Our Meeting Hosts

In addition to our sponsor QCYC, we receive very reasonable rates for meeting space from Dixon Hall, Paroisse du Sacre-Coeur, and Club L'Age D'Or Sacre-Coeur.

Meeting Nights

Meeting times and locations may change from time to time. Be alert to email messages from Scouters through ScoutsTracker.

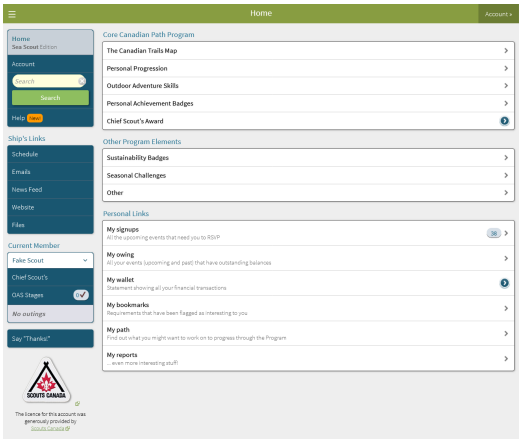
Tuesday

- **Beavers** (ages 5-7) – **Colony B**
  - 474 Ontario St from 5:45-7pm

Wednesday

- **Beavers** (ages 5-7) – **Colony A**
  - 188 Carlton St from 5:45–7pm
- **Cubs** (ages 8-10)
  - 474 Ontario St from 6:30pm – 8:00pm
- **Sea Scouts** (ages 11-14)
  - 381 Sherbourne St (back entrance) from 7–9pm
- **Sea Venturers** (ages 15-17)
  - 381 Sherbourne St (back entrance) from 7–9pm

Communications



Most communications will come via email through ScoutsTracker and will show a Scouter name and "403to-seascouts@scoutstracker.ca" as the sender. Please check your email program to ensure this address is not blocked. The simplest way is usually just to add this address as a contact, but ensure you label the contact "ScoutsTracker" and not the Scouter name since this email address cannot receive mail.

ScoutsTracker is how section Scouters keep track of the program, badge progression, emails to Scouts and parents, and other administrative aspects. There is a separate one for each section, but information is shared in part between them.

By default the first parent listed in MyScouts will be added as a login to ScoutsTracker for their Scout, but there can be additional logins provided on request. It is best for older Scouts and at least one parent to each have their own login.

Things you can do in ScoutsTracker:

- Check the calendar for the year
- RSVP for events in the calendar
- Review your badge progression
- Mark badge requirements you think you're ready to demonstrate as completed
- Check the status of your program fees

Registration and Program Costs

There are two main costs in Scouts – the membership/registration fee and program costs. There is also the cost of uniform and personal camping equipment such as raingear and sleeping pads and bags.

Membership/Registration Fee

The membership/registration fee is the same across all sections, and is an annual payment made through MyScouts.ca. Scouts Canada is in a registration transition. Some families will need to re-register in December, while others are Registered to next August. Please log in to MyScouts to review your current registration status. The group Commissioner will send out emails to affected families in the late fall.

Program Fees

Program fees are set by the individual sections and are dependent on the type and number of activities scheduled throughout the year. Our aim is to keep the program fees as low as possible through fundraising. This year the Sea Scout section will be moving to quarterly program fees which include all core program instead of a per event fee. We hope this will reduce administration and better reflect the centrality of these weekend programs in achieving our goals. This should also make it easier for families to predict costs and plan ahead. Payment schedules can be arranged if needed.

We expect that the Group Committee and Sections will be transparent and timely in telling families about costs for camps and events. Those costs will be subsidized as needed.

Subsidies

We want every youth to be able to participate in the full program. We do not want cost to prevent this. Programs can be offered on a sliding scale. Please contact the Group Commissioner to find out more.

Expectations of Scouts and their families

In order for the 403rd Toronto Scout Group to thrive, there are a number of expectations from youth and families. Scouting is a voluntary association, but having joined, full participation is not optional. We hope that sharing these expectations allow all youth, families, and Scouters to get the most from the program.

We expect that…

- Scouts will participate fully in the program on a weekly basis and communicate with their Scouter and Coxswain when they will be away
- Scouts will attend meetings and other events in full uniform and conduct themselves according to their promise and law
- Scouts attend all core camps and outings – notice of these events is provided in advance. Camping and outdoor activities are a significant part of the Scouting philosophy and program.
- a parent or older Scout will speak to the Group Commissioner if you are unable to cover the cost of a camp or other event.
- Scouts will come to activities with the appropriate clothing and footwear. This is an important safety issue. See our website or the appendices of this handbook for seasonal packing lists. Please speak to your Scouter if you need help obtaining these.
- Scout families will actively participate in our fundraising activities.
- Adults in Scout families will support the 403rd Toronto Sea Scout Group through volunteer roles.

Scouting works when we all work together

Volunteer roles for parents

- **Apple Day coordinator**
  - organizes communications, books sites and coordinates volunteer shifts, arranges for apples
- **Founders' day banquet coordinator**
  - organizes communications, coordinates various volunteers and pot luck plan
- **June picnic coordinator**
  - organizes communications, coordinates various volunteers and pot luck plan
- **Treasurer**
  - ensures our accounts are accurate, reports on finances to Group Committee, writes cheques and sets up payments for signatures
- **Secretary**
  - takes minutes of Group Committee meetings; takes the lead in group communications; sends out notice of Group Committee Meetings via ScoutsTracker

- **Registrar**
  - assists in maintaining member registrations and interviewing new Scouters
- **Parent roles in each section**:
  - **Transport coordinator**
    - works with Scouters to ensure that Scouts get to camp through parent drivers or other parent-supported transportation
  - **Quartermaster**
    - oversees the maintenance of section-specific equipment and works with the group Quartermaster to ensure problems with shared equipment are identified and dealt with
  - **Web content poster/creator**
    - gathers and posts information for the section onto the group website: events, reports, photos, etc.

Every family's participation is critical to our shared success. To volunteer for any of these roles, please send an email to scouts@403to.ca or speak to your section Scouter.

Group Events

In addition to the activities planned by each section, there are several group events that will be held throughout the year. Parents are asked to offer leadership to make these events successful.

The Group will communicate details about groupwide activities and events through ScoutsTracker emails, as well as on our website.

Important Group Dates

• October 17th: Apple Day Fundraising at St. Lawrence Market (and possibly other locations)

• December 4th – 5th: Santa Parcel Deliveries

• December 16th: 2026 group outdoor event – location TBD

• February 24th: Group Banquet – Baden Powell (Founder of Scouting) Day

• June 16th: Group Picnic – @ QCYC Paddle Centre

Fundraising

Scouts Canada is a non-profit organization based entirely on volunteers. In order to provide the activities, equipment and accommodations for our program, fundraising activities continue throughout the year.

There are two key fundraising activities that the group participates in annually – Apple Day and CGaming.

Your participation in these activities is very important to the quality of the program we can offer to your and other's children.

Apple Day

This is a fundraising exercise and community profile event that is well known and supported in the community. Apple Day is important to the 403rd as 100% of the money donated is retained by the group and it is often a moment when people discover us and join. We set up a number of stands in the local area and give an apple in return for a donation of any amount.

In the past we have averaged around $2,500 - $3,000 a day which goes towards helping run the section programs, badges, keeping program fees down, purchasing equipment, rent etc.

CGaming

We do our major fundraising through cGaming. Two adult volunteers, (any family or friends of the 403rd), do two hour sessions at Rama Gaming House, 991 Kennedy Road, at Lawrence. Each session involves greeting patrons at the reception desk and wiping fingerprints off electronic gaming machines. It's very easy, and for each session the group receives about $2500.

You don't have to sell anything!

Since starting in late 2023, the group has received over $200,000. This pays for buses to camp, new tents, canoes and other equipment, subsidizes uniforms, and offsets higher camp fees for high cost camps and jamborees**.**

To volunteer, you need to complete an online orientation (in your own time). Your first session, you will be paired with an experienced volunteer. You will be provided a purple uniform polo shirt, which is yours to keep!

Group Committee

The Group Committee consists of one Scouter from each section, and parent members. It meets 9-10 times a year, generally once a month but often taking a short break at the new year and a longer one in the summer.

The Group Committee selects a Group Commissioner who is responsible for overseeing the operation and development of the group. The committee supports the commissioner in carrying out these tasks;

- Approving the budget of each section
- Ensure that the necessary resources are available for the Scouters to conduct the program (materials, training, transportation and funding).

Sea Scouts

The Sea Scout program is based on the idea of a ship's crew. The need for Scouts to work together and develop the ability to accomplish tasks and keep each other safe is at the heart of our program. This happens through weekly meetings and through outdoor adventures.

Ritual and uniform help create an esprit de corps, and Scouts are expected to wear their full uniform, necker and shirt, with pride every week and keep it neat and clean. Sometimes we will do dirty tasks without our uniforms, but notice will be given.

Events maybe camps or one day adventures. The outdoors is our playground, but the goal is to develop strong, independent and interdependent leaders. Scouts are 11-14 years old and are capable of much. The program is meant to challenge them and as Sea Scouts, much of that program will be on and in the water. You can read more about the Scout philosophy and the Scout specific program overview on the Scouts Canada website. You can explore a bit more about Sea Scouts at SeaScouts.ca which is a website that is a cooperative effort between Canadian Sea Scouts.

Scouts will engage in activities in small, mixed-age groups called Boat Crews (or patrols), where one or two of their peers will assume a leadership role and encourage participation of the whole group. The program covers a wide range of adventures that lead to achieving Outdoor Adventure Skills or Personal Achievement Badges or simply exploring something new to the group or a beloved skill offered by a scouter or guest.

You and your child can explore the possibilities on ScoutsTracker, choosing to complete skills on their own and indicate the need for a Scouter to test your Scout's skill in a particular area. This can be something they are engaged in outside of scouting like aquatic skills or a sport.

There is a Court of Honour made up of Coxswains and Lead Hands (youth leaders) that meets regularly to help plan the program. The program reaches its peak when Scouts are deeply engaged in planning adventures for themselves.

Scouts is not a drop in program. Yes, we aim to do cool, adventurous stuff, but it's not a pick and choose menu. It's about teamwork: what we do, we do together. We will plan together and choose our activities and we will learn the skills to make those activities safe and fun. However, that depends upon everyone being there all the time, not just when the sun is shining. We grow as Scouts and people by living up to the commitments we make to the team even when things are a little difficult. And also when we challenge and support each other to do our best. We are there to help you do that.

Scout Promise

On my honour,
I promise that I will do my best;
To do my duty to the Land and its peoples
To help other people at all times,
And to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law.

Scout Law

A Scout is
helpful and trustworthy,
kind and cheerful,
considerate and clean,
wise in the use of all resources.

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Code of Conduct

The Code is based on the Scout Law and requires all Scouts to:

Above all else, tell the truth. It is a sign of honour and integrity that is the foundation for all our relationships.

Be helpful. Help each other to be the best version of themselves.

Be trustworthy. Say what you mean and mean what you say. Follow through on your word.

Be kind. Scouts will not engage or participate in physical, verbal, or emotional harassment. Scouts will refrain from inappropriate physical contact and language.

Be cheerful. Come to all get-togethers with a positive attitude to make the experience the best it can be for you and others.

Be considerate. You do not know what someone is going through. Always treat other Scouts and Scouters with respect.

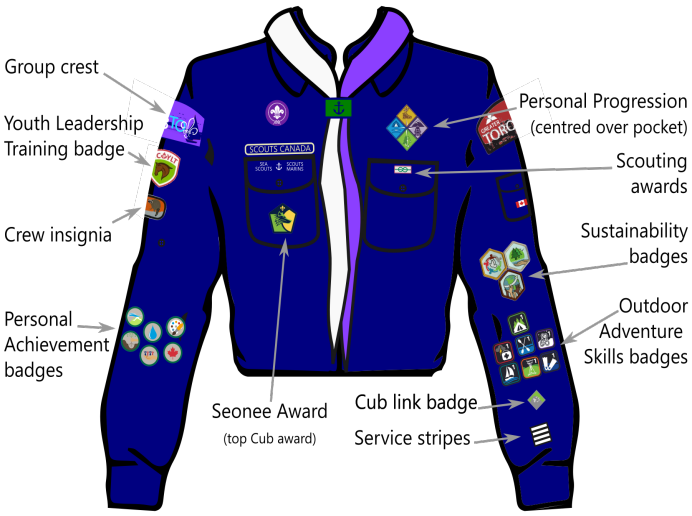
Be clean. Take pride in your appearance, uniform, and cleanliness. Keep your meeting places and campsites clean, and follow the Leave No Trace principles.

Be wise in the use of resources. Care for your personal kit and group gear as it is expensive to replace. All kit must be in good working order so that it is ready when you need it.

Violating this Code will result in an entry on your personal record and a discussion with your parents. Violations will be classified as minor or major resulting in a series of escalating consequences ranging from a warning, removal from current or future activity, and possibly permanent removal from the group at the discretion of the Ship's Company Court of Honour

Uniform

The uniform for our group is the Scouts Canada navy blue shirt available at a subsidised rate of $50 through your Scouter. This shirt is worn with the group necker (or scarf) which will be given to the child upon investiture. Replacement or additional neckers are available for an for $15. Old uniform shirts can be returned for a credit of $10 against the cost of a new shirt. These gently used shirts will also be available for others in the group at the same cost.



As Sea Scouts we have our own long sleeve technical shirt which we create before our spring program starts each year. The www.Scoutshop.ca does offer additional branded Scout specific attire and branded gear that you might want to review.

Personal outdoor activity equipment

Every Scout is expected to have a basic kit so they can be safe and relatively comfortable in our activities. Below are some important notes about those items in general, followed by seasonal packing lists. **You can help your Scout pack, but they must do the packing themselves so that they know what they have and where it is.**

Buying equipment: You can buy gear many places, but it is well worth checking thrift stores first, especially for non-cotton outdoor clothes. Talk to other parents, there may be outgrown equipment in the group. In addition, we often arrange gear nights at Mountain Equipment Company on Queen Street West near Spadina.

Fabrics: As much as possible, **leave your cotton at home.** Avoid cotton sweatshirts, sweatpants or cotton socks. Cotton does not dry or help you stay warm.

- **Use Synthetic Fleece or Pile:** Fleece is quick drying, remains warm even when wet. Jackets, vests and pants are available in a variety of thicknesses. Most fleeces do not block the wind and should be paired with an outer shell – like a rain jacket!
- **Use Wool:** Wool is a great natural insulator, even when wet. Pants, shirts, sweaters and jackets made of wool have traditionally been used for outdoor wear because of their insulating value. Some heavier wool can be slow to dry and bulky.

Layers: You will be drier and more comfortable if you dress in a way where layers that can be added or removed as conditions change. Wearing an inner wicking layer followed by insulation and an outer wind- and water-proof layer is the way to be comfortable in all weather conditions.

Key items

Hats

In warm conditions, hats provide protection from both the rain and the sun. In cold conditions, they help keep you warm. Even if it seems like the weather for your trip is looking warm, pack a winter hat just in case. It can be chilly at night and in the mornings.

Gloves and mittens

We are outside and hands are exposed to wind and weather. **In winter, mittens are a must** – gloves just aren't warm enough when it's below zero.

Raingear

You must have a waterproof jacket, pants and footwear. We cannot stress this enough. We are outside all the time. **A nylon shell is not waterproof.** Living outside for a weekend in the rain is fine if you have waterproof gear, but it is horrible and can be dangerous if you do not. People who grow up in urban areas seem to have trouble grasping this reality. If it rains, we are still outside. Effective raingear is crucial.

Water bottle

A water bottle needs to be leakproof, easy to carry and at the Scout level must be 1L. The standard for outdoor use and our preferred bottle is the 1L wide-mouth Nalgene. It is leak-proof, indestructible, fits many water filters, is easily filled and cleaned and can be marked with stickers to show ownership. The loop on the lid provides an attachment point for a carabiner so it can be clipped to things. There is a reason it is the standard bottle for canoeists, hikers, sailors and outdoor leaders—it is the best choice. The lid can be replaced and it is possible to get an insert that restricts the flow for easier drinking.

Sleeping pad

This is primarily for warmth, not comfort. Scouts must be able to pack it themselves. Scouts often struggle with inflatable mattresses. Foam pads are easy to pack. Two good and less expensive options are a yellow evazote pad and for easier packing, the Z-Rest. They are less warm than some of the more expensive pads, but that can be extended with a blanket on top

of the pad. A warmer starter pad are some of the MEC branded ones like the Camper, but be sure your Scout can roll it themselves before you buy it.

Backpack

A suitcase is not a workable way to carry equipment to camp. Neither is a duffle bag. A backpack must be large enough to contain a Scout's stuff—there can be no "danglers." A sleeping pad doesn't have to be inside, but must be secured under the lid or attached to the side with straps. Everything must be secure and not swinging: not mess kits, water bottles, or sleeping bags. If it's not inside, it must be securely strapped to the pack. Scouts must be able to walk into camp with their gear from the drop-off area.

Mess kit

At the Scout level, we are often doing things in patrols and more lightweight events where we need to pack some things together. Metal is usually a poor choice for mess kits. A mess kit must also have it's own mesh bag so it can be hung up to dry. It is not for hanging on the outside of a pack, it's annoying and will get damaged. A mess kit should always be inside the pack. Our preferred mess kit is the GSI Cascadian 1 Person Table Set. However, our crew boxes often have mess kits included, so you won't need this every camp. Be alert to the lists sent out.

Pocket knife

Once you have your knife permit, you should have a pocket knife. It is a very useful tool, particularly at camp. Your pocket knife should not be giant. It should fold to safely keep in your pocket and the blade should lock so you don't accidentally fold it on yourself when using it.

Compass

Optional for most Scouts, once you become a coxswain or are moving up to Venturers and leading small expeditions on land or water, having at least a basic compass is very important. We will teach compass use and navigation, providing compasses in that context, but having your own lets you practise those skills so that when you need them, you're ready.

Timepiece

Optional for most Scouts, this is important for coxswains. As coxswain, you are a critical part of the leadership of the troop and you are the leader for your boat crew and your watch. A leader needs to be able to keep track of time, so that we are getting critical tasks done in the

time we have and we are meeting up when we all expect. A wristwatch is probably the best choice but a watch that is part of a carabiner is ok too.

Please **label all of your gear** with your name. If it goes missing it is easier to return it to you if your name is on it. Mabel's Labels provide an easy way to label a lot of equipment at once. Mabel's is a Canadian company based in Hamilton and we have registered with them as a "fundraiser." If you order labels from them, on the checkout page, you can search for us in the "supporting a fundraiser?" box by typing 403rd Toronto. A portion of your purchase will come back to the group. You can also just write on things with a permanent marker, but please do label gear.

Do not ever bring...

- extra food of any kind – odorous items invite insects and critters into tents and may cause harm to those with food allergies;
- video games, computers, or other electronic amusements;
- mobile phones. If you would like to take pictures, bring a camera;
- alcohol, cigarettes or non-prescription drugs.

Packing lists

Our packing lists are on our website and will also typically be sent out in ScoutsTracker emails before a camp. Be alert to the contents as sometimes there are specific requirements for a camp. If you haven't seen one, check ScoutsTracker and if there is nothing there, then contact a Scouter.

Contacts

Group Commissioner - Beth Baskin beth@kapn.net or 647-224-2384

Sea Scouts Key Scouter - Benjamin Wilkins benjamin.wilkins99@gmail.com or 613-863-6704

Venturers Key Scouter - Keith Nunn kapn@kapn.net or 647-824-1408

cGaming coordinator - Evelyn Saungikar evelyn.saungikar@rogers.com or 416-997-0011

Payments

Emails for e-transfers – you will usually use the address for your section

- beavers@403TO.ca
- cubs@403TO.ca
- seascouts@403TO.ca
- venturers@403to.ca
- admin@403to.ca – use this for uniform payments or when directed

Core Sea Scout Program Calendar

Details and full calendar in ScoutsTracker

Optional items are marked optional. All other entries are core program.

Sep 18-20 – Youth Leadership Training – Toronto Islands

Sep 19 (Sat) – Camp 101 – Toronto Islands

Sep 26 (Sat) – Canoe Day – Toronto Islands

Oct 2-4 – Alders Challenge *(optional – for older Scouts)*

Oct 17-18 – Apple Day
- St. Lawrence Market (Sat)
- Ferry Dock (Sun)

Nov 6-8 – **Skyline Skills Camp**

Nov 21 (Sat) – Geocaching Day

Dec 4-5 (Fri-Sat) – Santa Parcel Delivery

Dec 16 (Wed) – Group event

Jan 16 (Sat) – Winter Activity Day

Feb 19-21 – **Winter Camp**

Feb 24 – Baden-Powell Week banquet and 35th Anniversary celebration

Mar 6 (Sat) – Scout Transit Day

May 5 (Wed 5pm) – 1st Island Meetings start

May 7-9 – Joe Thorn Competition Camp

May 22 (Sat) – QCYC Sailpast

May 29 (Sat) – ORCKA Canoe Day

Jun 4-6 (Fri am to Sun) – Canoe Trip

Jun 16 (Wed) – Group Picnic at our Paddle Centre on Toronto Islands

Jun 19 (Sat) – CanSail Day *(optional)*

Jun 26–Jul 3 – Whitewater canoe trip for 4th year Scouts and Venturers *(optional)*

July & August opportunities – *(optional)*
- Tue evening sailing and canoeing
- Wed & Fri evening racing opportunities
- 2 week sailing camp sessions

Aug 14-21 – Haliburton Scout Reserve Summer Camp – Ontario Sea Scout Rendezvous *(optional, but strongly recommended)*

You can subscribe to the ScoutsTracker calendar which includes all meetings and events: https://scoutstracker.ca/calendar/troop/1-5-6c956d1bc5017082b12a.ics