

ADVANCEMENT INFORMATION FOR SCOUTS

July 2020

Happy Summer, Scouts!

Many of you are taking part in rank advancement activities and virtual MB classes this summer, which is wonderful! I am so glad to see so many of you continuing to be involved in Scouting over the summer. In an effort to make things a little more efficient, here is an outline of how to handle rank and MB advancement items:

I. RANK ADVANCEMENT

A. Scoutmaster Conferences

1. For Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks - please contact your PASM to schedule your scoutmaster conference once all other requirements are complete.
2. For Star and Life ranks - please contact Scoutmaster John Eikenburg (see website for email address) to schedule your SMC.
3. FCT PASM's - if you have any Scouts earning Scout Rank, please log the completed requirements in Scoutbook and then email me to let me know.

B. Boards of Review

1. Once your SMC is complete, please email Advancement AND Board of Review contacts (addresses on the troop website) to request a BOR. **Emails should come from Scouts, not parents.**
2. You must send a PDF copy of your handbook page(s), even if not all requirements are recorded in your handbook. This allows us to cross-check with data in scoutbook, just as we would if you came to see us at the table on a Tuesday night. **Please be sure to indicate your patrol in the email.**

C. Submitting Rank Advancement

1. This step is handled by Mrs. Scheibner, after the BOR. There is nothing the Scout needs to do for this.

II. MERIT BADGES

A. Steps to begin/earn a MB

1. Scout approaches PASM to ask for blue card **for a specific MB.**
2. PASM recommends name of **at least one registered MBC for that MB** and signs the FRONT of the card. This initial unit leader signature may also be handled within Scoutbook.
3. Scout may begin working with MBC. Scout may choose to work with any registered MBC he wishes, but **it is required that he verify that the MBC is registered for that MB.**
4. Some MBC may desire/require Scouts to connect with them via Scoutbook. If you need assistance with this, please contact me. I am happy to help.
5. Once all requirements are signed off by the MBC, Scout returns to PASM for second unit leader signature. At this time, the PASM discusses the Scout's experience - what he learned, what went well, what was challenging, etc. ***A BUDDY OR PARENT MUST BE PRESENT DURING THE ENTIRETY OF THE CONVERSATION per YPT.***
6. Scout turns in completed blue card - completed in ink/printed from Scoutbook, **labeled with patrol**, ALL requirements signed as completed, and TWO unit leader signatures.
7. Don't know my address? Look it up in Scoutbook or in the directory on the troop website. Use your resources!

B. MB Reminders

1. In this time of social distancing, it is possible that some PASM and MBC communications may be occurring via email. The scout should print and attach those emails to the blue cards when submitting to advancement for processing.
2. If you are participating in virtual MB classes, please be sure to keep track of all names and contact addresses for the program(s) you are taking. It will be difficult for you to follow up if there are any questions or concerns after the class if you do not have this information. These are not our programs so we do not have access to the contact information for you.
3. **ALWAYS check to see if the MB class will cover ALL reqs.** If you aren't sure, ask the program coordinator.
4. **If the class DOES NOT cover all reqs, you are REQUIRED to find a registered MBC willing to help you with the pre-reqs and/or incomplete items remaining after the class, BEFORE you begin the class. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
5. REMINDER - it is ALWAYS your responsibility to verify that the MBC you choose to work with is registered with BSA as an MBC for the MB you are working on. If you need help with this, please contact me.

6. I STRONGLY ADVISE THAT SCOUTS KEEP ALL MB MATERIALS/DOCUMENTATION (worksheets, projects, photos, etc.) UNTIL AWARDS ARE PROCESSED. We have a lot of moving parts and changes due to virtual MB programs and quarantine issues. Things happen and things keep changing. Help us help you by being prepared. It is a LOT easier to address any potential issues if all of the materials are present.

C. Submitting MB

1. ALL ITEMS must be submitted via hard copies. NO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED. You may mail items to my home address OR deliver in an envelope LABELED WITH YOUR NAME AND PATROL. NO LOOSE ITEMS, because loose items get lost.
2. Don't know my address? Look it up on the troop directory, available on the troop website, or in Scoutbook.
3. If you take a virtual MB class that logs data using Scoutbook, you must print your blue card from Scoutbook and submit the hard copy. Make sure the initial unit leader signature is handled by your PASM (it will print automatically on the blue card) and your patrol is written on the card. Second unit leader signature given via email should be printed and attached.
4. If you do not see your submitted items in your Scoutbook profile, please feel free to follow up via email and ask, but please be patient and allow reasonable time for things to get into the system. Remember we are all volunteers offering our 'free time' to make Scouting happen for you. 😊

D. Gigglin' Marlin

1. As of June 15, ONLY swimming, lifesaving, and SCUBA diving MB will be accepted from Gigglin' Marlin. NO EXCEPTIONS.
2. If you started a MB with Gigglin' Marlin prior to June 15, then please contact your PASM or Advancement for more information on how to handle this.

III. COMMUNICATION TIPS

A. Telephone

1. When you call someone, be sure to say hello and then immediately identify yourself.
2. Ask to speak to whomever you were calling and then ask your questions.
3. Thank whomever you were calling for their help.
4. YPT policy holds true here – make sure you have a trusted adult or buddy present for the whole conversation. Speakerphone works well.

FaceTime is even better, because then the person on the other end of the call can see who is speaking.

B. Email

1. **When sending emails to any adult, Scouts are REQUIRED to copy in a parent or other trusted adult.** This is Cyber Chip and YPT policy. **This is important.**
2. Use proper salutations and closings. It is always important to know your audience and always be respectful. You can find the full names of every troop member in the troop directory on the website. This is a convenient way to check spelling too. This shows the recipient that you took the time to care enough about what his/her name is to spell it correctly. Little things matter and this is a great time to make this a habit for life.
3. **Always use your first and last name and patrol when you sign the email.** We have over 250 Scouts, so it helps us find your records faster.
4. Send Scouting-related emails to the Scouting email contacts for Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chair, Advancement, BOR, etc, rather than our personal email addresses. This helps us keep our volunteer work separated from our personal emails and keep organized communication records, which means we can help YOU more efficiently. Addresses are available on the troop website.
5. Be polite – all those manners you learn at home and school apply here too. Please, thank you, making requests rather than demands, etc, go a long way.
6. Parents, please let your son learn these lessons! Yes, you could probably type faster than he can, but he needs to learn how to send emails, make requests, solve problems. Please allow him the space to do so.

C. Videoconferences

1. During videoconferences, be sure to have your video and microphone ON.
2. Check to make sure your face is visible in the camera. If you cannot see yourself in the preview window on your screen, the person on the other end cannot see you either. Adjust your screen angle if necessary.
3. Try not to move around a lot. It is hard to keep your face within the camera range if you are moving around a lot.
4. Be prepared. Make sure you have whatever materials you will need for your meeting handy.
5. YPT policy holds true here – make sure you have a trusted adult or buddy present for the whole conversation. During a BOR, a parent will be asked to confirm it is acceptable for their child to participate in the meeting, but may NOT be present during the actual BOR. This is

consistent with how BOR are run in person and is in accordance with YPT/Cyber Chip because three YPT-trained adults are present on the call.

IV. Courts of Honor

Unfortunately, we do not know when we will be permitted to have a COH. Normally, our next COH would be in September after school starts, but that remains TBD. We will, of course, keep you updated as we know more.

V. Questions, concerns, confusion?

Please just call or email me. I will do my best to help.

Hope you all are having a safe summer,

Dr. Coveler
T55 Advancement Chair
advancement@troop55.org