

Moving on from Beavers to Cubs?

Moving on from the Beaver Colony to the Cub Pack is a big step. This guide lets you know what to expect and to help you help us and your child in the transition from the youngest group in the Scouting movement (6-8 years) to those who are older (8-10½ years old).

What happens?

St Edmunds Cub Pack meets Fridays 6.30pm to 7.45pm. On the first visit to the Cub Pack, a parent is welcome to stay (and might get roped-in to help!).

At Cubs, they will be introduced to the whole Cub pack and in a few weeks will be placed in a six (which comprises an older Cub, the sixer, an assistant, the seconder, and about 4 other Cubs). One of the older Cubs in the six will be asked to guide the new Cub. Assigning a Cub to a six will depend on striking a balance between the age range and boys vs girls.

After about 3 weeks of a Beaver visiting the Cub Pack, they will be asked if they would like to make their Cub Scout promise. When this occurs, parents will be invited into the hall at the end of a Cub meeting and the new Cub Scout will hold the Cub Pack flag, make the Scout sign and make their promise, led by the Cub Scout Leader. Photos are taken and everyone applauds!

The badges which transfer over to the Cub sweatshirt are – the international membership badge (purple arrow head), the moving-on award, any year badges, the County/District badge, the group badge, any (dark blue square) Group partnership awards, any (light) blue activity badges and the bronze Beaver Scout award, if they achieved it. The bronze award might be awarded in the early stages of being a Cub Scout. See: <http://scouts.org.uk/supportresources/search?cat=12,67,281>

What is the same and what is different?

Although the underlying principles of Scouting are exactly the same, Cubs are *not* the same as Beavers. Cubs do include fun, games and sport activities. But the types of games are deliberately mixed up into team games, knock-out games or place Cubs in pairs.

Cubs are expected to stretch them and doing things which need more effort, appropriately challenging and being more self-reliant.

The most popular of these are nights away - which may be for a night away to start with, but increasing to a whole week away (the need to look after one's own kit, to co-operate in sharing a tent, to take part in outdoor pursuits as a part of the camp experience – but still in a safe environment – no axes, knives, cross country orienteering, open water swimming etc – that's for Scouts!). Typically, Cubs will be invited to camp twice a year – a weekend camp for Cubs alone (which may with alongside Cubs from another Group) and a weekend camp alongside Scouts. Sometimes these camps are a week-long affair! But we must say now – the opportunity to camp will only be given (a) normally in the first instance for a night to start with unless they have a family member also camping – such as a Scout, and (b) to those we think mature enough to camp. Unfortunately, we occasionally think that a Cub is not ready to start camping and may hold off inviting a Cub to camp.

There are organised hikes, ranging from a mile or two to 3-5 miles in distance, undertaken during a weekend afternoon and may be local (in town or riverside) or relatively easy distance (e.g. train to a station and walk to another station across-Country using map-reading skills).

Weekend day visits (from a ¼ day to a full day) which are linked to badges – e.g. to Greenwich (Astronomy), Church (My Faith), Mosque (Global Faith), Nature Reserve (Naturalist), Fire Station (Community) etc.

There are also many District events to participate in each year – typically this will include a whole-day team Challenge against all the other Cub Packs in the District, a District Quiz, a swimming gala, sports day and a 5-a-side football tournament.

Badges – loads of badges are offered and badge-work is emphasised at 3rd Whitton St Edmunds Cub Pack (to compliment the “fun and games” at Beavers and “pioneering/life skills” in Scouts and emphasizing the differences between the three Scouting sections). The objective is that a Cub should aim to reach the Chief Scout Silver Award, which is the highest award that a Cub Scout can achieve. This requires 6 Challenge Badges to be gained. A Challenge Badge is offered each term, so over the course of 5 terms (plus a camp or two for the Outdoor Challenge) every Cub will have the opportunity to work for the Silver Award.

As well as the cycle of Challenge Badges, there is a complimentary cycle of activity badges (which the leadership at 3rd Whitton has the skills to provide) which also rotates over a 5-term period. Badges often require things to be done at Cubs during the weekly meeting, things to be done at camp or on a hike, or things to be done at home (and either certified by a parent, or brought in the following week or so). Yes, I know it sounds a bit like homework, but that’s what some of the badges require! There is however no set standard. The most important thing is that the Cub tries their best and the Cub Scout Leader has a lot of discretion.

What do the Leaders Expect from Cubs?

A Cub is expected to take more responsibility for themselves and Cub Pack nights are more formal than Beaver Colony nights:

Cubs are expected to be able to keep still and/or quiet when asked to. We often mix up noisy/boisterous stuff with quiet/thinking stuff.

Cubs are expected to wear their uniform properly - in particular wearing scarves correctly and badges sewn on when they have been awarded - and in the right places!

Sixers and seconders are expected to help the leadership team and other Cubs and to represent their six in an occasional pack forum.

Cubs are expected to arrive on-time (just before) 6.30pm and leave the HQ quickly and (relatively) quietly after their meeting, as parents are coming and going – and Scouts are arriving as well.

In order to gain badges, Cubs must attend regularly. Cub Scouts is not a social club where it is acceptable to drop in/drop out. In particular, we often have a waiting list to join Cubs and therefore any Cub absent for three weeks in a row without prior notification will be assumed to have stopped Scouting with us.

Our Cub Scout Leader thinks that it is important that the children who attend Cubs keep it an entirely separate part of their week from school or home. Parents are expected to remain out of the hall during our regular pack meetings. This helps demonstrate that times that parents are invited into the hall (such as investitures, awards etc) are more important and special.

We have a Cub Code of Conduct, which every Cub will sign. Poor behaviour does need sanctions. Ultimately, a Cub may be asked to sit out an activity, a parent called to remove a Cub from the rest of the evening, suspended for the following week or denied access to external activities or events.

What happens at a Cub Pack Night?

This depends on the Cub Scout badge cycle, the resources available, and the time that the Cub Scout Leader has had to prepare!

Cubs normally drift in and are quite capable of organising some sort of game for themselves depending on the equipment available (although we try and not have balls available before the remainder of the Pack meeting).

The Cub pack is brought to order with the Cub Scout Leader (CSL) calling out "pack, pack, pack". The Cubs are expected to quickly (and hopefully quietly!) arrange themselves in their sixes in a semicircle around the flag pole. The CSL chooses a "duty" sixer or seconder, who leads Cubs in the Grand Howl and who breaks the flag, which is saluted. The evening is outlined and any urgent questions answered.

We normally start off with a game.

The pack might then be split into one or two groups or teams and undertake a range of activities. This could range from first aid training, a run-around-game linked to a badge, a visit by someone outside, a challenge to build something out of materials available, map reading, sports activities on the adjacent park, a talk through the requirements of a badge, a tasting session, a presentation by a Cub, going through badgework done at home, campfire story telling, putting up a tent against the clock, racing soap boxes, making things from Lego...anything and everything linked to Cub Scouting!

A final game will be played (depending on the time available). The pack will then return to order with the call "pack, pack, pack". Important notices will be read out, badges awarded, permission slips/reminders issued. The flag will be lowered and the Cubs dismissed.

What we have found is that different Cubs like different things entirely. Some will want just to run around and play games. Others just want to do Badgework. Unfortunately, we can't do what all Cubs want, so we try to provide a suitable mixture – with a slight emphasis on the badgework and progressing towards the ultimate goal of the Chief Scout Silver Award. Some Cubs do find the additional discipline required at Cubs compared to Beavers hard going – and unfortunately, some do find this beyond their ability and regretfully leave Cubs soon after transferring from Beavers.

Who is who?

In charge of all Scouting at 3rd Whitton Scout Group is the Group Scout Leader, Caron Carter.

The Cub Scout Leader (CSL) for the St Edmunds Cub Pack is Peter Tomlin. Peter was previously a parent-helper with the 3rd Whitton Beaver colony and served for a few years as the Group Secretary on the Executive Committee. Peter volunteered to be a parent helper at camps and a non-uniform badge instructor with the Cub pack. When the CSL post fell vacant, Peter offered to take on this uniform role. As well as running the Cub Pack, Peter is also one of the Group's Charity Trustees. Peter's son is in our linked Explorers Edmund Hilary Explorer Group and daughter, Lucy, will shortly move up from Cubs to Scouts.

Robert Baden-Powell took the stories written in the Jungle Book, as the foundation of Cub Scouting. The characters from the book, who led the man-cub Mowgli through the travails of the Indian jungle, are given to the Cub Scout Leader and assistants. The Cub Scout Leader is normally called "Akela" (ar-kay-lar).

The assistant leaders are:

- Alex Dutson – recently returned from University, but currently travelling.
- Guy Jones – who has helped at camps and has recently volunteers to undertake a uniform role.

We also have parent helpers, Young Leaders (Explorer Scouts who are undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh award) and sometimes other students who want experience in working with young people.

How do we keep in contact?

On joining the Cub Pack, you'll be asked for an e-mail address and a textable mobile telephone number, as well as other information about your Cub, such as health issues. You'll be sent regular newsletters by e-mail, reminders by text and written information about badge work.

Otherwise, please speak with Peter, Alex or Guy. Otherwise, you are free to e-mail at anytime: cubs@dial.pipex.com. You can of course also speak to the Group Scout Leader at any time.

Costs

A final point. We acknowledge that the cost of a running a Cub is more than a Beaver, particularly when camps and trips are involved. The cost of an activity is NEVER a bar to participation for ANY Cub. If necessary, please speak to the leadership team about any difficulties which will be treated confidentially.