

Cub Camp – A Brief Guide for Parents

Introduction

I have written this guide to supplement the letters and information that you get about Cub Camp on the basis of my background as a dad who has had a son at camp, having attended father and son camps with my son and more recently attending camps as a leader.

My aim is to provide you with some additional information and tips so that you can send your child to camp without too much worry and so that your child can enjoy the camp to the full.

As far as possible, the way we camp is a simplified version of the way that our Scouts Camp.

If you have any doubts or queries, please speak to your son's Leader.

Geoff Vanderplank
Group Scout Leader
1st Ickenham Scout Group

The Basics

Before the camp you should receive a letter with the details such as the location, arrival time, pick up time and who the emergency contact point is.

Cub camps are normally held at a Scout run camp site within about 20 miles of Ickenham. You will be asked to drop off and pick up your son from the site at specific times.

There are three sorts of camp we run:

- **Cub Camp** Just the 1st Ickenham Cubs and Leaders and possibly some parents to help. We sleep in tents but usually have a building on site with a kitchen and meeting / dining area. We sleep under canvas but cook and eat in the building. The Leaders do the cooking, the Cubs do the washing up.
- **Father and Son Camp.** The 1st Ickenham Cubs and dads. It says dads but there is no reason why a mum can't attend instead and if mum or dad is unable to come along, another adult relative would be fine (by prior agreement). Due to the nature of the activities, Cubs cannot attend alone, although we will always try and find an alternative solution to allow attendance. Cooking, sleeping and eating is under canvas. The dads are responsible for their offspring throughout the camp and do most of the cooking / washing up assisted by the Cubs.
- **District Camp.** We join up for a camp with other Cubs from the Uxbridge area. Because there are larger numbers attending, a wider range of activities is organised. We cook, sleep and eat under canvas. The Leaders do the cooking, again the Cubs do the washing up.

Food at Camp

There is plenty to eat and drink! A typical day would be:

Breakfast – cereal, cooked breakfast, toast/bread and jam, tea / coffee or squash.

Mid morning – squash and biscuits.

Lunch – roll or sandwich with a variety of cold meats, cheese and salad plus fruit and squash.

Dinner – hot meal such as pasta and mince, pudding and squash.

Supper – hot drink or squash and biscuit.

If your child has any particular allergies or food fads please let the Leader know when you return the camp permission form so they can prepare in advance. Cubs are encouraged to try new tastes but it is recognised that not everyone will like everything, so no one is forced to sit and finish a meal if they simply don't like it and alternatives can be arranged if the need arises!

For health and safety reasons no one must bring any food, drinks or sweets with them to camp. Food will go 'off' if stored in a tent and will also encourage ants, squirrels and other animals.

It should be noted that on the Friday evening at the start of camp, whilst there is normally a late supper of soup and bread, campers should have dinner before they leave home. Similarly on the Sunday, lunch at camp is normally something cold e.g. sandwiches, not a cooked Sunday lunch.

What to Wear and What to Bring

The Cubs need to wear uniform to arrive at and depart from the camp. Whilst at camp they can wear what they want, the preference is that the Cubs wear shorts (better in hot weather and much easier to deal with if it is raining) with a tee shirt. Plus a sweat shirt and track suit bottoms for cooler dry weather and chilly evenings. Expect all the clothes to get dirty and muddy and you will not be disappointed!

A suggested kit list can be found at the end. Please try and let the Cubs do the packing with you beforehand so they can see what they have with them and where things are. A soft holdall or backpack is preferable to a suitcase.

Please ensure that every single item of clothing is marked with a name. We spent quite a bit of time just before departure trying to find owners for odd socks etc! Quite a good system to pack a set of clothes for each day in a clear plastic bag with a label on it and also provide another labelled plastic bag for dirty clothes.

Each Cub should bring with them a complete change of clothes in a separate plastic bag with their name on for emergency use. This bag is looked after by the leaders (or parent on father and son camp) and is only used in an emergency. It is handed back at the end of camp, hopefully unused.

Health and Safety Matters

You will receive a health form before camp which needs to be completed and returned to the leader before camp.

All Leaders have had First Aid training and have been vetted by the Scout Association for child protection purposes. All other adults staying on camp need to be similarly vetted by completion of a Scout CRB check. These checks can take 3-4 months to be completed by the central government department and so need to be done well in advance. It should be noted that the results of the CRB search remain confidential and are not seen by 1st Ickenham Scout Group and we will simply get an advice from our local HQ that an adult has been cleared. Any adult who has not been through the vetting process will not be eligible to attend the Father and Son camp and consequently the Cub won't be able to attend either.

Where any health matters are advised on the camp form, the leader will discuss with you any particular treatments required and take charge of the appropriate medicine for the duration of the camp.

Any non-medical health matters should be advised as well e.g. any tendency to wet a bed, so that the Leaders can be prepared.

Contact during Camp

Any general information will have already been advised to you by letter. For any specific queries during the camp, you are advised to contact the leader by mobile phone.

For each camp a home contact is appointed, this person is the central point of contact, for any emergencies arising during camp. That person will not be on the camp itself, their number will be advised in the camp letter.

Cubs are not permitted to bring mobile phones, MP3 players and the like or electronic games to camp.

Tents

The Cubs sleep in large canvas tents. Whilst perhaps slightly old fashioned to look at, they are very heavy duty and provide a warm secure environment, particularly in bad weather. By way of contrast, the Leaders and parents sleep in cheap modern looking nylon tents. We have experimented with Cubs sleeping in this type of tent, but the tents are simply not as robust as canvas ones and proved more susceptible to leak in wet weather - we also encountered jammed zips and tears in the nylon.

The canvas tents cost about £500 each, whilst the leaders' tents are about £90 each, so please don't be deceived by the appearance of the tents.

Discipline at Camp

We try to operate with the minimum of rules, but do insist on politeness, good manners, cleanliness, particularly at mealtimes and being friendly towards each other. Also, some activities are of an adventurous nature, such as archery and we do expect Cubs to listen and obey any instructions / rules given by the leader of the activity. We also try and instil some idea of keeping their individual kit organised and tidy – this sometimes takes a while!

Where Cubs consistently misbehave, they may be required to undertake a menial task, such as extra washing up.

On the last day of camp we hold a tent and kit inspection. This might appear somewhat regimented, but the intention is to ensure that as far as possible everyone goes home with their own clothes and that nothing is missing.

Pocket Money at Camp

Most camp sites we stay at have a shop ("The Providore") which sells a range of sweets, soft drinks and souvenirs. There will be normally an opportunity to visit the shop towards the end of the camp. There is plenty to eat and drink on camp and we normally provide a souvenir badge to each Cub, but most of the Cubs like to buy something and so you may provide your son with a small amount of pocket money (say up to £3) but this is entirely optional. To avoid any losses, any pocket money should be put in an envelope marked with your

son's name. Depending on the type of Camp, the Leader in charge may request all pocket money to be handed in for safekeeping at the start of camp.

Suggested Kit List (All items to be clearly marked with a name)

- Waterproof jacket / coat
- Cap or hat
- Jumper / sweat shirt (a second is useful if the weather is chilly or wet)
- Pyjamas
- Sleeping bag and Pillow
- Warm Blanket (even in summer the nights can sometimes get a bit chilly). For camps in Spring or Autumn, consider a second blanket.
- Foam sleeping mat or airbed (not a camp bed)
- Washing kit and towel
- Swimming trunks for water games
- Two sets of:
Shorts (plus at least one pair of long trousers needed for chilly evenings)
Tee shirt, Pants, Socks, & Handkerchiefs
- Training Shoes or Plimsolls
- Wellington boots (in case of wet weather, not needed if it is high summer)
- Tea towel (preferably an old one that is 'expendable')
- A book or comic to read during any rest periods (not a game or electronic toy)
- Teddy or other soft toy for use at night (optional)
- A small torch (please ensure that the bulb and batteries are working)
- An emergency set of clothes (in a separate named plastic bag)
- Medicines - supplies of any medicines and written instructions on use (consider sun tan cream if the weather is very sunny) to be handed to the Leader on arrival
- Full uniform and black shoes to wear for arrival and departure

Remember no food, sweets or drinks to be brought to camp

Father and Son Camp Supplement

A prime objective of this camp is to allow you and your child to have a chance to spend quality time together outside of your normal environment – you might say “bonding”.

It is important to note that unlike a normal Cub Camp, the Leaders are there to facilitate activities via a programme of activities and you need to be in charge of your child at all times (including any medicinal requirements). At bedtime you need to ensure teeth cleaning / washing takes place and at meal times that your child gets enough to eat. Similarly it is your responsibility to ensure that your child is in the right place at the right time and not simply messing around. In the past we have encountered minor accidents because a parent has failed to supervise their own child.

Try to get your child to try new things whilst at camp and also ensure they do their share of the work such as washing up.

We would ask you to respect any smoking rules that a camp site may have and also not to smoke in front of the Cubs. We normally have a chat and a drink or two after the Cubs have gone to bed (but no spirits please). We do not enforce an adult bedtime although the days at camp are action packed and getting a good night's sleep is strongly advised.

We suggest that you wear casual or sports type clothes at camp. The most important items are some strong footwear such as trainers or boots and bring along a warm / waterproof jacket. Despite a warm sunny day, it can often become quite chilly in the evenings and at night. A normal summer sleeping bag may not be enough and you will need a foam sleeping mat or air bed and a blanket(s) as well.

During the camp we provide sufficient tent accommodation for all parents and we encourage you to ‘muck in’ and share a tent with other parents. If for personal reasons you wish to bring your own tent, please discuss the situation with the Cub Leader in advance. It should be stressed that the effort on the first evening is to put up the group tents and as such you should arrive early to put up your own tent if applicable.

If for any reason you need to leave the camp site during the camp, you should:

- Agree the details with the Cub Leader
- Arrange for another parent to take charge of your child
- Advise your child what is happening and who is looking after them

If in doubt about any aspect of the instructions or programme of events at camp, just ask.

Lastly, have fun!

Geoff's Top Ten Tips for parent campers:

1. Rough it a bit and join in with your Cub, try something new
2. It can be nippy at night, bring a warm sleeping bag and blanket(s)
3. In case it is wet you need a good waterproof jacket and some boots
4. Bring a decent torch and new batteries
5. Remember to look after your Cub and ensure they have the right kit as well
6. Don't bring any work with you (this has happened)
7. Get a good night's sleep – it will be a long day tomorrow
8. No excessive drinking
9. Don't be late arriving, the first night is very hectic
10. Have something to eat before you arrive, there is no big dinner on Friday night