

## Troop 541 Cell phone/Electronic Device Usage Policy & **cyber** CHIP Internet Safety Pledge

### **Summary:**

Scouts in Troop 541 are encouraged to use electronic devices at any time for purposes relevant to her participation in Scouting such as patrol business or merit badge work. Scouts are also permitted to use them for other purposes after dinner on outings. Use of these devices during Scout functions is subject to the following two provisions. First, the Scout must have a current Cyber Chip card indicating that she has taken the Cyber Chip training and signed the Internet Safety Pledge. Second, electronic devices must be used appropriately, in keeping with the principles of the Scout Oath and Law, and the BSA's youth protection guidelines as detailed in this policy.

### **Background:**

Today's youth are spending more time than ever using digital media for education, research, socializing, and fun. To that end, Troop 541 is introducing a new electronic device, cell phone and game usage policy for our meetings, weekend activities, and summer camp.

To help Scouting families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the Boy Scouts of America has introduced the Cyber Chip and Troop 541 has adopted the policies found in the Cyber Chip training course.

In addition to this Troop electronic device usage policy and the Cyber Chip Internet Safety Pledge, Troop 541 follows the Youth Protection behavior guidelines provided the National Boy Scouts of America for Scouts and Adults:

### **Policy:**

A Scout is encouraged to use her electronic device at any time for purposes relevant to her participation in Scouting such as patrol business or merit badge work. Otherwise, the devices should not be used during meetings or until after dinner on outings. If a Scout is found to be violating the usage policy it will be documented and discussed during the Scouts next rank advancement. Continued violations could have an effect on the next rank advancement.

**Cyber Chip Training:** All Troop 541 Scouts will attend an annual Cyber Chip training course (Cyber Chip cards and training expire annually) and will receive and sign a Cyber Chip Internet Safety Pledge stating:

- 1) I will think before I post
- 2) I will respect other people online
- 3) I will respect digital media ownership
- 4) I won't meet face-to-face with anyone I meet in the digital world unless I have my parents permission
- 5) I will protect myself online

**A Scout is Courteous:** Scouts are encouraged to use their electronic devices in a courteous manner. Never use your device to distract yourself or others from what you are assigned to work on. Never use your device in a manner that will disturb others.

**Observe the Scout Oath and Law:** All use of electronic devices should be in keeping with the principles of the Boy Scout Oath and Boy Scout Law. Severe violations of those principles may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership.

**Youth Protection Policies Apply:** The following elements of BSA policy apply to the use of electronic devices.

- **No hazing.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.
- **No bullying.** Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited in Scouting.
- **Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, or digital devices prohibited.** While most campers and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where participants expect privacy. A key ingredient for a safe and healthy Scouting experience is the respect for privacy. Advances in technology are enabling new forms of social interaction that extend beyond the appropriate use of cameras or recording devices (see "Scouting's Barriers to Abuse"). Sending sexually explicit photographs or videos electronically or "sexting" by cell phones is a form of texting being practiced primarily by young adults and children as young as middle-school age. Sexting is neither safe, nor private, nor an approved form of communication and can lead to severe legal consequences for the sender and the receiver. Use of an electronic device in this described manner will be reported and the violator may be removed from the Troop. Further action by local authorities may also be warranted.
- ***The "Three R's" of Youth Protection: The three R's of Youth Protection convey a simple message for the personal awareness of our youth members:***
  - Recognize situations that place you at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
  - Resist unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
  - Report attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse and helps to protect other children. Let the Scout know he or she will not be blamed for what occurred.
- ***Our Troop Adults are responsible to enforce the Youth Protection***

***Policies.*** All chartered adults and unchartered adults are responsible to monitor and report any violations of this policy to the Troop Committee Chair or the Scoutmaster. The parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance. Violations of this policy will be brought to the Troop Committee for discussion and may be reported to the Cradle of Liberty Council.

## **Additional Resources:**

Additional information regarding Youth Protection Guidelines and the Cyber Chip requirements can be found at these links on the National Boy Scouts of America site:

<http://www.scouting.org/YouthProtection.aspx>

<http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/CyberChip.aspx>