



**Trail Life Troop FL-0613
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Parrish
Handbook
2025-26**

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Welcome to Trail Life USA (TLUSA) Troop FL0613!

We are grateful that your family has chosen to participate in Trail Life USA (TLUSA) this Program Year! It is our prayer that the Lord would use TLUSA to help your boy grow into a man of character and ability. This troop orientation packet is a resource for your family as we begin this Program Year together. If you have any questions throughout the year, please contact one of the Troop leaders listed on page 5.

About TLUSA

Mission Statement

To guide generations of courageous young men to honor God, lead with integrity, serve others, and experience outdoor adventure.

Troop Vision

- **Christ-centered** – we glorify God by trusting in Jesus and pointing to Him in prayer, praise and service
- **An out-of-doors and hands-on experience learning ministry**
 - The “Trail Life” is an attitude of pursuing the life Christ would have for us
 - We believe God uses the outdoors and skill challenges to mature us in ways indoor lectures cannot
 - By accepting the challenges God gives us, we learn about Him and grow into mature men
- **A place to connect fathers to sons, sons to fathers, sons to sons, and fathers to fathers**
 - We believe “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens/strengthens another.”
 - Our troop is intentional about growing both youth and adult males through connection with each other and with our Lord

Trail Life Oath

“On my honor I will do my best,
to serve God and my country,
to respect authority,
to be a good steward of creation,
and to treat others as I want to be treated.”

Trail Life Motto: “Walk Worthy”

“...That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...” Colossians 1:10 (NKJV)

Statement of Faith

We believe that there is one Triune God – God the Father; Jesus Christ, His one and only Son; and the Holy Spirit – Creator of the universe and eternally existent. We believe the Holy Scriptures (Old and New Testaments) to be the inspired and authoritative Word of God. We believe each person is created in His image for the purpose of communing with and worshipping God. We believe in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He who enables us to live godly lives. We believe that each of us is called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

Per the *Trail Life USA Statement of Faith and Values*, “Trail Life USA is a Christ-centered outdoor adventure, leadership, and character development ministry. Within the operations of the local Troop, the primary statement/profession of Christian beliefs, faith, and/or doctrine is that belonging to the Charter Organization... all Trail Life USA Charter Organizations and Registered Adult Members must concurrently adhere to the Christian principles stated in Trail Life USA’s Statements of Faith...”

Membership Policy:

All biological males (5 thru 17 years of age) of any color, race, national origin and socioeconomic status who agree to live according to the standards of the Trail Life Oath. All men of the same are also invited, if they support the Statement of Faith and are also willing to live according to the Trail Life Oath.

Role of the Charter Organization

A Trail Life USA Charter Organization is typically a church or Christian non-profit. They are the vehicle by which Trail Life is brought to a local community. Troop FL0613 is Chartered by Emmanuel Baptist Church of Parrish. Though the Charter Organization owns the Troop, the relationship between a Charter Organization and its Troop is designed to be mutually beneficial. By linking arms, the Trail Life Troop serves as an extension of the Charter Organization's mission while providing a unique ministry opportunity. The Charter Organization Ministry Agreement (found on TrailLifeConnect.com > Documents library > Resources) is signed each year by the Charter Organization and provides guidance in maintaining a healthy Charter-Troop relationship. The Charter Organization plays a vital role in the success of its Trail Life Ministry and invests in the following ways:

- The Senior Ministry Lead appoints a Troop Ministry Liaison who is trusted and authorized to act on behalf of the Charter Organization, approving all Troop volunteers and signing necessary documents.
- Works alongside the Troop in planning and implementing the Trail Life Program and spiritual development for their members. The Charter Organization is the final decision maker regarding any Troop decision.
- Owns and stewards Troop budget and finances alongside the Troop Treasurer.
- Provides a meeting place.

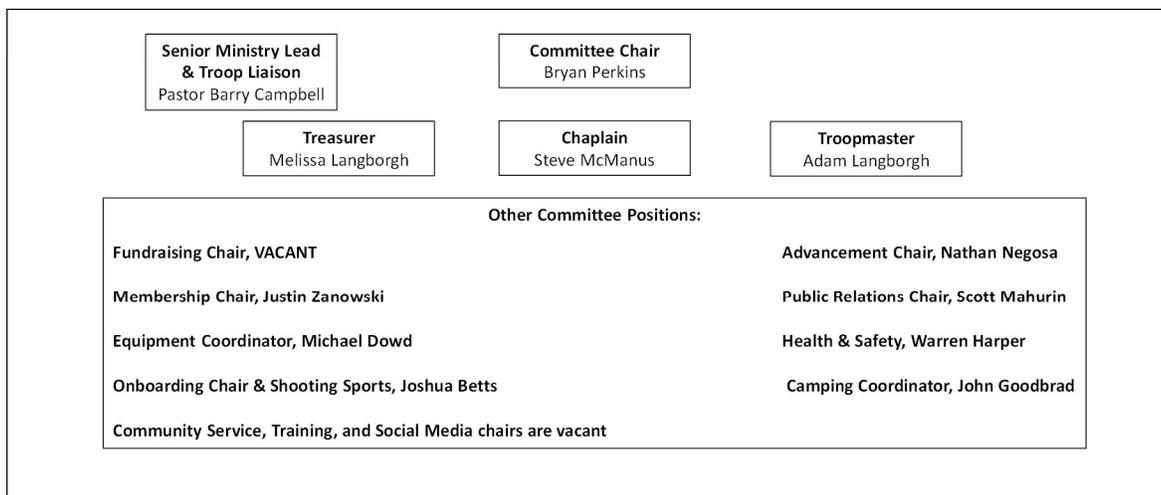
Troop Structure

The Trail Life USA Troop is overseen and administered by a committee with day-to-day instruction of the youth program by a Patrol Structure as follows:

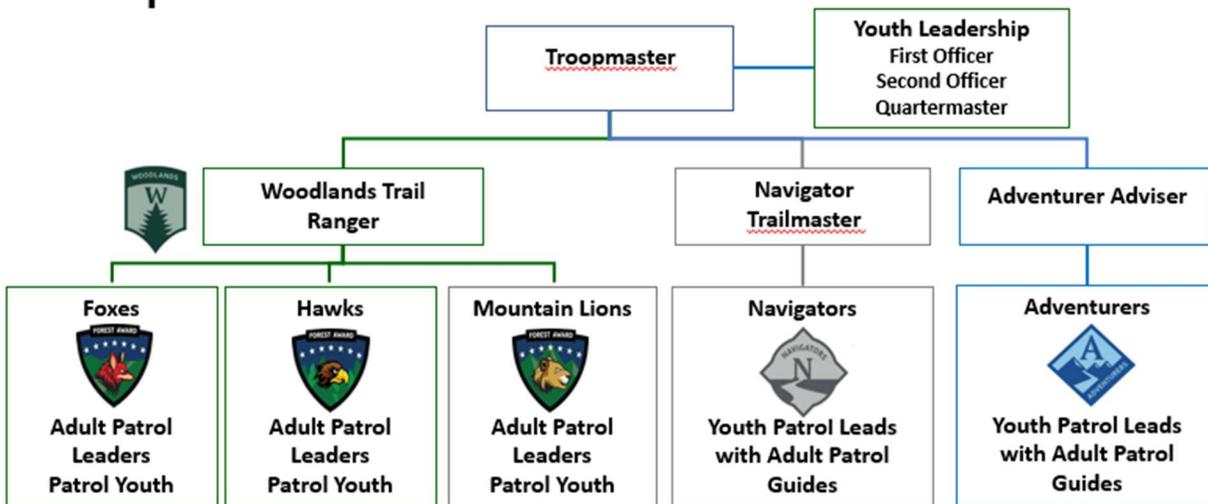


EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Troop Committee



Troop Patrol Structure



The following diagram and bullets provide a general description of each patrol level and the path of progression towards the capstone “Freedom Award”:

Trail Life Troop Structure



- **Woodlands Trail (K-5th)** is adult-run, **focused on Knowledge** in 7 areas: Heritage, Life Skills, Science and Technology, Hobbies, Values, and Outdoor Skills
- **Navigators (6-8th)** **focused Understanding** . Imparts core skills learning (Aquatics, Camping, Fire Ranger, First Aid, Our Flag, Outdoor Cooking, Ropework, Trail Skills, Woods Tools) and explores youth leadership through the “patrol method”
- **Adventurers (9-12th)** is youth-run, adult-guided. **Focused on Wisdom**; understanding applied through freedom experiences & expanded skills (Emergency Prep, Family Man, Outdoor Life, Personal Resources, Fitness, Citizenship)

The age cut off for all patrols is October 31st. For example, a Fox Trailman must turn 5 before that date to be eligible. If the Trailman is 7 years of age upon beginning a new year, he will be at the Hawk level. The most a Trailman can spend at each Woodland Trails level is two years. For a Navigator, it is 3 years. For an Adventurer, it is a maximum of 4 years, but cannot extend past the majority age point (18 years). Upon turning 18 years old, the Trailman is no longer eligible for youth awards (exception: a short-term waiver can be granted for those pursuing the Freedom Award). However, if he wants to continue with Trail Life, he must do so as a registered adult.

Note: The grades levels listed above are for reference only. Age is what matters, not grade level.

Awards and Recognition

Trail Life provides numerous opportunities for boys to grow by earning awards and recognitions. Although not the focus of the Program, they serve as a tool to recognize boys as they grow into men of character and ability. Some of the awards that Trail Life offers are listed below:

- Woodlands Trail (WT) Joining Awards/Forest Patches – earned by agreeing to live by the Trail Life (TL) Oath, memorizing it and learning the TL handshake, salute, motto, and if a Mountain Lion or older, learning to fold the US Flag.
- WT Branches – earned in each of the 7 areas of learning through participatory learning
- WT Forest Award – earned through 60% or more attendance and gaining all 7 branches
- WT Sylvan Stars – earned after the Forest Award for each of the 7 branches of learning
- Worthy Life Award – awarded at all levels in recognition of spiritual development through devotional activity, discipleship, discipline, and demonstration culminated in a Board chaired by the Chaplain.
- Timberline Award – capstone award for WT Mountain Lions. Completion of all the above, plus a service project, and successful Board of Review
- Recruit Badge – like the WT Joining Award but earned by new Navigators (Navs) & Adventurers
- Service Stars – earned by Navs & Adventurers for meeting annual volunteer service requirements
- Rank Badges (i.e., Able > Ready > Journey > Ascent > Horizon) – earned by Navs & Adventurers as they maintain membership standards (e.g., 60% or more attendance, good behavior, service requirements, etc), and after earning a certain number of core & elective badges, and if applicable, freedom experiences
- Ridgeline Award – capstone Nav award earned by being a member in good standing, obtaining the Ready Trailman Rank, the Nav Worthy Life Award, completing a Board approved service project, and completing a Board of Review
- Freedom Award – the capstone rank and award for the Trail Life program only to be earned by Adventurers after they have earned their Horizon Rank, Adventurer Worthy Life Award, and completed a leadership/service project approved by their Freedom Award Advisor. Lastly, they must go through the Freedom Award Boarding process described in the Trailman's Handbook and on reference documents found on TrailLifeConnect.com

Award Ceremonies/Courts of Honor

The Troop plans a Court of Honor at the end (and sometimes at the mid-way point) of the year so Trailman Youth may formally receive their Awards and Recognitions. Award Ceremonies are open to families and friends to attend. If a youth is unable to attend the ceremony, his recognition will be given to him directly at the next Troop meeting either formally or informally, as desired by the guardian and/or youth.

Family Responsibilities

Parents/legal guardians demonstrate commitment to the Trailmen youth by encouraging and supporting them throughout their years in Trail Life.

Trailmen should arrive at meetings and events on time, in the appropriate uniform, and with the necessary handbook and/or supplies. Parents/legal guardians can obtain information at check-in for upcoming activities and should monitor Troop communication and the Troop calendar (on TrailLifeConnect.com) regularly.

Providing a quality program requires a commitment from all families. Each family should actively participate in the Troop to ensure the success of the Troop as a whole. At times, some families may be asked to serve

outside of regular Troop meeting times, some may serve during Troop meetings, and others may experience a blend of both.

Volunteer Position Recruitment and Selection

Since Trail Life USA is a volunteer program, the troop requires one (1) parent/guardian to become registered and serve in some capacity. By all contributing something, we find that “many hands make light work.” More importantly, we are able to use our cumulative strengths and skills to create a great program for our youth. We ask all parents/guardians to prayerfully consider how you may use your skills, interests, and availability to best serve and help us build the youth up into men of character. During onboarding, a Troop Board Member will connect with you to discuss what role may work best for you and your family.

For a list of standard positions, reference the *2859 Troop Level Positions* document found within TrailLifeConnect.com > Documents Resources or provided physically along with this packet.

Financial Matters (Dues, Uniforms and Fundraisers)

The Troop leadership believes in maximum transparency, especially on financial matters. The following is the current breakdown of initial and annual costs. “National” and “Uniform” costs are subject to change beyond the Troops control. Local Dues will be revisited annually and will likely lower, as fundraising operations grow.

National Dues: (Youth Fee ~\$38, Adult Fee \$43) which covers base fees (per child) for the operations of the Trail Life USA national/home office, annual insurance, and background checks for registered adults. These fees are paid when you register online at TrailLifeConnect.com.

Local Dues and Uniform: Paid with check or potential cash app after turning in the New Member Order and Payment form to the Treasurer or Onboarding Chair.

a. Dues: \$100.00 per youth per year. This goes towards annual troop re-chartering fees, awards/badges, and a start towards funding our trips and activities.

b. Trail Life Uniforms: To simplify matters, the troop will purchase the following uniform items after receiving payment for local dues and uniforms. Here are the prices per group:

- \$100 per Woodlands Trail Youth: covers Class As (Uniform Shirt & Belt, Epaulets, Troop Patch) and Troop Trail “Class B” T-Shirt
- \$115 per Navigators or Adventurers Youth: Class As, Troop T-Shirt, and the Trailman’s Handbook
- \$95 per Registered Adult (females are \$65; they get Uniform Polo Shirt instead of Class A): covers Class As, Troop T-Shirt, and Lanyard. (Unit Leaders will have free access to handbooks.)

Socks, closed-toed shoes, and khaki, black, or dark olive green (Trailman) pants or shorts are considered part of the Trail Life USA uniform. Other colors and types (gym shorts) are not allowed. Trailman official pants/shorts and other optional uniform items, such as the Trail Life hat, polo, and socks can be purchased through <https://shop.traillifeusa.com> .

Note: Uniforms only need to be re-purchased as the youth grows or select items (epaulets), as he promotes to higher levels.

The Trail Life Uniform is a valuable piece of the Trail Life Program. It signifies belonging to a group that shares common beliefs and goals. A Youth Member or Adult Member in Trail Life Official Uniform symbolizes being a part of an organization dedicated to building men of character.

We plan to put in a group orders in mid-August, early December, and during the Summer of each year. If these times don't work for you, you are welcome to acquire your own uniform directly @ <https://shop.trailifeusa.com>.

Contact the Troop Committee for more information about uniforms or review the Uniform Guides found on TrailLifeConnect.com and in the various Handbooks (e.g., Woodland Trails Handbook, Navigator and Adventurer Handbook, Parent and Adult Leader Guide).

Troop Fundraisers

Troop leadership is sensitive to program costs and is seeking ways through donations, fundraising, and efficient troop operations to minimize the costs to the family.

Troop fundraisers are the primary way to offset Troop expenses and keep costs to a minimum. Our Troop will be participating in no more than three (3) fundraisers each year. Typically, we will do fewer. Details on the fundraisers will be provided throughout the years.

Health and Safety

Trail Life USA values the health and safety of its members and is fully committed to providing a safe and healthy environment. Physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health are integrated into everything a Troop does to ensure as safe a program as possible. The goal is always to provide opportunities for faith, service, and fun in a manner that no injuries occur beyond those that are readily treatable by simple first aid. Volunteers in Trail Life are responsible for the health and safety of others when participating in Troop meetings, trips, events, and activities. Trail Life Adult Members are accountable for administering the Trail Life Program in a safe and responsible way by adhering to Trail Life policies. Trail Life seeks to equip Charter Organizations, Troops, and members with policies and guidelines which are designed to prevent incidents, reduce risk, protect members and the Charter Organization, and create boundaries. These policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards which have been identified through knowledge, expertise and experience. Any restrictions or limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as being overly protective; rather, they should be viewed as facilitating safe and enjoyable experiences for the Trail Life Members of your Troop. Health and safety knowledge can be enhanced when this resource is paired with Child Safety Youth Protection Training, the Trail Life Peak Training Program (Level 1, 2, and 3), and practices found in the *2380 Trail Life USA Health and Safety Guide* and *Youth Protection Essential* document. These documents and training may be found on TrailLifeConnect.com > Documents > Resources.

Two-Deep Leadership Policy: For the safety and protection of both youths and adults, there will be at least two Registered Adult Members during all Troop meetings, trips, activities and events. In addition, two-deep leadership, appropriate youth/adult ratios are always maintained when youths and adults are present together at a Troop/Unit activity, meeting, or event.

Buddy System: Trail Life USA believes in fun and safety through a buddy system. No child without a parent/guardian is to be by himself during any Trail Life activity. All Woodlands Trail youth are to be in groups of three or more. Navigators and Adventurers are to be in groups of two or more.

Health & Safety Matters during Registration and Onboarding

Upon completion of the registration process including the application, criminal background check, and Child Safety Youth Protection Training, and membership fee payment, volunteers will receive a Member ID badge. Trail Life volunteers must wear their Member ID badge within the lanyard purchased during onboarding, so they are easily identifiable as Registered Adult Members.

All troop members are to complete and turn in the applicable forms upon joining the troop:

- 2667 TLUSA Adult Member Participant Health and Medical Form
- Youth Health and Safety Form
- 2411 TLUSA High Adventure Medical Form (for Mountain Lion, Navigator, or Adventurer youth)
- Consent, Waiver and Release Agreement

Other forms that may need to be turned in based on situation:

- Youth Weekend Health and Medical Record (only needed for events that exceed 72 hours in duration)
- 31428 Swimming Competency Test and Record (form or in Handbook) – for water events
- 2663 Troop Trip Activity Form – turned in by troop leadership to the Charter organization for outdoor events
- High Adventure Restricted Activity Form – to be completed by the troop leadership and filed with the Charter Organization for trips or activities that meet any of the following descriptions: (1) a Troop trip that will exceed the 400-mile radius from the Troop meeting place; (2) a Troop trip or activity that involves traveling outside of the United States; (3) a Troop camping trip; (4) a Regional/Area Camp; (5) a Restricted High Adventure Activity (as indicated on the form and/or the Trail Life USA Health and Safety Guide. It is only necessary to file with the Trail Life USA Home Office if the Troop is participating in activities identified as “Restricted High Adventure Activities.”
- Risk Management Form – a tool to be used by the troop to evaluate risk for any event
- Event Permission Forms will be sign via TrailLifeConnect.com after you RSVP for an event.

Emergency Preparedness

We will post our emergency evacuation plan in each classroom. We will walk through this with the kids on the first meeting. In the case of an emergency, please do not take your kids away from the unit leader. You may join them once everyone is safely outside. The unit leader will have a list of who he is responsible for and with the help of other parents in the classroom will get the youth out to the designated safe place. Do not take any child until the unit leader has accounted for everyone in the group.

For weather or event induced cancellations, the troop will follow the lead of the Parrish public schools. For example, if they cancel school due to weather, Trail Life will cancel any events that day. Look out also for a mass email or text from troop leadership (e.g., Troopmaster, Committee Chairman...) for event cancellation.

Sign-in and Sign-out process

All Adult and Youth Members, as well as visitors must sign in and sign out during all Trail Life meetings, trips, activities and events. We will have a table in the lobby that you need to sign your child in before the opening flag ceremony. You will also have to sign them out at the end, usually at the entrance to the sanctuary. This is a safety precaution and enables accurate attendance.

Troop Communication

Troop information for troop events will be posted and you will receive an invite through TrailLifeConnect.com. Events will, also, be posted on our private Facebook page. Please use the RSVP function on TrailLifeConnect.com to register for special events (e.g., most Hit-the-Trail activities).

Units will communicate to the group via email. If a unit leader needs to touch base with one or two youth, he may decide to call/text. Please respond to Troop emails in a timely manner. A texting app, such as Signal, may also be utilized, subject to a future Committee decision.

Communication with Youth Members

Text messages, emails and phone calls should always include two-deep leadership for the safety and protection of both Youth and Adult Members. Adult Members can be included or copied on an email, text, or present on a phone call to ensure two-deep leadership.

Youth Members will not have any electronic devices during troop meetings, activities or events. Unit leaders have the right to allow them for an activity and that will be announced in advance. If a youth member has an electronic device out, it will be taken away and given to the parent at pick up. This will serve as a first warning as electronic devices are a distraction from the short time we have with your children. Adult members may not have their electronic devices out during class unless it is being used as part of the class or there is an emergency. We need to set an example for our children.

Cooperation with American Heritage Girls

Both Trail Life USA (TLUSA) and American Heritage Girls (AHG) are chartered by Emmanuel Baptist Church in Parrish. TLUSA and AHG have signed a *Memorandum of Ministry Alliance* to support another in their shared mission for Christ-centered spiritual character development of youth. As such both “FL-0613” troops are brother/sister troops and will cooperate wherever beneficial and practical. For example, we will share meeting times, conduct common open ceremonies, and cooperate on some fundraisers and service projects. We even will cooperate to support a joint Child Care room for boys and girls of Trail Life and AHG families that are not yet old enough to participate.

Importantly, TL FL-0613 and AHG FL-0613 have partnered to come up with some common policies, principles, and agreements documented in *American Heritage Girls (AHG) and Trail Life (TL) USA FL-0613 Troops: Policies, Principles, and Partnering Agreements* file posted on our troop TrailLifeConnect.com site.

While both troops will cooperate, pray, and support one another, in the end, we are separate organizations with our own missions, goals, and culture to maintain and uphold.

Addressing Inappropriate Behavior

It is the expectation of Trail Life USA. that youth and adult members not only subscribe to but strive to live according to the values represented in the Trail Life Oath and Motto. With this expectation, it is also understood that both adult and youth face temptation and are not without sin. Because we all fall short from time to time it is important the Trail Life Troop remain a place of grace and truth. While the following language specifies the Trail Life youth, the principles and steps articulated apply also to the adult member.

Boys, especially during their adolescent years, are trying to determine who they are and how their faith and the culture play into their identity. Trail Life can serve a critical role in guiding boys toward their identity in Christ. Trail Life is meant to be a ministry of transformation—a ministry which surrounds boys with Godly adults who will offer them sound Biblical advice, encouragement, grace, and truth. Trail Life should be a safe place for boys to navigate the confusion of today’s moral landscape.

The relationship between a Charter Organization and its Troop is designed to be a partnership. Trail Life values the role of the Charter Organization as a ministry partner and Troops are encouraged to collaborate with them in supporting the Troop and its members in both joyous and challenging seasons. As part of the partnership between the Charter Organization and Troop, the Charter Organization will provide direction in walking through the following steps and addressing a Troop Member’s behavioral concerns.

When a troop member falls short of living up to the Trail Life Oath and Motto, it is not a time for his immediate dismissal from the Troop. Especially, for youth Trailmen, it is a time when the Christ-centered program of Trail Life, his family, his church and the faith-filled adults of his Troop the most. When a boy engages in poor behavior, it is important he understands his error and is given an opportunity to change. These behaviors might include, but are not limited to gossip, bullying, stealing, sexual activity outside the context of marriage (opposite-sex or same-sex), illegal use of drugs or alcohol, etc. When a Troop becomes aware that a boy is engaging in such behavior, several steps must be taken before dismissal from the program can possibly occur.

Step 1: Depending on the level of severity of the behavior, the parent/legal guardian(s) of the youth are notified and included in the process. If the Charter Organization has policies regarding the behaviors being addressed, please refer to the Charter Organization for input, if agreeable to the parents/legal guardians. With parent/legal guardian approval, the trusted Unit Leader and/or Troop Chaplain plus one other Adult Member (maintaining two-deep-leadership) discuss their concerns with the boy in a loving manner. "Here is why we are concerned. Here is why this behavior contradicts the Oath/Motto." Share Scriptural references regarding these behaviors. Boys are given an opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior.

Accountability for the plan is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes youth safety through measures such as, but not limited to, two-deep leadership in all types of communication (written, verbal, in person, electronic).

Step 2: If the Youth Member does *not* show remorse, does *not* agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop:

Meets with the youth's parents/legal guardians as soon as possible, no matter how small the infraction. The Troop explains in a loving manner why the behavior is of concern, why it contradicts the Trail Life Oath & Motto, and what steps have been taken to assist the boy in addressing the issue. Following this meeting, boys are given another opportunity to show remorse, repent, and determine a plan for changed behavior. Accountability is established in a manner which preserves confidentiality and promotes safety.

If the Boy Member denies the behavior while the evidence of the behavior is overwhelming, the Troop:

Stands for truth and encourages the youth to be truthful. The Troop explains that grace is available to all, however, where truth cannot be found, grace will not be applied. If the youth refuses to be truthful, then the Troop meets with his parents/legal guardians to explain their observations and concerns, to describe the potential consequences of a youth's willingness/unwillingness to be truthful, and to request the parents/legal guardians counsel the youth. The Troop offers the parents/legal guardians and the youth 2-3 days to respond and commit to behavior change.

Step 3: If the Youth Member continues to not accept responsibility for the behavior, does not show remorse, does not agree to a plan of action, or repeats the behavior of concern, the Troop again meets with the youth and his parents/legal guardians. At this meeting, discussions are had around engaging a pastor or other church leader within the boy's preferred denomination. Outside ministries who specialize in the issue at hand may also be engaged at this time. The objective of this meeting is to again work on a plan of action in order to assist the boy in understanding her behavior, the consequences or impact of her behavior, and work to overcome it. If the parents/legal guardians and youth understand the concern around the behavior and are willing to implement a plan for change, then the youth will be allowed to remain in the Troop.

Step 4: If the above avenues have all been exhausted and the youth continues his behavior, refuses to recognize the behavior as contradictory to the Trail Life Oath/Motto, and/or poses a threat to other Boys or Adult Members in the Troop, he may be asked to terminate his membership in Trail Life USA by the Charter Trail Life FL-0613 Troop Handbook

Organization. The goal for every Troop should be to keep the youth in the Troop. The decision to ask a Youth Member to leave a Troop is one made with prayer and discernment and in which counsel of the Charter Representative and the Hometown Mentor or Trail Life Troop Support Specialist is sought.

Whistleblower and Grievance Policy

Trail Life USA is committed to the highest standards of ethical, moral, and legal conduct. Therefore, the Trail Life FL-0613 Troop has codified grievance and whistleblower policies to address concerns. These policies provide an avenue to raise concerns.

If a troop member has a grievance, disagrees with a troop policy, or sees a concern that requires leadership attention, they are to put the issue in writing and discuss the issue with the Troop Committee Chair or Troop Ministry Liaison for resolution. If not resolved, they may seek resolution through the Senior Ministry Lead.

Troop Feedback

The Troop Board desires your feedback! So that the Troop can best serve your family, please share your feedback about your youth's experience and suggestions on how we can continue to grow. The Troop will provide an end of year survey annually, but if you have ideas on how the Troop can continue to grow, contact troop leadership at Troop0613@EBCParrish.org