

The Boys' Brigade – 25th Stirling (Dunblane) Company Company & Senior Sections

Parents' Information Pack 2023-24

For regular updates, check @dunblanebb on social media.

Dear Parents...

This session we get to celebrate the 140th Birthday of The Boys' Brigade's founding in 1883. We are pleased that your son will be part of our Company Section or Senior Section in this significant year.



Meeting Times and Venues

Due to refurbishment of the main hall at the Cathedral Halls, our start and finish point on Fridays will be St. Blanes Church until the October holidays. **Please note start and finish times.**

Parade Night & Activities Fridays 8.00-10.15pm (P7s 9.30pm finish until Christmas)	St. Blane's Church
Bacon Roll Breakfast Sundays 10.00-10.45am (2 nd /4 th Sundays of month)	St. Mary's Church Hall

Optional weekly meeting nights are as follows:

Badminton / 5-a-side Football 8.00-9.00pm (alternate weeks) Tuesday evenings (Cost £2)	Dunblane High School (not currently on)
BB Band – Wednesdays Training Band 6.45-7.30pm Main Band 7.30-9.15pm	St. Blane's Church Hall
Chanter / Bagpipe class Thursdays 6.30-8.00pm	St. Blane's Church

There are many more evenings with activities such as local (and national again!) competitions and trips. These will be announced by e-mail/OBM as and when dates become available.

Last year, there was much, much more walking and cycling to and from BB on Friday nights. We encourage you to continue with that - safely. Walk or cycle down/back with your friends; maybe even bring back that old tradition of getting chips on the way home. Bring a bike lock or bring it inside.

Online Brigade Manager – Parent Portal

We use an online system to do all organisation of our programme, events, payments for trips, subs, etc. and keeping contact details regularly updated so we are compliant with GDPR. It is important that you use the unique links in e-mails inviting you to sign up for events. Please also sign up for online payment for events. These will be direct-debited when the payment deadline for an event occurs.

Membership Fees

See attached sheet for details of this year's amounts. Please fill in the Gift Aid declaration (on OBM) to allow us to claim back an additional 25% on your donation if you are a taxpayer. Your donation helps support the costs of leader training, insurance, equipment, resources and many other week-to-week expenses.

It is our clear policy that no boy is ever to be excluded from BB (or its activities) based on his family's means to pay. Please ask in confidence if you ever require assistance to ensure your son can take a full part in our programme.

Parent Help

We are blessed with a good group of volunteer leaders in Dunblane BB; we also have a very large number of boys and we can't emphasise enough how important it is that we have your support, as parents, in many ways. We will continue our rota that PVG-checked parents will be on, to help us ensure we have a high-quality programme with supervision levels and expertise that make it such.

It is a fairly simple – but thorough – process to get a PVG check through Church of Scotland for BB volunteering as a parent. Of course, if you enjoy yourself and think you might like to get involved more regularly, we'll be delighted – and so will the boys! If you do want to get trained up, it's easy and enjoyable – and the paperwork is short and straightforward.

Minibus

We have a 17-seater minibus, which helps us to get boys to events more efficiently but there will be times when we still rely on additional help with transport from you. No eating or drinking (other than water) is allowed in the minibus. At the end of minibus journeys, boys are expected to tidy/clean it before going home.

Our hopes for and expectations of your son...

With the number of boys involved in BB, it's important that the values and expectations of our Company reflect the need to run a 'tight ship'. We have set these out in sections below and we ask that you take some time to discuss these with your son(s) at the beginning of the BB year.

Membership Commitment

As volunteer leaders, our commitment to the BB is a very satisfying one and we enjoy giving our time and skills. It is our hope that boys will have a similar level of commitment, recognising that the many activities on offer are all provided by volunteers. We ask that boys show this by:

- Attending regularly on Fridays and setting this aside as BB time. Think of it along the lines of a professional sports team: being in the team means coming to all training sessions, going into the community, representing the organisation and keeping yourself in good shape – as well as the matches, away days and trips!
- Honour your commitment to an activity that you sign up for. If something else comes up later, prioritise what you committed to first or, at minimum, give apologies well in advance. **If you withdraw from an event with a cost, you will be charged the unsubsidised cost** if you or we cannot find a replacement for you. (This does not apply if you are genuinely ill.)
- Get the most out of being in the BB by coming to the extra events, competitions, trips, weekends, volunteering opportunities and camps that all form part of your BB experience – and which give you the credits you need for badges and awards.
- Be courteous – if there's a reason you can't attend a meeting or event, let us know in advance so we know you're not coming.

Behaviour and Conduct

At BB, we will be insisting that boys demonstrate the highest levels of respect, both in the way they behave and speak to fellow boys and to the leaders – and the way they represent BB and your family. Boys should:

- Speak courteously and politely to all adult leaders whether in conversation or when answering questions.
- Do not swear or use other inappropriate language whilst at BB – even when adults may not be listening. A good rule for life!
- Take responsibility for your own actions and be prepared to explain yourself and how you intend to make situations right if problems arise.

- **Phones are not to be out or used at BB meetings.** They are a distraction, and everyone needs time away from screens; we want to be that valuable time at BB. **Anyone using a phone at a BB meeting may have it confiscated and it will be returned to a parent. Leave it at home!**
- Ensure that you represent the BB well at school and in public. Look out for your fellow members elsewhere in the community and speak positively about the BB when given the opportunity to do so.

Uniform and Kit

The BB uniform and drill are two things that distinguish us from many other organisations, and they are something in which we all take pride. Spending time making sure you have all of your uniform each Friday evening (beginning and end!) is vital and being smart and well turned-out is equally important. Each week, we ask that you:

- Iron your blue BB shirt and wear it with sleeves rolled down and collar buttoned.
- Wear your BB tie properly tied at the collar (clip-ons available for ease!)
- Ensure you have all of your badges on the correct armband/arm and laid out properly (BB website or attached sheet has details)
- Iron your black/grey school trousers and wear them with your polished BB belt.
- Polish your black, formal shoes and wear them with black or dark socks.

In addition, we expect that **everyone brings PE kit to BB when asked**, consisting of trainers, a t-shirt and shorts. Doing and having all of the above shows you are committed to turning out your best self on a Friday night – and you will gain good inspection scores for yourself and your squad.

Volunteering

It might surprise you to learn that our annual turnover – through many sources – often exceeds £40,000. We offer dozens of activities throughout the year, almost all of them subsidised – something which schools and other organisations cannot always do. These can only happen if and when boys step up and volunteer. A significant part of being in the BB is about helping out, whether that's by collecting sponsors for a hike, bag-packing, assisting at coffee mornings, volunteering at an event that brings us good publicity (and possible funds, subsequently) or helping to do deliveries of posters, tickets etc. around Dunblane.

We will be reminding the boys regularly of the need for everyone to show commitment to these values.

Practical Information

Friday Nights

Boys should arrive **early** (from 7.50pm) already dressed in full BB uniform and **enter St. Blane's Church by the main door**. We strongly encourage boys to walk or cycle to BB. Please share lifts if you must drive and take care when dropping off near St. Blane's (we recommend using the Cathedral car park and walking round). P7 boys will attend from 8.00-9.30pm only until Christmas, after which they stay until 10.15pm. On some weeks we may use other venues; we will let you know if this is the case.

All meetings will start and finish at St. Blane's.

A typical Friday evening will include an opening ceremony, devotions and a short talk and prayer, uniform inspection and then blocks of activities, including games/physical or drill. We also have canteen each week with snacks and sweets – recommended maximum spend of £2. We don't sell fizzy juice but diluting juice and (tap) water are available free. Pay by cash or contactless methods.

Each week, one squad will be assigned as **duty squad** and will be given the task of ensuring all rooms of the church/hall are tidy, clean and organised before going home. This will only happen once every eight weeks for each boy and may mean he is slightly later finished than others.

Sundays

No uniform is needed on Sundays unless specified for a particular special event. Our bacon roll breakfast is always interactive and explores Christianity in a way that encourages boys to think deeply, learning and forming ideas about their own faith by hearing from others (adults and boys) and discovering the Bible in a fun and enjoyable way. We look at world issues, our own lives, film clips, cartoons, and how the Bible and Christianity is relevant to these or demonstrated through them.

Attendance points that will give priority for signing up for popular events are given out for Friday and Sunday attendance. If you don't make the effort to come on Sundays, it's unlikely you'll get enough of these to attend e.g. Scotland matches.

Events during the year

Church Services

We will have a Service on Sunday 8th October to mark the 140th Anniversary of the founding of the BB. Parents and family members are warmly invited to join us for this in the Cathedral at 10.30am and we hope that you will.

All boys must attend the Remembrance Day parade (9.45am) and church service on the morning of Sunday, 12th November. This year we'll be at the Cathedral, where the service starts at 10.30am.

Weekends Away

Several weekends away will be on offer throughout the year. We hope to have a city weekend away in the new year. Keep an eye on e-mails from OBM for details of these when organised.

- Scott Lodge/Glen Doll walking weekend Fri 8th – Sun 10th September
- Manchester/Liverpool or Aberdeen BB140 Monopoly Challenge weekends – Fri 29th Sep – Sun 1st Oct.
- Nethybridge Outdoor Activities Weekend Fri 27th-Sun 29th October
- Band & Pipes Music Weekend (Dumfries House) Fri 2nd-Sun 4th February 2024

Coffee Mornings, Car Washes, baking/book sales

Dates to be confirmed in coordination with our parent fundraising group soon.

Christian Aid Week

Boys are asked to deliver (not collect) envelopes to houses in the town on the weekend preceding Christian Aid Week the weekend of 14th/15th May.

Church Coffees

We have been asked to do a monthly slot helping to serve coffees and teas after the Sunday service at St. Mary's. We can also sell home baking, etc. at this as a mini-fundraiser. This coincides with the Sundays we have bacon roll bible class.

Startup Stirling

We have a monthly collection of food for Startup Stirling on the **first** Friday of each month and we will organise other events to raise funds, awareness or boost supplies as Startup has recently become one of our unofficial charity 'partners' and we are keen to support them.

Summer Camp 2024

The undoubted highlight of the BB calendar in a normal year, our summer camp offers a week under canvas. Living, playing and working together with their peers and leaders can have a great impact on a boy's life and the way he handles relationships and living in community with others. As well as in-camp games (team and individual) we offer lots of other activities on- and off-site and day trips. Our annual camp returned in 2023 after a four-year hiatus and next year we hope to go to Dyffryn Ardudwy on the west coast of Wales the week of 13th-20th July 2024.

The Kilbryde Hike

This is the BB's national hiking competition in Scotland and takes place in June in the hills south of East Kilbryde and Strathaven. We enter several teams and boys are keen to take part. It involves several weekends of training but provides an excellent culmination to the year and a chance to put map/compass, teamwork, navigation and camping skills into practice in a competitive setting. We are the current 'Junior' category champions! In 2024, the hike takes place 8th-9th June.

Opportunities

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

We currently offer the DofE to boys from S3 upwards and it matches up well with the BB President's Badge and Queen's Badge requirements. Many boys regularly complete Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Doing DofE requires a large degree of independence and self-motivation as well as a lot of gentle but regular prodding from parents (for which we will be very grateful!) but it is undoubtedly one of the best out-of-school qualifications to have to your name, as are the President's and Queen's Badges.

We are a provider agency and will help boys with ideas for their activities and train them for the expedition element, but we do not spoon-feed the award. You can be sure of doing a *real* DofE award through the BB.

JASS

Six years ago, we began to offer the JASS scheme, which is a sort of precursor/warm-up to DofE. Boys in P7, S1 and S2 can work on the Silver or Gold JASS awards, which involve similar themes, but with fewer hours and lower levels of challenge and commitment to DofE but still generally take at least six months to a year to complete. If your son is interested, please speak to Ann Johnston (annjohnston06@icloud.com) for more information.

BAND AND MUSIC

Our wind band has been going now for 13 years. Boys can learn brass, woodwind and percussion instruments on Wednesday evenings. In 2023/24, we are teaching instruments to beginners again, so new members are welcome to the training band 6.45-7.30pm on Wednesdays at St. Blane's Hall. For more experienced players, the main band rehearses from 7.30-9.15pm. The main band plays in many concerts, parades, fundraisers and other public performances and competitions throughout the BB year, as well as for pure fun and enjoyment!

Chanter/bagpipe lessons are also available with Ewan Brown and Tony Byrne on Thursday evenings from 7.00-8.30pm in St. Blane's Church and we are able to supply chanters. Please get in touch if you are interested.

COMPETITIONS

As a Company, we take part in local, regional & national competitions. We have a variety of competitions, including the 5-a-side football league, quiz, ten pin bowling, table tennis, athletics, badminton, chess and swimming. National competitions came back in 2023 and this year we have the Scottish intermediate cross-country trophy to defend, as well as entering the five-a-sides, quiz, chess, FIFA, 5-a-sides and table tennis.

Waiting Lists

If there are too many boys in individual year groups at BB, we do operate a waiting list system. Places only become available if/when a boy in the same year group leaves and we decide we have the leader capacity to take more boys at that time. It is very difficult to make predictions or promises about when someone on the waiting list will be able to join so we respectfully request that you don't ask as our answer wouldn't be worth the paper it's written on!

Follow us on social media!

You can find us @dunblanebb on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Object of the Boys' Brigade is the advancement of Christ's kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness.

The BB aims to give young people the opportunity to **learn, grow** and **discover** and to live life to the full. (John 10:10)



25th Stirling (Dunblane) Boys' Brigade Company – Registered Charity in Scotland No SCO40043