ONLINE SCOUT MANAGER (OSM)

What is it & why do we need it ?

You may be surprised to learn, that when you collect your child from Beavers, Cubs or Scouts, that the night is only half over for your child's leaders.

In order to keep the section & Group running properly, there are a myriad of records that need to be updated after every meeting. From recording payments received, to updating badge records & of course, the need to plan ahead for the following week.

Many adult leaders who leave Scouting, say that administration work was one of the main reasons as It can easily take over Three hours a week.

As we are all volunteers, this puts an additional burden on us when we still have a day job, families and organising more activities to contend with.

The old system of spreadsheets, record cards & tick sheets was both time consuming & restrictive for leaders.

Is On-line Scout Manager safe?

We are content that OSM is as safe as it can be.

– Access to the personal data on the system is limited to the leaders who use long and complicated passwords.

– All communication with the site is over SSL, so the information you see and send is encrypted and can't be intercepted.

– The web-server/database are hosted in a datacentre in London. The database is constantly replicated onto a backup machine, and system-wide database backups are taken hourly, weekly and monthly.

– Passwords are hashed in the database (i.e. they not stored in plain text and it is impossible to reverse-engineer). Parents can only reset their password if they have access to their email address.

– *Parents will only have access to their own child's personal data.*

– Leaders are given appropriate levels of access to the individual parts of the system.

– All the code has been written in-house by the Southampton company Online Youth Manager Ltd, there is no third party code with potentially known exploits.

– No personal information is shared with the Group Website.

So what do parents get access to & how does it work ?

On joining the Group will register your child on the system.
This is done via our Online Scout Manager registration form which you will be given to complete when your child joins the Group and also when they change section as the forms are slightly different for Beavers, Cubs & Scouts.
Once the Groups administrator has entered these details & registered your child, you will then be sent a sent a secure e-mail link to the site and have the option of setting up your own username and password so you can log in at any time.

If you choose not to register, emails out by section leaders will contain a personal link to the relevant activity. Once logged in the parents can see a 'Noticeboard' giving messages from the leaders. Along the top of the page (depending on which section your son/daughter is in) are links to Payments, Events, Programme, Badges and Personal details. There is also an 'Account' button for changing passwords.

What does each bit of the parent page do?
Let's go through them one at a time. It's really not complicated and you don't even need to remember any passwords as you can log in through the secure link sent out in notification e-mails from the Section Leader.

Programme
This will show what's coming up in the next few weeks. It will inform parents, and young people what to expect. The programme also ties in with a register held by the Leaders so we can keep track of who was present on a particular day and which badges are being worked on.

Events
Now to the good stuff…. All new events will be e-mailed out to you with a secure link. No more letters home to be lost! If you are logged on clicking on 'Events' brings up a list of current events on offer for your Son/Daughter. It gives you the option of saying if they want to attend and gives you all the details of the event. The times dates and costs are all there. If you click on attending, and then change your mind you can always back out before a 'closing date' and if you speak to the section leader may be able to back out after the date.

Payments

One of the biggest bug bears for Leader is collecting and processing payments at the start and end of the meeting. And for parents, just imagine if you could pay for an activity or event without looking for loose change or trying to find a cheque book or a fiver just as you are about to leave for a meeting…. Here's the beauty of this system. All events and activities for the **Scout** section can now be paid online. When you first go to make a payment you will be asked for some bank information to set up a direct debit. You don't need to enter these again. If your son or daughter wants to go on an event you can click on the 'pay now' button (just like e-bay) and the money will go into the relevant Scout Group account. The Online Scout Manager uses 'Go Cardless' to manage the transaction but it is totally secure, covered

by the direct debit guarantee and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The only person who can make a payment from your account is YOU. We will of course continue to accept cheques or cash, but our preference for Scouts at least, is online.

If you choose to set up an active direct debit then the system will automatically take a payment for every activity you have signed you child up to attend.

You are always in control & can cancel the Direct Debit at any time .

If you choose not to set up a direct debit you can pay simply by clicking the Pay now button. Before each payment is due, the system will send you a reminder that the payment is due & the date it will be taken if you have an active direct debit.

Please note that a 2.95% transaction charge is added to all online payments.

Currently OSM is used in the Beaver & Cub sections to collect online payments for Membership fees only.

The Scout Troop also uses it to enable parents to pay for activities & camps online.

Badges

One of the most common questions we get asked by a parent is where the badges go on the uniform. This part of Online Scout manager will hopefully answer these questions. Parents can see a diagram of their child's uniform & the clever bit is that all gained badges will be shown on the uniform when they have been awarded.

Badges that are complete will be in full colour, badges that are partly complete will fill with colour as the badge sections are completed.

Clicking on a badge will show you which parts have been completed (Ticked Green) & what is left to do. This encourages Scouts to try & complete some sections of badges that can be done through school or other leisure time activities.

The leaders plan activities to cover sections of all the awards so a young person may gain A badge without even knowing it & when all the elements of a badge have been completed, OSM alerts the leaders that the badge is complete & ready to be awarded.

OSM makes sure that nothing is missed, including service badges which are flagged from the date your child joined Scouting.

Personal details

Once we have your permission to hold your son / daughters personal data (Via OSM form), It is then entered onto the system by our Group admins. There is nothing on here that we would not already ask for in paper form. This however has one major advantage to the leaders who can access this information at camp or on an activity in the case of an emergency using their Smartphone . Yes OSM works flawlessly on a mobile phone as well. You as a parent can also access this info & if anything has changed (address etc) you can easily update it. OSM will flag any changes to the leaders so we can update any paper records we keep.

Summary

We think you will find OSM quick & easy to use & the Leaders love using it.

If you have any questions, please get in touch, we will be happy to help .

The Scout Leaders.

Above is a sample of what Parents will see in the BADGES section

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