



## Appropriate KIT



This guide is intended as a help to you, the parents to kit your Scout out with the appropriate gear they will use in their time within the organisation (and beyond). I will split the gear down into “Should have”, “Need for camping” and “Good to have” sections. We most certainly do not mean for this to be an immediate shopping list but as something to guide your decisions for the likes of Birthday and Christmas present ideas that can be built up over time. Also to give the Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles etc. some ideas of gifts they can buy to help out.

The old saying of “buy quality, buy once” is very true, but quality often costs a small fortune. Fortunately, we are lucky to have an abundance of fantastic quality gear at very affordable prices from outlets like Decathlon and Go Outdoors (10% Discount for Scouts). It will be there, where I will focus most of my selections, in fact I would strongly recommend not buying expensive premium equipment like RAB, Berghaus, North Face etc. As Scouts tend to be very “hard” on their gear and an ember from a campfire could ruin a £100 jacket just as easy as a £25 one.

Shopping around often pays dividends, so other places you should consider would be Millets, Trespass, Cotswolds, Summits, Blacks and the Scout Shop. (Some of these shops offer a discount for Scouts or people participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme). Always ask and you may receive. Sport Direct also can have some good kit at great prices, however their quality often falls short in my opinion so buy carefully there. I have included “guide” costs, these should give you some idea of typical pricing. Of course you could spend a lot more, but not necessary.

*Please note, the following kit examples are just an idea of the sort of quality/performance required. It is not possible for the Scout Leaders to “test” each piece of equipment but we have used our many years of experience to come up with these suggestions. We cannot take responsibility for any shortcomings experienced.*

### **Should Have**

**Walking/hiking boots** (not mountaineering, climbing or fashion boots) £30-£50

Apart from the Uniform, all Scouts should have a good pair of walking boots. I cannot recommend enough to have tried these on in store and fitted by an expert. Most reputable retailers offer this service free of charge to customers. Boots should be comfy, have good support and be waterproof. *Scouts should be able to lace up their boots and tie a bow confidently. If they can't, please practice every night and morning till they can.*



### **Waterproof Jacket £7-£15 / Trousers £6-£15**

A good waterproof jacket is another essential investment. Not just for Scouting but for School and everyday use. There are a couple of options here. A ski type jacket that is both warm and waterproof is fine but has some issues. Firstly, they tend to be synthetic fibres, these do not do well round fires! They also take ages to dry when they get wet because of the insulation. I appreciate they are supposed to be waterproof, but this does not help when your “cherub” leaves their jacket out in the pouring rain while they are off doing something else (this happens ALL THE TIME).

I prefer the waterproof shell approach. They are inexpensive, very effective at both keeping you dry and protecting you from the wind, however they have absolutely no thermal capabilities at all. You then need to use warm undergarments to suit the conditions and temperature. This is a much more flexible approach as it could be “tipping it down” but actually quite warm. A selection of warm fleeces, sweaters and t-shirts that can be layered up to manage the conditions. Make sure you buy a jacket big enough to get a sweater and fleece under it. A military type cotton smock/jacket are fantastic as they will not melt round the fire. These are not waterproof but super hard wearing, repairable, and inexpensive. Not to mention, the “natures colours” tend to do well at disguising the fact that your Scout has been rolling around in the mud (a little).

Water proof trousers are really important too. Again, inexpensive, very light weight and roll up into a small pack not much bigger than a sausage roll. Make sure the one you get has boot zips. This allows you to quickly put them on and off without taking your boots off.

*Top Tip, if shopping in Decathlon, the “Hiking” department is an obvious stop but also check out the “Hunting and Shooting” section, loads of great, hard wearing, very affordable clothing there and all very outdoor friendly. The fishing section in Go Outdoors is good too.*



### **Need for camping**

#### **Sleeping Bag £30-£50**

A good warm sleeping bag is a must for safety and comfort while camping out under the stars. In the past we have seen Scouts turn up for a winter camp with a bag designed for “sleep overs” indoors. In an ideal world you could have a Summer bag, a Spring/Autumn bag, a Winter/Arctic bag.

However, that going to cost a significant amount of money. So therefor, as it is easier to keep cool if too warm than try to warm up if freezing, I would always go for the warm option. A 3 season bag minimum (comfort temperature around 0°C) or 4 season bag is what I would recommend. I found Go Outdoors was best for bags. Remember your 10% discount!

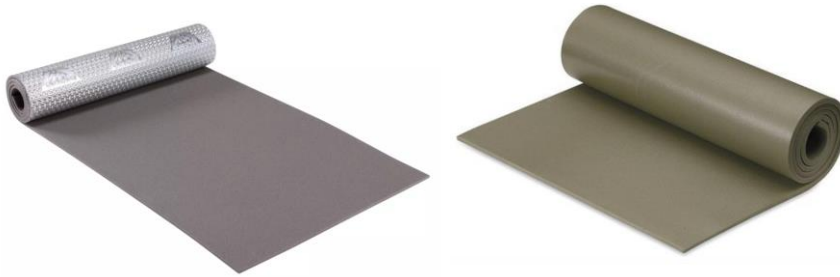
*Please get your Scout to practice packing the sleeping bag into its stuff sack. Your child needs to be able to do this confidently without help.*



### **Roll mat** £5-£10

I would recommend go simple here, the foam mats are really cheap and give sufficient comfort and warmth for most camps. Inflatable and self-inflating matts are just another job your Scout will need to deal with to set up and strike camp. Don't go for the thinnest mats, 10mm thick would be fine. Only when camping in sub-zero temperatures will you need something with better insulation. The Scout group have a good supply of self-inflating matts we can lend out for these camps, so I wouldn't bother.

*Just a wee point for the "grown-ups". If you are intending to go out camping with your kids, I would defiantly recommend one of the better mats. We are a lot heavier and our bones more susceptible to pain. Much more comfort will be afforded with one of the aforementioned self-inflating matts....*



### **Rucksack** Main 50-75ltr £30 - £60 / Day bag £2.50 - £10

Again a rucksack is a bit of equipment that your Scout really should have when camping. We have seen Scouts turning up for outdoor events with suitcases, school bags and shopping bags. It should be appreciated that your child may have to walk for a fair bit to get to the camping area and if they are trying to carry a selection of different bags and loose kit, potentially in the pouring rain, they are not going to start the weekend off in the best way. A small (very inexpensive) day bag is ideal for going for a hike and carrying small items on the bus/car and a much bigger rucksack (something like 50ltr to 75ltr should be fine) for all the main kit. A Scout should be able to get all the kit needed for camp ether in the rucksack or strapped firmly and securely to the outside of the bag leaving hands free. If carrying a small day sack also, this can be worn on the front. (this setup is fine for a short hike, if going further, then everything must go in the one bag.

*This is another piece of kit I would thoroughly recommend that you try on in the shop. Make sure it is sitting correctly and is comfortable. Girls bags have different shapes so may be needed to suit your Princess better. Some girls find guys bags are comfier, so it is worth checking out. Again, ask the staff to advise.*



### **Torch £20**

I can't recommend a head torch enough. Hand torches have got great over the last few years but the so have head torches. However, head torches have the huge advantage of freeing up your hands. This is so valuable when pitching tents, cooking, tying knots etc.

Head torches start from as little as £3 but these tend to be terrible. We as leaders have spent full weekends reassembling these cheap lamps and fixing their straps. A really good one can cost under £20. I recommend Petzli, this is one occasion where I would go for a top brand. These Petzli's can be upgraded at a later date to take a rechargeable battery and for further £13 you can purchase the little Noctilight protective case (pictured below) that turns your head torch into a fantastic wee lantern. Other brands worthy of consideration would be Led-Lenser or Black Diamond but these tend to be more expensive.



### **First aid kit £7**

A simple basic first aid kit with plasters, bandages, anti-septic cream etc. The leaders always carry well stocked full kits but these little packs are great for Scouts. They also have some spare room to add extra items so you can personalise them to your child's needs.



### **Water bottle £3-£5**

This is more down to personal preference but as long as it is not going to leak and your Scout can operate it without help even when hands are cold. Something from 500ml – 1ltr would be fine.

### **Plates, cutlery & mug**

Nothing special here. Whether your child prefers mess tins (£5) or some sort of plate and bowl, it doesn't really matter. Just pick something that won't break and don't send them to camp with your "best china" and solid silver cutlery! Plastic mugs are good too. Enamel and military stile aluminium (Crusader) mugs are great but they can be a little tricky to drink your hot chocolate out of without burning your lip. Individual cutlery is too easy to lose so the wee sets that clip together are better, or just a spork works for me. The plastic sporks break easily and the Titanium ones are really expensive but you can get stainless steel ones on-line cheaply.

### Hat & gloves

A warm hat for the winter months. Something that is comfortable, cosy and quick drying. Fleece is great, wool and cotton not so good. For the summer, something to keep the sun off the face is perfect.

Gloves are a bigger challenge. Wool or knitted gloves are warm but get wet too easily. Ski type gloves are warm but render your hands pretty much useless. They are often near impossible to get on when your hands are wet and cold (when you need them the most!) Sailing gloves are great, they are usually neoprene which will still keep your hands warm when wet and they allow use of fingers to some degree. (sailing section in Decathlon is good for warm, windproof, fast drying hats too).

### General Clothing

I'm a big fan of Decathlon for outdoor clothing. Their own brands Queshua for Hiking goods and Solognac for Shooting and Hunting gear are a great choice of very affordable, hard wearing clothing. You can pick up a pair of Solognac cargo trousers for as little as £7. They are cotton rich so great around the fire. They don't dry as quick as the synthetic fibre Hiking trousers so these are good to have as well. Fleece base layers can be picked up for £5 for a top and £5 for long johns, sweaters £7 and fleece jackets £9. Good boot socks are also a must. Again, synthetic fibres here work best as they are warm and quick drying. Unless you want to splash out on Merino wool...

One of the biggest challenges we get when the weather is against us is Scouts complaining they are cold. With the kit mentioned above, your child will have a much more rewarding and present experience when "Mother Nature" throws her lot our way!

It is also so important that you involve your Scout in packing their kit. We often get a shivering wreck of a Scout approach us complaining they are "freeeezzzinng". Telling us they have no warm clothes with them. When we take a look through their bag and say "what about this" or "this"? the response is usually "didn't know that was there". They also need to know exactly where things are in their bag. Assist them by all means but get them to do it all please.

### Good to have

#### **Wellington Boots £6-£20**

Wellies are great to have when the heavens have opened. We can sometimes be moving around a camp that is starting to resemble a scene from the Somme. Wellies are a great bit of kit for just these occasions. They don't need to cost much and will get use outside of Scouting. A simple mid height boot (left 2) will cost you £4.50 - £6, full height boot (middle) £9 and the mid boot (right) with the cosy removable inner £13. Mid height boots are fine, we rarely find ourselves wading through knee high mud!





### Swiss Army Knife £20-£30

A Swiss Army Knife is an amazingly useful tool (I still carry one every day). These have non-locking blades so are not illegal to carry as they are designated as a “tool”. There are loads of cheap knock off copies but the original Victorinox or Wenger are by far the best. If you don’t lose it, they will last a lifetime. There are so many on the market with vastly different price points. The secret for these is buy one with the tools you are likely to use and no more. I use the blade, scissors, screw driver, bottle opener, bag carrier, pen, tooth pick and sometimes the tweezers but that’s about it. Extra tools add a lot to the price and might be fun to impress your grandpa but it also adds to the size and weight too. The Victorinox Spartan below costs £20 and should do for most.



### Scout Knife £12-£25

I appreciate there is a lot of stigma with knives as some see them as weapons. Here at Scouts, we teach the kids to use knives safely and responsibly as they are a fantastic tool, particularly at camp or in the woods. I would not recommend our younger Scouts to invest in their own personal piece, however you would be the best judge as to the level of responsibility of your child. If you do decide you are happy for them to have one, I could not recommend Mora’s (Morakniv) more. They are cheap but made in Sweden so are of exceptional quality. They start at around £12 or £22 for a heavy duty one. These a great way to learn how to use, sharpen and maintain a fully functional piece without the worry of damaging an heirloom quality and priced tool.



### Tents £40 - How much?!

Scouts don’t need a tent when with the group as we have all the equipment needed. However, if your Scout wants to do a bit of camping in the garden with a friend or sibling, then there are fantastic bargains to be had. Long gone are the days of sinking a wad of cash to buy some canvas. You can pick up a great waterproof, storm resistant, long lasting tent starting around £40-£50. Please be careful of buying online or somewhere like Argos or Sport Direct as some of these are “toys” or single use “festival Tents”. Stick with Decathlon, Go Outdoors or similar. I still use a £40 pop up 3-man tent from Decathlon that I’ve had for years. It has survived some filthy weather including Storm Ciara and has never let in a drop of water and is still going strong!



