

# South Plains Young Marines



Parent/Guardian Guidebook

Last Updated: 10/01/2025

## Mission

The [Young Marines](#) mission is to positively impact America's future by providing quality youth development programs for boys and girls (ages 8 through high school) that nurture responsible citizens. The program focuses on promoting a healthy, drug-free, and gang-free lifestyle while developing leadership, self-discipline, and teamwork.

What this means: serving our Veterans and community, emphasizing achievements, offering adventure activities to build leadership skills, and offering a unique and challenging learning environment.

## Introduction/Purpose

Welcome to the South Plains Young Marines. This Parent/Guardian Guidebook explains volunteering, expectations, communication protocol, and much more. It is important to read and understand this guidebook and attend all scheduled meetings.

This program relies on the active participation of everyone, including you. **The Young Marine program is not a daycare, nor do we act as your child's parent.** It is important to know this in advance to avoid future conflicts with staff members due to misconceptions. The volunteer staff of SPYM adapted this guidebook and "Young Marines Code of Conduct" to facilitate what will be expected from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/ren enrolled in the program.

The SPYM "Parent/Guardian Guidebook" is based on the experiences of other units with the Young Marines program. If a discrepancy is found within this guidebook or conflicts with the National Young Marines Registered Adult Manual, it is to be brought to the attention of the SPYM staff for review. All revisions and mandates to this guidebook will be posted in a timely manner and distributed through written notification. Updated Parent/Guardian Guidebooks will be issued yearly in October.

This document serves to give the parents and youth clear cut rules as to what is expected for the youth to be successful in this unit. Successful Recruits and Young Marines have parents/guardians that are actively involved.

Each child's attendance, participation, attitude, effort, outside activities, uniform, and appearance, can all be considered when reviewing the Young Marine for promotion, school selection, ability to attend a trip, and any unit outing.

All children in this program are expected to arrive to drill ten minutes early, have a light breakfast, drink plenty of water, and come prepared with ALL their gear/uniform that is listed in the SPYM Central BAND group.

It is also the program's intent to allow the Young Marine to mature and become responsible for the training and operation of the Unit as prescribed by the Unit Commander. Eventually, training and class time, while being supervised by adult staff members, will be the responsibility of the Young Marines to organize and initiate, keeping in mind that they are still children and may falter at times with schedules and tasks.

## Meeting Facility

Our current meeting facility is the American Legion Post 575. As this location is on loan to us, we expect it to be treated with respect by our Recruits/Young Marines, parents, and volunteers. Under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to wander through the facility. Disciplinary action will be taken with anyone who does not follow this directive. In addition, no one will be allowed to use the kitchen, so Recruits & Young Marines should prepare a cold chow.

The American Legion has been gracious enough to let us use the facility for our unit meetings at no cost. At the end of each unit meeting all Recruits & Young Marines will be required to participate in police call (clean up) to ensure that we leave the facilities cleaner than when we arrived.

## A Volunteer Organization

The most important quality of SPYM is that it is composed entirely of volunteers. These individuals, giving their time and expertise, are the heart and soul of the unit's success. Furthermore, to make this program an even more successful investment to our children's potential, it is imperative that all parent(s)/guardian(s) support the volunteers when the need arises. No staff member or associate of SPYM receives monetary gifts as compensation for their services performed for the program.

### **Staff**

Most of the current members are parents of current or former Young Marines. These volunteers have the same type of responsibilities as the parent/guardian of the children enrolled. Not all volunteers have children involved in the program. These individuals deserve a great deal of credit for unselfish devotion of their time to aid and educate the children of our future. Whatever hardships you may be going through, chances are there is a staff member going through or has gone through the same thing. As much as the staff might wish, children are not perfect and neither are we, however, this is where much of our experiences is learned and shared. Because the staff is just like you, they too like to see that they are not alone in working with the Young Marines. This program succeeds when all parties work in unison to help instill discipline and personal accomplishments.

## Participation

Participation is a large part of the program's ability to grow. Growth will allow this program to aid other individuals who have not heard of the Young Marine program. Since this is a volunteer program, it is important that we, parent(s)/guardian(s), follow through with all scheduled activities. When schedules are not met, attendance falls, and the Unit suffers.

## Dropping Off and Picking Up

The Young Marine or recruit must be in formation at the scheduled time and signed in by parent(s)/guardian(s) to participate in the day's events. It is recommended that the Young Marine or Recruit arrive 10 minutes prior to the beginning of drill or scheduled events to avoid disciplinary action.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to sign their Young Marine or recruit out at end of drill to ensure an authorized member of the Young Marine's or recruit's family has assumed responsibility. If someone other than the Primary Contact, Secondary Contact or Emergency Contact listed on the registration is picking up your child/ren, please let us know the full name (as provided on their state issued ID) and ensure they are aware that an ID is required at pick up. Teen drivers can sign themselves out so long as the Adjutant or Unit Commander has written permission from the Parent(s)/Guardian(s).

## Attendance Policy

### Attendance Expectations

**Mandatory Drills & Events:** All Young Marines/Recruits are expected to attend scheduled drills and unit activities unless excused.

**Punctuality:** Young Marines/Recruits must arrive on time and be prepared for all drills and events.

**Participation Requirement:** Active engagement in all scheduled activities is required.

### Absence & Excusal Procedures

#### 1. Excused Absences

An absence may be considered excused if:

- a. The Unit Commander or designated staff is notified **at least 11 days in advance** (unless there is an emergency).
- b. The absence is due to:
  - i. Illness or medical appointments
  - ii. Family emergencies
  - iii. School-related events or academic obligations
  - iv. Religious observances
  - v. Other valid reasons as approved by the Unit Commander

#### 2. Unexcused Absences

An absence is considered unexcused if:

- a. The Young Marine/Recruit fails to follow proper reporting procedures.

#### 3. How to Report an Absence

- a. Parents/Guardians or Young Marines/Recruits must submit the Absence Report Form **11 days before drill or event** unless it is an emergency.
- b. This form must be submitted PER Young Marine/Recruit and PER missed Drill or event date. If you are missing 3 or more in a row, please submit a Leave of Absence Form.

- c. For emergencies, please **call the Unit Commander directly at 806-474-2887**. Be sure to leave a voicemail if the Unit Commander does not answer or send a text.

## Consequences for Unexcused Absences

- 1. Unexcused Absence:** Verbal warning and reminder of attendance policy.
- 2. Unexcused Absences:** Written warning and possible extra training assignments and/or duties.
- 3. Unexcused Absences:** Meeting with the Unit Commander, possible suspension from activities or loss of eligibility for promotions.
- 4+ Unexcused Absences:** Review for dismissal from the unit due to lack of commitment.

## Make-Up Opportunities

Young Marines who miss training should:

1. Review the Drill Recap posted in BAND and work with their Squad Leader when needing help
2. Complete any assigned make-up work or training to stay on track, in a timely manner.
3. Participate in Study Nights when available.

## Eligibility for Fun Activities

Participation in fun activities (trips, camping, parades, etc.) is a privilege earned through commitment.

- Young Marines must attend the **3 drills prior** to the event.
- **Final eligibility will be determined by the Unit Commander and staff**, considering overall attendance, communication, and demonstrated commitment.

## Young Marine Inactivity

Inactivity is simply explained: if your child/ren is/are going to miss more than three drill dates as a Young Marine, then the Leave of Absence (LOA) Request Form must be submitted with an estimated return date, two weeks prior to the date of leave requested. Furthermore, leave requests will only be granted for a period of three (3) months maximum per year from unit registration date. Vacation, family emergencies, or extended leave can only be approved by the Unit Commander.

In the event the LOA Request Form has not been submitted, and the Young Marine has missed three drill dates, s/he will be considered UA (Unauthorized Absence) and possible suspension of rank privileges will occur. Upon return, the Young Marine will be on probation for the next three drill dates to determine eligibility and reinstatement of privileges.

While on probation, the Young Marine will not be allowed to attend outings with the unit for any other purpose other than work detail or a mandatory event. If placed on probation, the Young Marine may incur one UA. If another UA is incurred, the Young Marine will be placed under Inactive status and will not be allowed to earn rank, ribbons, or participate in any Young Marine Incentives for

the duration of 2 drills, may receive non-recommendation for promotions and/or become ineligible for Young Marine of the Year (YMOY).

**BOTTOM LINE: YOUNG MARINES MUST MAINTAIN 80% ATTENDANCE OR REQUEST A LOA.**

## **Recruit Status**

Attendance at scheduled Recruit Drills is a required component of the South Plains Young Marines unit. Recruits must attend all drills; however, up to two absences will be permitted while remaining eligible for graduation. Recruits who miss drill must check BAND for posted training materials, assignments, and updates to ensure they do not fall behind. It is the Recruit's responsibility to review all missed content. Any recruit who accumulates three or more absences will be removed from the current training cycle and placed into inactive status. The Recruit may rejoin during the next Recruit Training Series, and re-enrollment fees may apply.

LOA Requests **WILL NOT** be granted. Recruits are under a very strict and intensive training program, and absences during this time are strongly discouraged.

## **Observation of Drill**

Observation will be allowed during regular drill and recruit training only under strict supervision. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may watch occasionally at a distance and only for a small amount of time (typically up to 1 hour). If this becomes a distraction, a parent/guardian will be politely asked to leave. As always, the best observation is from within; volunteers are always needed to help this program grow.

## **Distraction of Young Marines**

During their training, distractions must be kept to a minimum. Young Marines and recruits are easily distracted when they see you or other family members making it difficult for Staff Instructors and Recruit Instructors to carry out their lessons. This is not beneficial to your child on three accounts:

1. The Young Marine or recruit may miss some part of a learning objective.
2. The Young Marine or recruit may be injured accidentally by not paying attention.
3. Recruit Instructors do not take kindly to distractions when giving of their time.

## **Training is Challenging**

There are times when an instructor may need to get tough with either the Young Marines or recruits as a whole or a specific Young Marine or recruit who may be causing an immediate distraction. It is one thing to watch a movie on a tough Drill Instructor dealing with his recruits, but it is quite another thing to see one yelling at your child/ren. These instructors are very aware that they are dealing with children, and they are very careful and responsible with them

## **Tobacco and Alcohol use by adults**

As Young Marines, they are taught not to use alcohol and tobacco (this includes dip and vapes). As adults, we must act as role models. During Young Marines' functions, adults are not permitted to use tobacco or alcohol products around the Young Marines. If you need to smoke, move to a safe location away from the Young Marines. You cannot be in view of the Young Marines.

## **Extended Weekend Training**

During the year some extended weekend training will be required. There will be times when we need volunteers for food, water, or a store run. If the event involves staying overnight, the parent(s)/guardian(s) are not allowed to attend. Adult sleeping quarters are separate and far away from the training area. If a parent(s)/guardian(s) wishes to volunteer for a particular function, consult the staff.

## **Information Exchange**

Every effort is made to make the information available to the parent(s)/guardian(s) but it is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to review that information. The following methods will assist you in obtaining vital information.

### **Emails & Text Messaging:**

Emails are sent whenever larger amounts of content need to be distributed, such as encampment/trip details, updates to policies or policy additions. Our unit sends out quarterly newsletters roughly 1-2 weeks before the next quarter. Text messaging is generally used to update parents on outstanding dues, emergencies (we will call as well) or when any other quick information is needed to communicate that is not intended for all parents to view.

### **BAND:**

There are several BAND groups available. All Young Marines & Recruits will be added to three BAND groups (SPYM Central, SPYM DDR and their rank specific BAND). Each one has their own purpose and function. SPYM Central includes unit updates using posts, a calendar, pinned posts for important announcements, and is a place for all members to encourage each other and ask questions. SPYM DDR is intended just for Drug Demand Reduction content and rank specific BANDs are for members of that rank to view Drill Recaps which include a link to access training material for the most recent drill. SPYM Parents is for parents and guardians to communicate with each other and some members of staff, view the calendar, engage and ask questions. Pinned posts are available for important announcements. BAND serves as the PRIMARY form of communication.

### **Unit Honors:**

Our unit asks that parents/guardians arrive 15 minutes before dismissal to attend Unit Honors. Unit Honors serves two purposes, and one is to honor those Young Marines & Recruits that have shown

Teamwork, Leadership and/or Self-Discipline during drill, for promotion ceremonies and to recognize and award those Young Marines that may have earned new ribbons/devices since the last drill. When necessary, we will hold brief meetings to discuss larger upcoming events, fundraiser details, or go over any other relevant information.

### **Information Packets:**

At the last drill of each month, parents/guardians will be issued our Monthly News for the following month. This provides a shorter overview of the following months' activities as well as provides QR codes for the LOA Request Form and the Report an Absence Form. During Unit Honors, other vital paperwork may be provided. Individual documents (Ribbon Request Forms, Community Service Reports, etc.) are available at the front table for you at every drill but are also available on BAND.

### **Parent Meetings**

These meetings will be held AT LEAST twice a year. They will be published through the various contact points listed above. This is the primary method that information will be passed and the best way to be involved in the program. It is to your advantage to attend these meetings every time one is held.

### **Unit Website:**

The unit website is a great place for our Young Marines and Recruits to work on any missing drill objectives, and we strongly encourage them to view it. The Training Hub allows them access to each drill's lessons and assignments. Young Marines or Recruits who miss drill should view the Drill Recap post on their rank specific BAND to review and learn the information they missed that day. Additionally, there are Home Activities that should be completed. Young Marines & Recruits who attended drill, should use this space to review information that they might have struggled with during that day. All Young Marines & Recruits should be completing the Assignments and Assessments listed. Additionally, Young Marines & Recruits have the ability to play Blooket Games, if they wish, but these are not required.

### **Facebook:**

Unit Public Page – South Plains Young Marines. This page is public and open to all families and those supporting our program.

## **Uniforms**

Every drill we will have a uniform/gear check. The items that are inspected may change every drill, so always come prepared. What is needed for each drill is listed on the SPYM Central Band under the calendar event.

If any of the items need to be replaced, i.e., ribbons, belts, replacement uniforms, this must be requested through the appropriate form. The links to the forms are on BAND.

The staff will be tracking this information and can use it to determine whether a child should be promoted, selected for Young Marine of the Year (YMOY), and if they are eligible to attend any of the unit outings/trips.

**UNIT T-SHIRT:** The South Plains Young Marines' official unit t-shirt will be worn with the Young Marines' digital uniform.

- a. The only deviations to this will be for events that require the RED National Young Marines' t-shirt, or an alternate t-shirt as described by the event
- b. T-shirt designation can also be determined by the Unit Commander

**All youth registered with the South Plains Young Marines are required to have:**

1. Hydration system (one or all of the below)
  - a. Hydration Pack (issued by unit and first choice and required for "in field" trainings or events)
  - b. Water Bottle-reusable
2. A plain black watch cap/beanie (issued by unit)
3. Black gloves (issued by unit)
4. Binder, pen/pencil, notebook paper or spiral (binder issued by unit)
5. Garment bag (issued by unit at graduation)

**RIBBONS/CHEVRONS:** Ribbons and Chevrons are given to each Young Marine that earns them, the *FIRST* time they are awarded. If ribbons and/or chevrons are damaged, lost, or soiled, it will be the responsibility of the Young Marine (parents/guardian) to pay for replacements. If you need a replacement for any item, do so on the appropriate form.

**YOUNG MARINE HAIR:** Hair is to be maintained per Young Marines' guidelines as described in the Registered Adult Manual Uniform Appendix, and the Young Marines' Guidebooks. Hair is to be maintained in a "NATURAL HAIR COLOR".

- a. Natural hair color is defined as a color and shade that a human would have at birth.
  1. Blonde
  2. Black
  3. Red
  4. Brown
- b. No FADDISH hairstyles are permitted. Examples are, but not limited to:
  1. Multi-color
  2. Extreme hair styles or cuts
  3. Streaked

c. Young Marines who alter their hair color to other than a natural color or have faddish styles will not be authorized to wear the Young Marines' uniform until their hair is returned to a natural state.

d. If a Young Marine attends an event and hair does not meet regulations, the Young Marine will be sent home and not allowed to participate

e. The Unit Commander has final determination of specific hair color, shade, or style.

## Drill UOD

Unless otherwise specified in advance, the **standard UOD for all drill days** is:

- **PT Gear upon arrival**
- **Full Uniform brought with you** (this includes **cover, boots, boot bands, belt, ribbons, chevrons—everything**)

This will remain our standard UOD unless a specific uniform is posted prior to drill.

## Event UODs (Outside of Drill)

There are **three primary UOD categories** used for events outside of drill. Variations may occur due to weather or the nature of the activity. If no variation is posted, the following standards apply:

### 1. PT Gear

- Olive green shirt (white shirt for Recruits)
- Black athletic shorts
- Athletic shoes (**No Converse, Vans, cleats, etc.**)
- Cold weather: Heather grey crewneck sweatshirt & heather grey sweatpants

### 2. YM Uniform

- Digital blouse and trousers
- Cover, belt, ribbons, chevrons
- Boots, boot bands, long black or green boot socks
- Unit shirt under the blouse
- Cold weather: Cold weather PT gear may be worn underneath

### 3. Activities Gear

- **Neon green unit T-shirt** (with large unit logo on back)
- Black athletic shorts
- Athletic shoes
- May include blue jeans or khakis depending on the event

#### 4. Recruit Uniform

- Plain white t-shirt with last name and first name initial on the front
- Black athletic shorts
- Athletic shoes
- Cold weather: Cold weather PT gear will be worn during cold months

*Any UOD variations will be posted in advance.* However, please ensure your Young Marine or Recruit knows what each UOD includes, as **only the UOD type will be listed** (e.g., "PT Gear" or "Uniform").

**NOTE:** All Young Marines and Recruits are required to wear their **Red Cord Bracelet** with every UOD. **Covers** are also mandatory—do not forget them!

#### Uniforms for Events Outside Our Unit

When attending **events hosted by Regiment, Division, or National**, uniform requirements may vary slightly from our unit's standards. Please note:

1. The **host of the event** will provide an **official gear list** in advance to all participants and their parents/guardians.
2. Based on prior experience, these gear lists often include:
  - **Plain white T-shirts**
  - **Red National Young Marines T-shirt**
  - **Khaki pants, slacks, or shorts**
  - **PT Gear**
  - **Young Marine Uniform**

Please review any provided gear lists carefully and prepare accordingly. If you are unsure about any item, reach out to unit staff for clarification **well in advance of the event date** to avoid last-minute issues.

#### Cleaning and Maintenance Guidelines

1. **Blouse:** The blouse will be machined or hand laundered in warm water. It must be starched but may not be bleached.
2. **Ribbons:** Ribbons are worn so that the lowest row of ribbons is 1/8-inch above the left breast pocket patch and centered. Ribbons are worn in the order of precedence as established in the Young Marines Awards Manual. They are preferably worn in rows of three. Ribbons that become soiled or faded should be replaced. Your YM's ribbon rack configuration can be found in the YM's Record Book.
3. **Trousers:** The trousers will be machined or hand laundered in warm water. It must be starched but may not be bleached.
4. **Khaki Web Belt:** The belt will be machined or hand washed in warm water.

5. **Boots:** Standard black leather must be polished with a high shine on the toes and heels. Black long socks will be worn with the boots.

## Consequences

### 1. Verbal Warning & Instruction (First Infraction)

- **Action:** A verbal warning from an adult leader along with a private conversation to identify the reason for the uniform issue.
- **Focus:** Educate the Young Marine on the importance of uniform care and proper regulations. Offer guidance on how to correct the issue and provide a reminder of expectations.
- **Outcome:** No further consequence if the issue is resolved by the next event.

### 2. Uniform Inspection Duty (Second Infraction)

- **Action:** The Young Marine will be assigned to assist with uniform inspections for the unit (under adult supervision).
- **Focus:** Learn the details and importance of uniform standards by inspecting others. This also helps the Young Marine understand the expectations more clearly.
- **Outcome:** Successful completion of inspection duty reinforces their understanding of regulations.

### 3. Counseling Sheet (Third Infraction)

- **Action:** The Young Marine will meet with a unit staff member to complete a Counseling Sheet.
- **Focus:** To address the importance of maintaining proper uniform standards, reinforce pride in appearance, and ensure understanding of uniform regulations within the Young Marines program.
- **Outcome:** The Young Marine will identify the specific uniform deficiency, review proper standards with an Adult Volunteer, and commit to corrective action.

### 4. Loss of Privileges (Fourth Infraction)

- **Action:** The Young Marine may lose certain privileges, such as participating in a special event or holding a leadership position for a designated time.
- **Focus:** Demonstrate that repeated failure to meet expectations affects their standing within the unit.
- **Outcome:** Once the Young Marine shows improvement and corrects their uniform issues, privileges can be reinstated.

## 5. Leadership Conference & Behavior Contract (Repeated Infractions)

- **Action:** A meeting with the Unit Commander or XO, the Young Marine, and their parents/guardians to discuss repeated infractions and develop a behavior contract. This contract outlines specific actions the Young Marine must take to improve.
- **Focus:** Address the issue directly with both the Young Marine and their family to ensure understanding of expectations and the seriousness of repeated failures.
- **Outcome:** The Young Marine will be monitored closely, and failure to meet the contract terms may lead to further consequences, such as temporary suspension from unit activities.

When a Young Marine leaves the South Plains Young Marines program, the following guidelines apply regarding uniforms:

### 1. Inactive or Not Re-Registering

- Young Marines who become inactive or choose not to re-register may **keep their uniform**.
- **All patches** (including unit and Young Marine patches, name tapes, and “Young Marines” name tapes) must be **carefully removed and returned** to the unit at the earliest convenience.
- Uniform items that are no longer wanted may be **donated back to the unit** (in full: blouse, trousers, cover, belt, and boots).

### 2. Disciplinary Discharge

- Young Marines discharged from the unit due to disciplinary actions are required to **return the full uniform** to the unit, including:
  - Blouse
  - Trousers
  - Cover
  - Belt
  - Boots
  - With all patches and name tapes

### 4. Return Process

All patches and/or uniform items may be returned at a scheduled drill or mailed to:

**South Plains Young Marines**  
**2609 32nd St.**  
**Lubbock, TX 79410**

## Money Disbursements

The Young Marines program is a non-profit organization. To successfully run the program, there are several financial factors to be taken into consideration. First and foremost, all funds raised on behalf of the South Plains Young Marines, including recruit training, must be approved by the Unit Commander, and supervised by the unit's Financial Manager.

### Corporation

A corporation does not currently sponsor our unit, yet we will always be open to be sponsored by one. This would be a great source of support for the program at the unit level. We ask that if you have a source that may be interested, please notify the Adjutant, and help the unit make the correct contacts.

### Grants

Grants can be like corporate sponsorship with more restrictions and demands that are difficult to meet. There are professional grant writers (none of which belong to our staff) that receive thousands of dollars a month in grants for non-profit organizations. The Unit cannot afford a professional grant writer.

### Fundraising

Fundraising is our primary source of income and is very demanding on Young Marines, recruits, parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff. Fundraising is **MANDATORY**. However, through these fundraisers, we can provide trips, encampments, and social activities to keep Young Marines interested in the program. The staff of SPYM has decided on a simple disbursement plan for all monies collected through regular fundraisers.

- Specific fundraising details and deadlines to turn in fundraising money will be clearly communicated during kick-off.
- Failure to turn in fundraising monies in time will result in your child/ren being **unable to attend any events or unit outings associated with the fundraiser**. You are financially responsible for any items taken and not paid for, regardless of whether they were sold.

*For Example: You sign out 2 boxes of chocolates and eat them all instead of selling them; you still owe the unit the \$120 (\$60 per box) at the time of the fundraiser closure.*

*Everyone is required to participate in **EVERY FUNDRAISER!***

### Dues

**\*All collected monies from dues/fees, fundraising, or equipment are to be considered as donations should you decide to depart from the unit.**

**\*Staff is willing to work with parents to come up with a payment plan on any monies past due, but you must communicate your needs with staff.**

**\*All payments are non-refundable. If a Poole or Recruit does not complete training, does not begin training or becomes ineligible to participate, any payments already made will be considered a donation to the South Plains Young Marines.**

## Outside Involvement

It is understood that there are some parent(s)/guardian(s) who honestly and legitimately do not have the time to be involved in the Young Marines as a Registered Adult Volunteer. There are still things that may be done to help the unit.

### **Printing Literature**

If you own or have access to printing equipment, you can help print flyers, brochures, invitations, newsletters, or any other literature to assist with the program.

### **Food and Beverage**

Whenever there is an event requiring food, such as camping, cookouts, or recruit graduation, donated food or beverages will help keep costs down. Although, on some occasions, we supply MREs (meals-ready-to-eat), these small bundles of nutrition are expensive and would take several fundraisers to earn enough money for the unit to buy in bulk. In some cases, we may ask each family to pitch in.

## Promotions and Disciplinary Actions

### **Unit Expectations**

1. **Respect & Courtesy**
  - a. Always address adult staff and volunteers as "Sir" or "Ma'am."
  - b. Show respect to fellow Young Marines, instructors, and guests at all times.
  - c. No bullying, harassment, discrimination, back talking, or poor attitude will be tolerated.
  
2. **Discipline & Obedience**
  - a. Follow all lawful orders given by staff, volunteers, and senior-ranking Young Marines.
  - b. No talking or moving while at attention or in formation unless directed.
  - c. Arrive on time for all scheduled drills and events.
  
3. **Uniform & Grooming**
  - a. Wear the correct uniform as assigned for each drill or activity.
  - b. Uniforms must be clean, properly worn, and in good condition.

c. Maintain proper grooming standards, including haircut regulations.

4. **Integrity & Accountability**

a. Always be honest and take responsibility for your actions.

b. Do not take or use another Young Marine's gear or property without permission.

c. If you make a mistake, own it and learn from the experience.

5. **No Tolerance for Drugs, Alcohol, or Tobacco**

a. The Young Marines program is dedicated to a **drug-free** lifestyle.

b. No Young Marine shall possess or use illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or vaping products.

c. Violations will result in disciplinary action, including possible dismissal.

6. **Physical & Mental Readiness**

a. Participate in all physical training activities to the best of your ability.

b. Maintain a positive and determined attitude during all challenges.

c. Report any injuries, illnesses, or concerns to an adult staff member immediately.

7. **Electronic Devices**

a. Phones must be turned off and placed in the contraband box at every drill and activity.

b. Smart watches may be worn in uniform, with the exception of PT, unless medically necessary.

Proper documentation from a physician must be on file for approval.

c. If anyone's smart watch becomes a distraction, all personal electronics will need to be turned off and placed in the contraband box at every drill and activity (medical reasons will be excused from this if proper documentation is provided).

d. All emergency calls must go through a staff member (youth to parent, parent to youth).

8. **Drill & Training Expectations**

a. Pay attention and actively participate in all lessons and activities, whether you know the information or not.

b. Follow instructions immediately and without argument.

c. Ask questions if you do not understand something.

9. **Attendance & Commitment**

a. Attendance at scheduled drills, events, and community service activities is mandatory unless excused by the Unit Commander.

b. Notify staff in advance if you will be absent.

c. Young Marines who miss multiple drills without notice may face disciplinary review.

10. **Community Service & Leadership**

a. Serve the community with pride and professionalism.

b. Be a role model in and outside of the Young Marines program.

c. Show initiative and take on responsibilities as you grow in leadership.

***\*If you feel that an Adult Volunteer has been unfair, have a private conversation with them instead of making a scene (arguing) with the Adult Volunteer.***

## Consequences

### 1. Verbal Warning & Guidance (First Infraction)

- **Action:** A verbal warning is given to the Young Marine by an adult leader explaining the behavior that was inappropriate or against unit rules.
- **Focus:** Provide immediate feedback and a clear explanation of why the behavior was unacceptable. Offer guidance on how to correct the behavior.
- **Outcome:** The Young Marine is expected to adjust their behavior immediately, and no further action is taken if improvement is seen.

### 2. Reflection Assignment (Second Infraction)

- **Action:** The Young Marine is assigned a short reflection or essay (age-appropriate) on the importance of following rules, teamwork, leadership, or how their actions affect the unit.
- **Focus:** Encourage the Young Marine to think about their behavior and how it impacts others. This can include topics like respect for authority, personal discipline, and the value of teamwork.
- **Outcome:** The reflection must be completed before the next drill or activity, reinforcing the need for personal responsibility.

### 3. Counseling Sheet (Third Infraction)

- **Action:** The Young Marine will complete a Counseling Sheet with an Adult Volunteer.
- **Focus:** To reflect on repeated behavior, understand the impact of actions on the unit and peers, and identify personal responsibility and commitment to corrective action.
- **Outcome:** The Young Marine will acknowledge their behavior, demonstrate understanding of expectations, and create a written plan for improvement with guidance from an Adult Volunteer.

### 4. Parent/Guardian Involvement & Behavior Plan (Repeated Infractions)

- **Action:** A meeting is held with the Young Marine, their parents/guardians, and unit leadership to discuss the ongoing behavioral issues. Together, a behavior plan is developed, outlining clear expectations and consequences for continued infractions.
- **Focus:** Ensure family support and involvement, and create a concrete plan for improvement, including specific steps and milestones.
- **Outcome:** The behavior plan is closely monitored, and the Young Marine's progress is reviewed regularly.

## 5. Suspension from Unit Activities (Severe or Continuous Infractions)

- **Action:** The Young Marine may be temporarily suspended from participating in unit drills, events, or activities until they demonstrate a commitment to following unit rules and displaying expected behaviors. Must stand a disciplinary board.
- **Focus:** Provide a serious consequence for repeated or severe infractions, emphasizing that participation in the Young Marines program is a privilege.
- **Outcome:** The Young Marine can return to full participation after showing that they are ready to follow the rules and meet behavior expectations.

## 6. Dismissal from the Unit (Extreme or Dangerous Behavior)

- **Action:** In cases of extreme or dangerous behavior (e.g., violence, severe disrespect, or endangerment of others), dismissal from the unit may be considered after careful review by unit leadership and consultation with parents/guardians. Must stand a disciplinary board.
- **Focus:** Protect the safety and integrity of the unit while emphasizing the seriousness of the program's values.
- **Outcome:** Dismissal should only be used as a last resort when all other methods have failed, and when the behavior significantly disrupts the unit or poses a risk to others.

## Promotion Opportunities & Expectations

Our unit offers **four promotion opportunities each year**—one per quarter. However, **not every Young Marine will be promoted every quarter**, and that's okay! Promotions are **earned**, not automatic. Each rank has its own **requirements**, including guidebook objectives, billets, ribbons, and attending Leadership School.

We want our Young Marines to take their time and **truly understand** what they're learning—not just rush through tasks to promote faster. Promotion Goals Meetings are held every quarter for all youth, regardless of where they are in the process. These meetings help us:

- Track progress through the program,
- Identify areas for growth,
- Set goals for the next steps—even if promotion is still a few months away.

**Every Young Marine progresses at their own pace**, and we're here to support them every step of the way.

## Promotion Policy

**1. Purpose-** The purpose of this policy is to establish a structured and standardized process for evaluating and promoting Young Marines within the South Plains Young Marines unit. This ensures that

all promotions are conducted fairly and consistently, in accordance with National Young Marines standards.

**2. Promotion Eligibility-** All Young Marines will be evaluated for promotion on a regular basis. To be eligible for promotion, the following requirements must be met:

- Completion of all rank-specific requirements set forth by National Young Marines.
- Submission of a **Quarterly Report** at the end of each quarter for promotions during the preceding quarter.
- Adherence to the **Attendance Policy** related to promotions, including participation of thresholds and absence limitations.
- Any rank specific testing.

**3. Promotion Board Process-** A designated Adult Volunteer (AV) will be responsible for completing a **Promotion Board Request Form** for each Young Marine to determine eligibility. The process will proceed as follows:

**a. Determination of Eligibility**

- The designated AV will review each Young Marine's progress and submit a **Promotion Board Request Form** for those meeting eligibility criteria.
- For Young Marines not eligible for promotion, a **Goal Sheet** will be completed outlining missing requirements and necessary action steps.
- Young Marines with Goal Sheets will be given dedicated time to review their action steps with an AV to work toward eligibility for the current promotion period.

**b. Submission & Review**

- All eligible **Promotion Board Request Forms** will be submitted to the **Executive Officer (XO)** for review.
- The XO will attach a **Promotion Board Questionnaire** and other relevant documents to each form.
- The XO will schedule and communicate the date and time of each Young Marine's promotion board.

**c. Promotion Board Evaluation**

- Young Marines who qualify will stand a promotion board, where they will be assessed on leadership ability, performance, and adherence to Young Marine standards.
- The XO will compile results and submit recommendations to the **Unit Commander (UC)**.
- The UC has final approval on which Young Marines will be promoted.

#### 4. Promotion Ceremony

- Promotion ceremonies will be held during Unit Honors.
- Young Marines selected for promotion will be notified in advance, so they may invite family and friends.
- Each promoted Young Marine may select a person(s) of their choice to conduct their pinning ceremony.

### Training

One of the cornerstones of the Young Marine program is training. The required training by Headquarters is two physical fitness tests with a minimum score of 200 for RCT to YM/LCPL and 250 for YM/CPL and above. Three hours per quarter of Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) is also required by HQ.

If the Young Marine/Recruit misses a PFT, we are happy to allow an opportunity for your child to make up their PFT. However, the Young Marine/Recruit must contact staff to schedule the make-up PFT. This is the Young Marine/Recruit RESPONSIBILITY, NOT THE PARENTS!

A child in the program should be able to go from RCT to YM/LCPL in 24 months if the child puts effort into drills and shows active participation in other activities.

#### **PFT Events:**

Two physical fitness tests are required per year. Our unit will plan to administer four PFT events per year; we will provide one per quarter. If a PFT is missed, it needs to be rescheduled with staff by the Young Marine/Recruit.

*\*Failure to make up PFTs will result in the child not being able to attend trips/outings/schools/SPACES events.*

**PFTs CAN NOT BE BACK DATED!!!!**

#### **DDR:**

Three hours of DDR a quarter is required. DDR BAND is essential to those that are missing DDR hours as it will provide information on how to make up missing hours and provides ideas on what they can do to make up those hours. Tracking DDR to ensure they reach the required three hours is the responsibility of the YOUNG MARINE/RECRUIT.

#### **Community Service:**

Community Service is not a requirement until promotion to YM/LCPL; however, we HIGHLY encourage community service. Our unit will provide as many opportunities as possible to participate in community service events throughout the year. We try to schedule community service outside of drill dates, however, sometimes we do not have control over the events and drill dates may be adjusted

accordingly. We will provide as much notice in advance of community service that the unit is doing together on both SPYM Central and SPYM Parent BANDS.

Any community service that a Young Marine or recruit performs outside of the unit must be logged on the community service form and submitted to the Adjutant for recording in the YM database.

After completing 50 hours of community service in a rolling 365-day period, a community service award can be earned. This award is not a requirement to remain “current” in the program but is a requirement to be considered for YMOY at the Regimental level or higher.

### **Swim Qualifications:**

Swim Qualifications are not a requirement. We provide this opportunity for the unit to have some fun together before school starts back (when funding allows). By participating in this event, they can earn the swim qualification ribbon.

Unit staff will review each Young Marine or Recruits attendance history, financials, attitude, effort, uniform, and appearance, when determining eligibility for this event.

### **Enabling Objective Training:**

Enabling objectives are the items that Young Marines and Recruits must know to progress through the program. Classes will be given by either the staff or their peers with staff guidance, as a tool to help them learn the materials. If a class is missed, the Young Marine or Recruit is responsible for viewing the Drill Recap on BAND and completing all necessary assignments.

## **Registration/Re-Registration**

### **Requirements:**

Recruit Registration: \$365

Annual registration fee: \$60

Registration process completed in the portal.

### **Documents Needed:**

Sports Physical (annually)

Failure to provide a current and up to date physical or not completing the requirements above will result in the Young Marine or Recruit being unable to attend ANY unit event, including drill, until the item is satisfied.

## **Activities/ Trips Requirements**

The ability to attend unit outings and trips are subject to staff discretion.

**Attendance-** 80% attendance of the mandatory drills for the preceding four quarters. Excused absences will not count against you.

**\*Subject to staff discretion- excessive excused absences may be considered.**

### **Physical Fitness-**

Two passing PFT scores, one between each of the following periods, Jan-Jun, and July-December.

### **DDR-**

No missing DDR in the preceding four quarters.

### **Attitude-**

The staff is constantly evaluating the kids in the program to determine if their attitude represents the values of the Young Marine program. If the child attends drills with a bad attitude, talking back, not participating, the staff will let the parent know. If this behavior is a constant disruption, the individual will not be able to continue attending the program.

### **Dues-**

For a child to attend an outing the account must be current, or the parent must be making payments. We are willing to work with parents in terms of financials, but we should not be having to chase parents down. All fundraising money due must be turned in by the deadlines given at the start of the fundraising event.

## **Conclusion**

After reading through this guidebook, you may find yourself feeling a little bewildered about your roll in the program, in time you will learn how the program has developed and how you fit in as one of the pieces of this puzzle. The wording of this manual may seem blunt and harsh in some cases; it is intended to be such. The objective is to put in writing what is expected of the parent(s)/guardian(s) when enrolling a child/ren into the Young Marine program.

The program's expectations of the parent(s)/guardian(s) may seem rather difficult, but when you remember that this is for the personal growth and development of YOUR child/ren, you may be more eager to dive in and lend a hand. Each parent(s)/guardian(s) is ultimately responsible for their child/ren in the Young Marines program. Remember, this is just a tool to help your child become a better person, not a daycare to discard or shelter your child/ren for a period.

By the completion of recruit training, or the program when your child/ren graduates from high school, we believe that overall, you will be very pleased with the tool you have chosen. In addition, if you are active in the program, we also believe you will be pleased with yourself and your accomplishments.

As we said during orientation, the kids will only receive what they have put in the effort and have earned. We want to be clear: we understand that there are times in life where things get challenging either physically or financially. We are willing to work with any family in setting up payment arrangements, helping you find the correct equipment, or meeting the training requirements of the program. We only ask for an upfront, honest conversation.

***Strengthening the Lives of America's Youth***