

Youth Worker Policy

Wakeman Boys & Girls Club (WBGC) is committed to providing a safe environment for youth workers. As part of that commitment, the organization implements policies, procedures, and training for the protection of youth workers.

“Youth worker” is used as an umbrella term to describe all minors, defined as youth under the age of 18, who work in Clubs or Youth Centers as official staff/employees, non-member youth volunteers or work-based learning participants. The language below describes how youth workers will be permitted to work at WBGC.

Minor Employees

WBGC may hire minor employees who are no less than 16 years of age.

The organization defines the roles and responsibilities of minor employees as:

- An official employee of the Club; not participating in a job-readiness program through the Club during their paid time.
- Always partnered with an adult staff member when working directly with other youth.

Always

- Must complete all staff training and professional development required for BGCA Member Organizations, in addition to mandatory safety training for minor employees.
- Counted as staff in Club annual reporting.
- Minor employees may also be members and participate in Club programs
- When minor employees are on duty, they will be clearly in a staff uniform, including shirt and lanyard. When at the Club participating as a member, youth workers should not be dressed in their staff uniform. Minor employees must remember that they always are seen as role models to the youth, regardless if they are on duty or not.

Example Program includes: WBGC Staff

Work-based Learning Participants

The organization defines the roles and responsibilities of work-based learning participants as:

- A participant in a job-readiness program that occurs in the Club workplace to develop employability skills, knowledge and work experience.
- Participation/selection is intended to build developmental and workforce readiness skills and the young person is the primary beneficiary.
- Must complete mandatory safety training for work-based learning participants.
- Counts as youth in staff-to-youth ratios.
- Counted in registered membership and ADA. If not a member, counted as “Other Youth Served” in annual reporting.

Example Program includes: Fire Cadets Program



Non-Club Member Teen Volunteers

WBGC will allow non-Club member teens who are 13 to 17 years of age to volunteer at the Club. The organization defines the roles and responsibilities of a teen volunteer as:

- Other teen aged youth who complete volunteer service in the Club on a repetitive basis, but not through the work-based learning program.
- Approval of volunteer service is intended to support Club needs – Club is the primary beneficiary.
- Unpaid time.
- Must complete all volunteer training required for BGC Member Organizations in addition to mandatory safety training for non-member youth volunteers.
- Does not count as youth or staff in staff-to-youth ratios.
- Counted as a volunteer in Club annual reporting, not staff, members or “Other Youth Served.”

Example Program includes: Mentoring Volunteer

One-time or infrequent non-member teen volunteers

Non-member teen volunteers can volunteer at the Club to support one-time or infrequent (e.g., annual) events at which Club members are present without having to complete training requirements and must always be under the supervision of paid adult staff.

Example Event includes: Day for Kids Volunteer

WBGC is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers. To further ensure youth worker safety, the organization follows and adheres to all child labor laws when working with all youth workers. The federal child labor provisions authorized by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, also known as child labor laws, were enacted to ensure that when young people work, the work is safe and does not jeopardize their health, well-being or educational opportunities. When it comes to the legal aspects of managing youth workers, WBGC always follows the stricter law or regulation if more than one applies (e.g., state, federal, Tribal, local or international).

Actions and Implementation

To make sure we enforce this policy, WBGC is committed to:

- Educating our staff on youth work laws and showing them how to report child labor violations if they see or suspect any.
- Requiring hiring managers and HR to avoid hiring minors under the legal age for work. We also expect them to know and follow this policy and laws on wages and hours for older children.
- Keeping and validating documentation verifying our employees’ ages after they’re hired. If we discover that we’ve hired a minor, we’ll review applicable laws and adjust working hours accordingly.

Youth are hired as official Club staff and comply with all local employment-related policies and BGCA membership requirements, as well as state and federal laws affecting youth employment. WBGC is committed to and encourages partnerships with local organizations to provide seasonal paid work experiences for youth. All youth who are working at the Club and those supervising them will also complete mandatory training prior to beginning their work assignment at the Club.



Background Checks on Minors

WBGC conducts criminal background checks of all employees, including minors; board volunteers and others who serve on a standing committee; and all other volunteers, including partners and minors, who have direct, repetitive contact with members per the Background Check policy. This applies to all minor employees as well as non-Club member teen volunteers. Participants of work-based learning programs are not staff, but rather Club or Youth Center members participating in a Club-sanctioned program; therefore, they do not need to complete background checks before beginning their work-based learning experience. Because the minor does not have legal authority to enter into an agreement or give consent in his or her own capacity, it is necessary to acquire parent or legal guardian consent to authorize the background check.

Training for Supervisors and Coordinators

WBGC ensures that all supervisors and coordinators of youth workers understand their rights and responsibilities. All Club staff who supervise or coordinate the youth worker program, or work directly in the same space as youth workers – which includes minor employees, work-based learning participants and non-member teen volunteers – shall complete Boys & Girls Clubs of America-developed training annually, after which they will:

- Understand and communicate the roles and responsibilities of minor employees, volunteers and work-based learning participants.
- Provide leadership, supervision, training and coaching to staff as relates to organizational role, responsibilities, policies and procedures for youth workers.
- Maintain current knowledge about, communicate and follow child labor laws.
- Assess the individual and collective strengths of youth workers against the knowledge, skills and information needed to fulfill their roles safely.
- Identify and implement training for youth workers to ensure they understand and can implement their role.
- Prepare and supervise youth workers for their roles in the Club.
- Ensure systems, practices and procedures for the documentation and notification of suspected child abuse, neglect and physical, verbal and sexual harassment in accordance with state laws and organizational policies when youth workers report incidents are in place.

Training and Onboarding for Youth Workers

WBGC is committed to ensuring that youth workers understand the safety implications of working in the Club. All youth workers, including minor employees and work-based learning participants, will participate in the required number of hours of safety training each year before they work with any Club members. These trainings meet the requirements for child sexual abuse prevention, grooming prevention, and mandated reported trainings for youth workers. These trainings will be incorporated into the onboarding of youth workers. After participating in these trainings, youth workers at a minimum will:

- Know their rights and responsibilities as a youth worker at the Club.
- Understand their role as a youth worker and expectations around safety.
- Understand how to report concerns about issues perceived to affect emotional and physical safety.
- Know and implement organization-wide rules and policies that pertain to safety.
- Understand their role in supervising other youth.



Prohibition of Private One-on-One Interaction

WBGC is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. WBGC has put systems in place to prevent one-on-one interactions between youth members and all Club staff and volunteers. All youth workers (including minor employees, work-based learning participants and non-member teen volunteers) shall abide by the organization's policy to prohibit one-on-one contact at any time at the Club, in vehicles or by phone, text, social media or any other means. All staff and volunteers, including minor employees and non-Club member volunteers, are strictly prohibited from meeting Club participants outside of any Club-sponsored activities, unless the Club participant is the child or sibling of a staff member or volunteer.

Adult-to-Youth Interactions

All staff, whether they supervise youth workers or not, will understand and adhere to the organization's policy governing one-on-one interactions. Staff will remember to treat youth workers as youth in and outside the Club environment. This includes making sure that adult staff will not:

- Carpool with youth workers for any reason.
- Invite youth workers to after-work non-Club-sponsored events.
- Text, use social media or participate in online gaming with teens.
- Interact with youth workers one-on-one or outside of the Club or Youth Center.

Supervisors and coordinators should remain cognizant of the fact that youth workers, despite being under the age of 18, must not violate the prohibition of one-on-one contact with Club members. All meetings and communications will utilize either a team or group supervision approach. Team supervision involves two or more adults working together as a team to supervise and communicate with youth workers and is also utilized for digital communication with youth workers. This is specifically advised when a direct supervisor needs to talk confidentially with a youth worker. Group supervision is led by a facilitator in a group setting so youth workers can reflect on their work. Supervisors must ensure that assigned tasks adhere to this policy and do not inadvertently create a situation where minors are alone with another staff member.

Peer-to-Peer Interactions

WBGC is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff, and volunteers, including youth workers. Youth who are working and/or volunteering in the Club may already have relationships and interactions with other youth in the program. Accordingly, the organization realizes the importance of making clear distinctions whenever peer-to-peer interactions are involved.

Distinction of Youth Workers on Duty

Clear distinctions will be maintained between youth workers on duty and not on duty. These distinctions will leave no gray lines between the times when youth workers are working and when they are not. The organization will put the following procedures in place so that all staff and other youth can easily recognize when Club members are in the role of a Club member or that of a youth worker. Youth workers must:

- Sign into the program to record their presence and sign out when their shift is complete.
- Wear a Club shirt specific to the role of youth worker.
- Check in with their supervisor.



Interactions with Youth Outside of Assigned Duties

Youth who work in the Club as employees or volunteers may have pre-existing relationships with Club members. Youth are expected to disclose those relationships with the human resources manager or volunteer coordinator at the beginning of their service. Minor employees and non-Club member teen volunteers should not interact with youth outside of their Club peer group outside of the Club environment, unless the youth in question are siblings or a pre-existing relationship has been disclosed to the supervisor and/or coordinator before work begins. Work-based learning participants are participants in a Club-sanctioned program and therefore are not affected by this protocol.

Mandated Reporting

WBGC is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. Every staff member, volunteer and youth worker who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall immediately report to organization leadership. In such cases, youth workers may report the incident to their supervisor or another designated Club employee, who will then report to the appropriate authorities. All adult staff and volunteers will be educated on the protocols and procedures for reporting before youth workers become involved. The organization will provide support mechanisms for youth workers to access once their report has been submitted, to help limit any traumatic effects. Youth workers will receive such support on a timely basis.

Internal Reporting Policies and Procedures for Youth Workers

WBGC is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. As part of this commitment, any minor employee, work-based learning participant or non-Club member teen volunteer who becomes aware of an incident, as defined in this policy, shall immediately report and submit the incident to Club leadership. Club leadership will assist youth workers in completing an incident report.