

CHILD & CLUB SAFETY



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY

Revised July 2025

1. Child & Club Safety Summary

Based on the model BGCA Child and Club Safety Policy Statement

At Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley, safety is foundational to everything we do. We strive to create safe places where youth and staff thrive, and we are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment at all times. To ensure the safety of our operations and services, we have developed an extensive Child and Club Safety Policy and Procedures located at <https://www.bgccolsga.org/safety-policies>. A summary of these policies and procedures are outlined below.

1. **Staffing for Safety**. All Clubs and organizational activities will be staffed with employees and volunteers suited for the position. The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley will always maintain a staff to Club member ratio of no larger than 20 Club members to one staff member.
2. **Mandated Reporting**. Every staff member or volunteer who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect must immediately report to their Unit Director or Club leadership in the Admin Office. Club leadership is responsible for reporting the incident immediately to the appropriate authorities according to statewide mandated reporting laws. In Georgia, we **report by calling 855-422-4453**.
3. **No One-on One Interaction**. Staff and volunteers may not initiate one-on-one contact or communication (in-person, online, phone, text, social media, etc.) with a member, have a private meeting with a member or transport one member at a time.
4. **Safety Training**. All employees and volunteers who have direct repetitive contact with young people, will participate in multiple training programs covering child abuse prevention, grooming, mandated reporting and more. These training programs will occur before they are hired or permitted to volunteer and on an annual basis.
5. **Safety Resources**. BGCCV will prominently display BGCA-approved collateral that shares ethics hotline, crisis text line and safety helpline information with members, staff, volunteers and families at all facilities. In addition, BGCCV will share all safety policies with parents and guardians upon receiving a youth membership application.
6. **Physical Interactions**. PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS: Every staff member and volunteer is required to maintain appropriate physical contact with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate

- Side hugs
- Handshakes
- High-fives, fist bumps and hand slapping
- Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)

Inappropriate

- Full-frontal hugs or kisses
- Showing affection in isolated area
- Lap sitting
- Wrestling or piggyback/shoulder rides
- Tickling
- Allowing youth to cling to an adult's leg
- Allowing a child to ride on a motorcycle with you
- Giving individual members money or gifts

7. **Verbal Interactions.** Every staff member and volunteer is required to maintain appropriate verbal interactions with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate

- Positive reinforcement
- Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content)
- Encouragement
- Praise

Inappropriate

- Name calling
- Inappropriate jokes (adult-only content)
- Discussing sexual encounters or personal issues
- Secrete
- Profanity or derogatory remarks
- Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth

8. **Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace.** Employees and volunteers are prohibited from reporting to work or working while under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal or unauthorized drugs. Employees and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacturing, distribution, dispensing, sale or possession of illegal drugs and alcohol in the workplace, on organization premises, in organization vehicles or while engaged in organization activities.

2. Child & Club Safety Generally

Based on the model BGCA Child and Club Safety Policy Statement

At Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley, safety is foundational to everything we do. We strive to create safe places where youth and staff thrive, and we are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment at all times.

To ensure the safety of our operations and services, we are committed to a safety management system to identify, assess and mitigate risks and to continuously improve our safety performance. This requires our unyielding commitment to the following principles:

- Promoting the concept that safety is a core value and precondition to operation.
- Enabling proactive identification, assessment, and mitigation of risks associated with our activities, programs, and services.
- Fostering a positive safety culture through behavioral norms, expectations and “unwritten rules.”
- Prioritizing the safety and health of all individuals involved in our operations and affected stakeholders.
- Conducting risk assessments on a regular basis to proactively address risks and minimize the likelihood and severity of incidents.
- Complying with all applicable laws, regulations, and standards, including the Boys & Girls Club of America’s membership requirements.
- Actively encouraging the reporting of incidents, near misses and other safety concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Promoting safety awareness through open, regular communication and engagement initiatives.

- Providing comprehensive training to employees, volunteers, and other stakeholders to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform their tasks safely.
- Allocating sufficient resources (people, processes, tools and training) to supporting this safety policy.
- Integrating safety into all aspects of our business planning and decision-making processes.
- Ensuring all employees understand that we all have a daily obligation to pursue safety, quality and compliance as described in this safety policy.

This Child & Club Safety policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance. It may be revised as necessary to reflect changes in regulations, industry standards, and organizational requirements.

3. Staffing for Safety

All Clubs and organizational activities will be staffed with employees and volunteers suited for the position. When possible, staff will have previous experience working with children or will have suitable experience to perform the duties required of the position. All staff will receive orientation and ongoing training in the area of positive youth development.

Front desk or Membership Clerk positions in all clubs will be staffed by adults.

The Club provides staff shirts for all club workers to help identify them and show staff presence in the Clubs. Company issued shirts must be worn during Club hours and at all Club activities.

All program areas are subject to supervision by an adult age 19 or older, who has been trained on BGCCV standard operating and crisis procedures. In addition, Technology Labs must be supervised by adults who have been trained in technology procedures.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley will maintain a staff to Club member ratio of no larger than 20 Club members to one staff member at all times.

4. Child Abuse Prevention Generally

Based on the model BGCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy

As an organization entrusted with the care and well-being of youth, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Chattahoochee Valley condemns child abuse/sexual abuse. The priority of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley is the physical and emotional safety of its members, staff and volunteers. BGCCV maintains a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse. BGCCV implements policies and procedures for members, employees, volunteers, visitors or any victims of sexual abuse or misconduct to report any suspicion or allegation of abuse.

DEFINITIONS

One-on-Contact Prohibition: BGCCV prohibits isolated one-on-one interaction between Club participants and staff or volunteers, including board members. This includes prohibiting one-on-one contact at any time at the Club, in vehicle, on motorcycles or by phone, text, social media or any other means. Exceptions may only be made when delivering approved medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional according to professional guidelines. All staff and volunteers, including minor staff (under age 18), are strictly prohibited from meeting Club

participants outside of any Club-sponsored activities. The only exception to this rule is if the Club participant is a child or sibling of a staff member or volunteer.

Child abuse is when an adult or another child, whether through action or by failing to act, causes serious emotional or physical harm to a child. Sexual abuse or misconduct may include but is not limited to:

- Any sexual activity, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old).
- Sexual activity with another who is legally incompetent.
- Physical assault or sexual violence, such as rape, statutory rape, abuse, molestation or any attempt to commit such acts.
- Unwanted and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, brushing, massaging someone's neck or shoulders and/or pulling against another's body or clothes.
- Inappropriate activities, advances, comments, bullying, gestures, electronic communications or messages (e.g., by email, text, or social media).

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Grooming behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Targeting specific youth for special attention, activities or gifts.
- Isolating youth from family members and friends physically or emotionally. This can include one-on-one interactions such as sleepovers, camping trips and day activities.
- Gradually crossing physical boundaries, full-frontal hugs that last too long, lap sitting or other "accidental" touches.

5. Mandated Reporting

Based on the model BGCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Every staff member or volunteer of BGCCV who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect must immediately report to their Unit Director or Club leadership in the Admin Office. Club leadership is responsible for reporting the incident immediately to the appropriate authorities according to statewide mandated reporting laws. In Georgia, we **report by calling 855-422-4453**.

For more information about reporting under Georgia law, visit <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/services/child-abuse-neglect>

Club leadership is also responsible for reporting to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) within 24 hours via the critical incident system according to the procedures and categories of reporting incidents established by BGCA.

Club leadership should report the following incidents to BGCA using their critical incident reporting system:

- Any instance or allegation of child abuse, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse; sexual misconduct or exploitation (Club-related or not) against any child by a current employee or volunteer or any Club-related instance by a former employee or volunteer
- Any instance or allegation of child abuse, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse; or sexual misconduct or exploitation by a youth towards another youth at a Club site or during a Club-sponsored activity

- Any instance or allegation of abuse, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse; sexual misconduct; harassment; or exploitation (Club-related or not) alleged against any staff member; or any Club-related instance or allegation of abuse, including physical, emotional or sexual abuse; sexual misconduct; harassment; or Club-related exploitation against a volunteer or visitor.
- Any child who might have been abducted or reported missing from a Club site or Club-sponsored activity.
- Any major medical emergency involving a child, staff member or volunteer at a Club site or during a Club-sponsored activity leading to extended hospitalization, permanent injury or death; or a mental health crisis with a child requiring outside care.
- Any instance or allegation of a felony-level criminal act committed at a Club site or during a Club-sponsored activity.
- Any misappropriation of organizational funds in the amount of \$10,000 or greater; or any amount of federal funds.
- Any criminal or civil legal action involving the organization, its employees or volunteers, as well as any changes in the status of an open organization-related legal action.
- Negative media attention that could compromise the reputation of the Member Organization or the Boys & Girls Club brand.
- Any other incident deemed critical by BGCCV

Staff members who suspect that abuse has occurred shall not, except as directed by BGCCV's CEO, investigate the allegations or interview the child, any parent, guardian or volunteer, or any other witnesses. Employees should report only and let the appropriate authorities investigate.

Any failure by a BGCCV employee to adhere to the foregoing policy may result in discipline up to and including termination and may also result in personal civil and/or criminal liability.

BGCCV will report all allegations of child abuse to the appropriate authorities and will cooperate fully in the prosecution of any staff or volunteer abusing children.

6. Physical & Verbal Interactions

Based on the model BGCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS: Every staff member and volunteer of BGCCV is required to maintain appropriate physical contact with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Handshakes • High-fives, fist bumps and hand slapping • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs or kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling or piggyback/shoulder rides • Tickling • Allowing youth to cling to an adult's leg • Allowing a child to ride on a motorcycle with you • Giving individual members money or gifts

VERBAL INTERACTIONS: Every staff member and volunteer of BGCCV is required to maintain

appropriate verbal interactions with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive reinforcement• Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content)• Encouragement• Praise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name calling• Inappropriate jokes (adult-only content)• Discussing sexual encounters or personal issues• Secrete• Profanity or derogatory remarks• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youth

7. Prohibition Against Private One-on-One Interaction

Based on the model BGCA Prohibition of Private One-on-One Interaction Policy and the Youth Worker Policy

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. To further ensure their safety, the organization prohibits all one-on-one interactions between Club members and staff (including youth workers, minor employees and work-based learning participants) and volunteers (including board members and youth volunteers). All staff and volunteers, including youth workers, minor employees, work-based learning participants and youth volunteers, must abide by the following:

- Ensure all meetings and communications between members and staff or volunteers are never private (see definition below).
- Ensure in-person meetings take place in areas where other staff and/or members are present. Never be alone in a closed area with a member.
- Communicate to another staff member whenever an emergency arises that necessitates an exception to this policy.
- Never initiate private or isolated one-on-one contact with a member.
- Never have a private or isolated meeting or communication with a member. This includes in-person meetings and virtual communications such as texting, video chat and social media between only a staff member or volunteer and a single member.
- Never transport one Club member at a time. This includes transportation in Club or leased vehicles. Avoid transporting any Club members in your personal vehicle. Never allow a Club member to ride with you on a motorcycle.

Exceptions may only be made when delivering medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional. All exceptions shall be documented and provided to Club leadership in advance.

If an emergency arises that necessitates an exception to this policy, the emergency exception shall be communicated to Club leadership as soon as practicable, and ideally before engaging in one-on-one interaction.

DEFINITION OF ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION

One-on-one interaction is defined as any private contact or communication (including electronic communication) between any Club participant and an adult, including adult staff, minor staff,

volunteers, board members and others who might encounter members during regular programming and activities.

- Private contact/communication is any communication, in person or virtual, that is between one youth member and one adult (18 or over) that takes place in a secluded area, is not in plain sight and/or is done without the knowledge of others. Private places can include but are not limited to vehicles, rooms without visibility to others, private homes and hotel rooms. Examples of private contact include but are not limited to:
 - Meeting behind closed doors (in rooms without windows or visible sightlines) or any spaces that are not visible to others.
 - One staff member transporting one member in a vehicle.
 - Electronic communications (text, video, social media, etc.) between one member and one staff member or volunteer.
- Public contact/communication is any communication or meeting, in person or virtual, that is between at least three individuals, including two staff and one member, one staff and two members or variations of these combinations. Examples of public contact include but are not limited to:
 - Meeting in plain sight of others (e.g., in a quiet corner of an active games room).
 - Transporting members via public transportation (bus, taxis, train, air, etc.) or transporting multiple members.
 - Electronic communications (text, video, social media, etc.) between multiple members and adults (e.g., group chats).
 - Public places can include but are not limited to buses, airports, shopping malls, restaurants and schools.

Impact on mentoring programs: Mentorship is a key component of Boys & Girls Club programming and has tremendous positive impact on members. Prohibition of one-on-one interaction does not have to negatively affect mentor programs and/or relationship building. Mentors can adjust their practices to include:

- Holding mentor and coaching sessions in areas where other staff and/or members are present or can see you – for example, in large rooms where meetings are visible but not heard.
- Copying parents, staff or other members (when appropriate) on written and/or electronic communications.
- Scheduling meetings during Club hours and at the Club site.
- Documenting interactions between mentors and youth.

Impact on partnerships with local mentoring organizations

- All local mentors are required to abide by Club policies, including background check requirements and prohibition of one-on-one interaction.
- External mentors are required to abide by all Club safety policies and procedures.
- A written agreement should be in place to determine how and when the external organization assumes custody and responsibility of the member; these procedures should be clearly communicated to parents or guardians.
- Every interaction between mentor and youth will be documented and maintained

Impact on travelling to off-site events and activities

- When travelling to external events such as Keystone, Youth of the Year or other off-site events, the one-on-one policy shall continue to be followed.
- Should the Club take responsibility for transporting members to and/or from an event, one staff member should not transport one single child at any time in a vehicle. Accommodations shall be made to ensure at least three people (two staff and one member or one staff and two members)

are together when traveling. As an alternative, public transportation may be used (e.g., taxi, Uber, public transport).

- If this arrangement presents staffing or budget challenges, consider the following:
 - Inviting parents or guardians to attend and/or chaperone their child.
 - Including additional youth (e.g., Junior Youth of the Year) and/or staff in travel plans.
 - Coordinating with other Clubhouses or nearby organizations to travel together.
 - Travelling with additional staff or members.
- Parents and guardians should also provide written consent in each instance in which a member travels to any off-site event. NOTE: Parents or guardians are never allowed to provide consent for one-on-one interaction.
- Similar practices should be in place when coordinating field trips.

Impact on transportation to and from the Club

- When transporting members to and/or from a Club-sponsored event or activity, single members should not be transported alone with one staff person.
- Consider the following to accommodate single children:
 - Modify bus or van routes so single children aren't picked up first or dropped off last.
 - Use a bus aide if available.
 - Pick up and drop off children in groups.
 - Modify staff schedules to ensure multiple staff are present.

Impact when closing a Club after operating hours:

- In the case that a member is left at the Club after operating hours, a minimum of two staff members should wait for the child to be picked up.

Exceptions to policy: Exceptions to the one-on-one policy can be made under the following circumstances:

- When delivering medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional (e.g., counselors, social workers).
- When the emotional or physical safety of a member is at risk and a private, one-on-one communication is deemed necessary by Club leadership.
- In emergency situations that could create a safety risk, exceptions can be made (e.g., if a member is not picked up by a parent and leaving them alone at the Club could be a safety risk).

Should exceptions need to be made, the Club shall have policies in place to monitor interactions, including but not limited to:

- Disclosing the meeting to Club leadership and regularly checking in with the member and adult during conversations.
- Placing time limits on conversations.
- Meeting in rooms with clear sight lines (e.g., rooms with windows or glass doors).
- Documenting the interaction.
- In an emergency, disclosing the situation to another staff member before engaging in one-on-one interaction.

8. Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy

Based on the model BGCA Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace Policy and O.G.C.A. 50-24-3

BGCCV has a strong commitment to ensure the health and safety of our members, volunteers and employees. To further ensure their safety, the organization maintains a drug- and alcohol-free

workplace. The unlawful or improper use of drugs – including marijuana, controlled substances or alcohol in the workplace – presents a danger to everyone. The organization also has a duty to comply with the requirements of the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from reporting to work or working while under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal or unauthorized drugs.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from reporting to work or working when the employee or volunteer is using any legal drugs; exceptions can be made in accordance with state law when the use is pursuant to a doctor's orders and the doctor has advised the individual that the substance does not adversely affect the individual's ability to safely perform his or her job duties. Employees and volunteers taking any legal drugs that potentially affect job safety or performance are responsible for notifying their supervisor and/or Club leadership so that a determination of job performance or a reasonable accommodation can be made. An employee or volunteer may not be permitted to perform his or her job duties unless such a determination or reasonable accommodation has been made.
- Employees and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacturing, distribution, dispensing, sale or possession of illegal drugs and alcohol in the workplace, including on organization paid time, on organization premises, in organization vehicles or while engaged in organization activities.
- Employees and volunteers must notify their supervisor and/or Club leadership immediately of any criminal drug or alcohol violation.
- Employment and volunteering with the organization is conditional upon full compliance with this drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy. Any violation of this policy might result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

BGCCV further reserves the right to take any and all appropriate and lawful actions necessary to enforce this drug- and alcohol-free workplace policy, including but not limited to the inspection of organization-issued lockers, desks or other suspected areas of concealment, as well as an employee's personal property when the organization has reasonable suspicion to believe that the employee has violated this policy.

REASONABLE SUSPICION: Employees or volunteers shall immediately notify Club leadership of any action by an employee or volunteer who demonstrates an unusual pattern of behavior suggesting that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Club leadership will determine whether the individual should be examined by a physician or clinic and/or tested for drugs or alcohol in accordance with the Club's drug-testing policies. Employees and volunteers believed to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be required to leave the premises. Any illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia will be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency and may result in criminal prosecution.

Examples of behavior suggesting that employees or volunteers are under the influence of drugs or alcohol include but are not limited to:

- Odors (smell of alcohol, marijuana, body odor or urine);
- Movements (unsteady, fidgety, dizzy);
- Eyes (dilated, constricted or watery eyes or involuntary eye movements);
- Face (flushed, sweating, confused or blank look);
- Speech (slurred, slow, distracted mid-thought, inability to verbalize thoughts);
- Emotions (argumentative, agitated, irritable, drowsy);
- Actions (yawning, twitching); or

- Inactions (sleeping, unconscious, no reaction to questions).

Unusual patterns of behavior that may suggest drug or alcohol misuse include but are not limited to:

- Repeatedly calling in sick;
- Being absent directly before or after holidays and weekends;
- Repeatedly damaging inventory or failing to meet reasonable work schedules; and
- Being involved in frequent accidents that can be related to the use of drugs or other substances.

9. Allegations against Staff or a Volunteer

Because of the serious nature and implications, all allegations of child abuse or inappropriate behavior against BGCCV staff or volunteers are to be dealt with immediately based on the following:

1. Upon hearing about an allegation, no matter how trivial it may seem, immediately report it to your supervisor and your Unit Director. If neither is available, immediately report it to the Vice President of Programs and Operations or CEO.
2. After you report it, write down everything about the allegation or incident. Who reported it to you? What did you see? When did you learn this information? Share this information with your Unit Director.
3. The Unit Director should contact the parent/ guardian of any Club members involved in an alleged incident notifying them about what happened.
4. The Unit Director of your Club will assemble a more detailed written report. The Unit Director may compile written statements from the child(ren)/adult(s) making the allegation and/or a statement from the youth affected as well as the alleged perpetrator. Every precaution must be taken not to further traumatize the youth affected.
5. The Unit Director should forward all written statements outlining the allegation(s) to the Vice President of Programs and Operations or his/her designated representatives within 24 hours, or as soon as possible after the incident.
6. Once an allegation is made against a staff member or volunteer, that person is to be **immediately** suspended from all duties, asked to prepare a written statement regarding the incident, and placed on suspension with pay pending an investigation. For the person's own protection, as well as those affected, the accused individual is to be denied any contact whatsoever with the youth affected or any other youth in our care. They should also be cautioned not to return to the facility until their immediate supervisor contacts them.
7. The Vice President of Programs & Operations or the CEO is also responsible for reporting to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) within 24 hours via the critical incident system on BGCA.net according to the procedures and categories of reporting incidents established by BGCA.
8. The Vice President of Programs & Operations or the CEO is also responsible for reporting all allegations of abuse to the appropriate authorities and to the parents/guardian, as required by law. Report by calling 855-422-4453.

10. Medications

Staff members are not permitted to give any medication (over-the-counter or prescription) to members. Staff should not take responsibility for diagnosing medical problems, handing out medication, or giving out prescriptions, even if directed by a parent. However, staff may hold inhalers for youth in a safe place and give it back to that youth upon their request. Staff may also hold prescription medication as long as there is both parent authorization and a prescription with the child's name.

11. Safety Training

Based on the model BGCA Child Abuse Prevention Policy`

All employees and volunteers who have direct repetitive contact with young people, will participate in the following training programs as follows:

Before providing services to young people	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ BGCA-approved child abuse prevention○ BGCA-approved mandated reporting○ BGCA-approved grooming prevention○ BGCCV Safety Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ BGCA-approved child abuse prevention○ BGCA-approved mandated reporting○ BGCA-approved grooming prevention○ BGCCV Safety Policies

12. Safety Resources

BGCCV will prominently display BGCA-approved collateral that shares ethics hotline, crisis text line and safety helpline information with members, staff, volunteers and families at all facilities.

In addition, BGCCV will share all safety policies with parents and guardians upon receiving a youth