



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF WALKER COUNTY

PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome!

Congratulations on becoming a member. It is our privilege to welcome you and your child(ren) to the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Huntsville.

For over 20+ years, the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Huntsville has provided after-school programs to the Walker County community. Some of the most important ingredients at our Club are parental and membership involvement, as well as support from the community, staff, and Board members.

All our programs are designed to fulfill our mission to inspire and enable all youth. The enclosed organizational policies and parental orientation meetings are designed to help you familiarize yourself with our staff, programming, safety procedures, and special events.

In this handbook, you will find important information about your child's membership and safety policies at the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Huntsville.

Please read this booklet and keep it as a reference. We hope you have a wonderful year and thank you again for being a part of the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Huntsville.

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

Michelle Spencer

Chief Executive Officer

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Huntsville (BGCWCH) is *"to inspire and enable all youth, especially those that need us most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens"*.

CORE VALUES

Each young person receives the opportunity to participate in activities which foster self-development and growth in six core service areas: Character & Leadership Development; Education & Career Development; Health & Life Skills; Arts-Sports, Fitness & Recreation; and Outdoor & Environmental Education.

Our Formula for Impact



PHILOSOPHY

Our goal at the BGCWCH is to help prepare our members to be **LEADERS OF TOMORROW**. By doing so, we encourage positive attitudes, education, good sportsmanship, and friendship. We aim to empower boys and girls with the skills needed to face all types of challenges that they may encounter.

BGCWCH bases its programs on membership, community involvement, and its recognized role as an advocate for youth.

BGCWCH is aware of the influences of the total environment and so provides youth with relevant, everyday, varied, and diversified individual and group services — based on proven principles of youth development — which will achieve the health, social, educational, vocational, character, and leadership development of our membership.

HOURS OF OPERATION

BGCWCH will operate Monday through Friday during the following hours:

Regular School Days:	3:00 pm-7:00 pm
Early Release Days:	1:00 pm-7:00 pm
Teacher/Staff Development Days:	7:30 am-5:30 pm
Holiday/Spring/Winter Breaks:	7:30 am-5:30 pm
Summer Camp	7:30 am-5:30 pm

Dates and times of club operating hours are determined to best reflect the academic calendar of the Huntsville Independent School District.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES:

New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

****Note: Additional closures may occur based on special and/or unforeseen events. In the event of an unexpected closure, parents and/or guardians will be notified at least 48 hours in advance, where applicable. In case of inclement weather, BGCWCH will follow the Huntsville ISD open and closure schedule. Please listen to local news and radio stations and check the Boys & Girls Club Huntsville Facebook page.**

MEMBERSHIP

Membership at BGCWCH provides young people with a safe place to play, learn, and interact with other children and staff.

We also provide nutritionally balanced meals and snacks to youth daily. Parents of Club members are required to ensure their child(ren) arrive at the Club in weather-appropriate clothing.

Membership is open to youth regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin, who are in grades K to 12th AND registered and attending school. A membership application and parent orientation must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian each calendar year for both returning members and new members.

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The following steps are required to become a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County:

All forms can be completed and submitted online. The application process is two-part; registration is not complete until applications, orientation, fees, report cards, and age verification are ALL submitted.

1. Fill out the member application packet(s).
 - a. Membership Application & Expectation of Conduct MUST be filled in completely. Parents/guardians will need to complete the online Parent Orientation.
2. Contact your child's school to arrange HISD bus transportation to the Club before the deadline. This process usually takes 48 hours. Submit Club fees/dues, proof of age, and the member's most recent report card to the front desk.
 - a. Member information will be entered into the membership management database, to create a permanent record.
 - b. Due to the type of programming/services we provide, we request report cards for measurement and effect purposes. Report cards must be submitted at the end of each semester (December & May).

*Parent/guardians of current members MUST attend orientation each year to renew youth membership.

MEMBERSHIP AT THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A RIGHT. BOYS & GIRLS CLUB RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE MEMBERSHIP TO ANY CHILD AT ANY TIME, WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Our goal is to always keep the cost associated with Boys & Girls Club membership as low as possible so as not to exclude anyone based on economic circumstances. All membership dues will be used to process member documentation. Monthly activity fees are used for meals/snacks, program materials, tutoring, and/or life skills material, some off-premises field trips & transportation.

- Membership dues are: **\$45.00 per year**, regardless of what month of the year membership is paid.
- Monthly activity fee is: **\$45.00 per child**.

Summer program costs are paid by the month. We do not accept weekly payments or drop-ins; summer fees will also include the yearly membership cost.

The summer program is from late May to August of the current year. See the current year's summer application, BGCWCH website, or call the Clubhouse for specific dates and fees.

Membership & convenience fees are non-refundable. Our staff plans a month for programming based on registrations, and the planning includes having enough supplies, food, and staff to provide a good service. However, BGCWCH does recognize that unpreventable situations occur and will review requests for refunds on a case-by-case basis to be approved by the CEO only. Additionally, credit card convenience fees incurred from online payments may not always be refundable.

MEMBERSHIP FEE SCHOLARSHIPS

BGCWCH strives to serve youth regardless of their ability to pay the membership fees. If a youth's parent/guardian cannot afford the membership fee, a scholarship may be available on first come first serve due to limited funds. Please see the Site Director or the Director of Operations.

LATE PAYMENT FEES

Program activity fees are due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$1.00 will be added for every day after the 1st that payment has not been received. Late fees are to be paid separately from activity fees upon picking up that day.

LATE PICK-UP PROCESS/CONSEQUENCES

The hours of operation for the club are posted and communicated to each family at registration. As posted after-school programming and early release days close is at 7:00 pm, and the summer season, and HISD teacher preparation/staff development days close at 5:30 pm. It is understood that there are unforeseen circumstances that may arise, leading to an occasional delay. However, habitual late pick-ups inconvenience our staff as well as cause distress for your child, who becomes worried. If a parent/guardian anticipates arriving late, please telephone the Club immediately.

Late pick up infractions:

- 1st-Written Warning
- 2nd-Member(s) suspended 3 business days.
- 3rd-Member(s) suspended for 5 business days.
- 4th-Member(s) will be removed from programming.

Each member's case will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION

The privacy of Club members and their families is of the utmost importance to the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County. All membership forms and other documentation regarding Club members and their families will be kept in strict confidentiality and placed in individual member files. These records are stored in a locked file cabinet

at the club site, as well as a secure online recordkeeping system. Upon request, parents/guardians may have access to all records and reports maintained on their children.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

- **ALL YOUTH entering the club site building must be checked in**
 - Members verify attendance by being signed in at the front desk.
 - Member attendance will also be recorded within each program area as they rotate throughout the day.

TEXAS ACADEMIC INNOVATION & MENTORING (AIM) PROJECT ATTENDANCE

BGCWCH is a Texas ACE site, and students are required to be in regular attendance throughout the duration of the program.

BGCWCH, Sylvan Learning Centers, and HISD have partnered to help students make educational gains through mentoring and case management. To continue to yield outstanding results, attendance for the entire hour of programming is mandatory.

Youth are only allowed to miss two (2) days of programming during the 32 class days designated by TX AIM.

SAFETY & SECURITY

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY (SAFE)

The safety and well-being of the young people we serve is our number one priority. We have layers of safety policies and guidelines in place that we continuously improve and add to regularly. Before staff or volunteers provide services to youth, training on child abuse prevention/grooming, safety incidents, and reporting is mandatory. This policy is in alignment with the crisis response plan and critical incident reporting requirements of Boys & Girls Club of America. This also includes mandatory background checks and annual safety assessments.

We work every day to create a safe, fun environment so that kids can have every opportunity to be successful in life. You are encouraged to act if something is wrong. BGCWCH offers a confidential and toll-free hotline (1-866-601-SAFE (7233)) for parents to report safety violations.

In all Cases, during an emergency evacuation, persons needing assistance should be helped to the nearest exit by any Club staff. People needing assistance would include:

- Children (any staff assisting small children should either pick up the children or hold their hands until they reach a safe area)
- Non-English-speaking individuals
- Hearing or visually impaired and physically challenged individuals.

PRE-EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Annually, all employees shall receive training/orientation on the following emergency plans and evacuation drills that will be conducted once per month. An emergency evacuation plan exists, exits are marked, and evacuation routes are identified and posted in all areas and throughout the building. Evacuation routes are shown on floor plans with arrowed directions. Designated safety areas are identified in the building for shelter-in-place weather emergencies.

A site "code" is established to notify staff that an emergency exists without creating a panic situation among members or guests.

For all emergencies, a responsible staff member shall remain at the scene to see that the injured are protected

and that the area is cleared up by emergency personnel.

SHELTER IN PLACE:

All staff will be assigned designated shelter-in-place locations. Staff shall:

- Stay away from exterior doors and windows and go to the designated shelter area.
- Use a two-way radio to advise all staff of the emergency using the site-specific emergency code.
- Lead members promptly to designated shelter area(s)
- Staff must ensure all program areas and restrooms are cleared.
- Staff will take program binders/rosters to the designated shelter area.
- Staff will leave lights on and close the door upon exiting program rooms.
- Directors or other designated staff are responsible for conducting a final walkthrough of the club, checking closets or other hiding places, and making sure all doors are shut.
- The Front Desk Clerk will place a sign on the front entrance door indicating "Shelter In Place".
- NO one will go outside until advised and cleared to do so.
- Staff will lead children back into the program area when the hazard has cleared.

EVACUATION:

All staff will be instructed on how to evacuate the building and on the designated evacuation routes. Exits, hallways, and other evacuation routes will always be clear to permit prompt and safe exit from the building. The designated meeting location must be at least 1000 feet from the building. Staff shall:

- Use a two-way radio to advise all staff of the site-specific emergency code.
- Lead club members promptly out of the building using the closest and safest exit.
- Ensure that all spaces are cleared, including restrooms.
- Take program area binders to the evacuation area.
- Leave lights on and close doors upon exiting the room.
- Direct their assigned group of members to the site-specific designated evacuation area.
- Record attendance once all members have reached the designated evacuation area.
- Directors are responsible for conducting a final walkthrough of the club, checking closets or hiding places, including restrooms, and making sure all doors are closed.
- Staff will lead members back into the program area when and if Emergency Management determines it is safe.

WEAPONS:

Staff, members, volunteers, or guests possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted in the Club. A dangerous weapon includes, but is not limited to, a gun, knife, razor, karate stick, metal knuckle, or other object, the manner in which it is used or intended to be used is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Concealed and/or open carry is not allowed while on club premises. If any person is witnessed displaying a weapon in a threatening or hostile situation inside or outside the club, police will be called, and staff will:

- Immediately call the Police.
- Use a two-way radio to advise all staff of the site-specific emergency code.
- Assist in removing all members, guests, and volunteers from that area where the conflict is taking place and move them to a safer and more secure place and/or to the designated area(s).
- Wait for the police to determine when it is clear to exit the building.
- Proceed to the designated evacuation area and record attendance.

FIRE:

Routine drills are at least once per month from January to December. In the event of a fire inside or outside the club, staff shall:

- Notify via two-way radio of the site-specific emergency code.
- Immediately call the fire department.
- Make sure all members, guests, volunteers, and other staffers exit the building using the designated fire evacuation routes.
- Direct members to the designated evacuation area.
- Record member attendance.
- Not re-enter the building for any reason. Emergency Management and the CEO will advise staff and members when and if the building can be re-entered.

INJURY:

Some injuries may require emergency management to be called because the injury is deemed critical. There is a First Aid Kit and a Certified Defibrillator. BGCWCH staffers are certified in First Aid, CPR, and the on-site defibrillator. The staff will tend to minor injuries (i.e., scrapes, bee stings, small cuts, etc.) For more serious injuries, staff shall:

- Make sure the member remains calm and still.
- Not move the member unless in an extremely dangerous situation
- Radio front desk to advise of site-specific emergency code and call the ambulance.
- Assist in removing all members within proximity to other areas of the Club to avoid further injury.
- Allow Emergency personnel to take over once they arrive.

BOMB:

ALL BOMB THREATS are to be considered valid and taken seriously until proven otherwise.

No use of two-way radios or cellular phones because radio signals have the potential to detonate a bomb. Do not activate the fire alarm(s). Most bomb threats are received by phone and mostly electronically or via social media.

If the bomb threat is received by phone:

- Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.
- Listen carefully. Be polite and show interest.

- Try to keep the caller talking to learn more information.
- Obtain as many details as possible from the caller.
- If caller ID is available, record the number.
- Pay attention to the caller's voice (i.e., female/male, recorder, well-spoken, adult, child, accent, lisp, nasal, raspy, stutter, slurred) and background noises (i.e., animal sounds, house noises, music, static, office machinery, street noises)
- If possible, write a note to notify the Site Director to call 9-1-1 or call as soon as the caller hangs up.

If the bomb threat is received electronically or via social media:

- Notify the authorities, 9-1-1 immediately!
- If possible, screenshot and/or forward email to Site Director; do not exit page or refresh the page.

Suspicious packages such as packages wrapped excessively, strange color, strange odor, foreign postage, strange sounds, and/or unexpected delivery must be taken seriously and cautiously.

MISSING PERSON(S):

A member whose whereabouts are unknown to BGCWCH staff, whether at the Club or at an off-premises location, will be considered missing.

- Staff will notify the Site Director using the site-specific emergency code.
- All exits will be sealed and locked.
- Other YDP staffers will bring their group members to the gym area for a head count.
- The Site Director and (1) designated YDP will search all other areas in the building that the missing member may occupy and immediately begin to search the last known surrounding area of the child, as well as the exterior of the building.
- Director of Operations or CEO will be responsible for calling authorities and/or parent/guardian(s).
- A physical description, last known location, and photo of the missing member will be given to authorities if/when needed.

SPECIAL PLAN FOR CLOSING SITES

The designated Site Director and all full-time staff maintain a current roster of all site staff in order to communicate in an emergency. The decision to open or close a building will be made based on the specific

situation that exists, consistent with the plans established by the CEO. Criteria that determine if the program is open or closed are based on these conditions:

- There is no threat to individual lives.
- Operating conditions are safe and healthy.
- Staff and resources are adequate for serving the anticipated clientele.
- Official approval has been given by the appropriate authority.

SEVERE/INCLEMENT WEATHER

The CEO will determine whether to close the club due to adverse weather conditions. As a general guideline, BGCWCH will mimic the closures of Huntsville Independent School District during severe/inclement weather conditions. IF the decision is made when members are present at the club, staff must contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts to pick up members immediately. Staff must remain with members while maintaining the staff-to-member ratio until members are picked up. Please listen to the local news, radio, and TV station, and check the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County Facebook page for more info.

HEALTH EMERGENCIES

If your child is ill before leaving home or before arriving on the bus, please DO NOT bring him/her to the Club.

BGCWCH is not a day care facility; we are not fully equipped with an isolated area to treat and monitor ill members. In case of a health emergency that requires aid beyond simple First Aid, the Club will make arrangements so that proper care is provided until the parent/guardian can pick up the member. If a member becomes ill and needs to be picked up from the Club, he/she **must** be picked up within sixty (60) minutes after contact has been made with the parent/guardian.

No staff will be permitted to administer prescription and/or non-prescription medications at any time. If a health emergency becomes too critical, medical emergency authorities will be called to the Club by the Site Director, and parents/guardians will be notified via phone call.

As a provider of after-school program services to healthy children, BGCWCH will not permit children to come to the Club with any of the following illnesses or symptoms:

- Severe pain or discomfort;
- Acute diarrhea, characterized as twice the child's usual frequency of bowel movements with a change to a looser consistency within a period of 24 hours, or bloody diarrhea;
- Two or more episodes of acute vomiting within a period of 24 hours;
- Elevated oral temperature of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over, or axillary temperature of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or over in conjunction with behavior changes;
- Lethargy that is more than expected tiredness;
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin;
- Red eyes with discharge;
- Infected, untreated skin patches;
- Difficult, rapid breathing or severe coughing;
- Skin rashes in conjunction with fever or behavior changes;
- Weeping or bleeding skin lesions that have not been treated by a health care provider;
- Mouth sores with drooling; or
- Stiff neck.

Any member sent home because of the above symptoms will need to return to the Club with a written medical release from their health care provider. All documentation will be placed in the member's file.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND MEMBER ATTENDANCE

If any member shows evidence of having contracted a communicable disease as defined by a skin irritation or lesion that is designated as contagious to others and appearing as impetigo, chicken pox, measles, scabies, ringworm, head lice, pink eye, etc. Staff will isolate the member(s) in a designated area until a parent or guardian can pick up the child from the Club. Club staff are obligated to contact the Health Department, the child's parents, and the parents of any other children who may have been exposed to the infected child. A letter to ALL member parents or a posting at the Club is required when a communicable disease has been present at any Club location. Confidentiality of each Club member is to be maintained in all situations. The contagious member will not be allowed to return to active participation in Club activities until the member is examined by medical personnel and found to be free of contagious aspects of their affliction. A letter to this effect must be signed by a physician or registered nurse and placed in the permanent membership file of the member.

*BGCWCH may establish procedures for communicable diseases as needed.

SPECIAL HEALTH NEEDS

Parents should provide the Site Director with any information on a child's special health needs or conditions upon enrollment or upon the onset of the condition. The Site Director will place a copy of the information in the child's file and ensure that all staff who are responsible for the child's care are properly informed. This includes any allergies and/or health issues a Club member is diagnosed with, as well as the proper method of treatment (ex, asthma: treat with inhaler – child should administer him/herself)

OTHER DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

Parents whose children have dietary restrictions or special diets due to religious beliefs or other practices should submit documentation to the Club's Site Director. A special diet based on a medical condition may be served only upon written instructions of a child's physician and upon request of the parent. A copy of these restrictions will be placed in the child's individual file. All staff members having direct contact with the child shall be informed about the child's dietary restrictions, special diet, or food/other allergies.

AQUATIC SAFETY

Occasionally, BGCWCH youth may have the opportunity to utilize the community swimming pool or another off-site facility that is surrounded by water. Youth will also have the opportunity to participate in on-site water play days. Before granting access to the youth, the Site Director and/or Director of Operations will inspect the off-site location and evaluate their water safety protocols to ensure compliance with the recommended guidelines established by Boys & Girls Club of America for aquatic centers. It is crucial to understand that BGCWCH does not own or manage any aquatic facilities. Below are the definitions of all aquatic environments that will be referred to throughout this policy.

Pool- is any indoor or outdoor, small and rather deep body of usually fresh water

Lake- a large body of water surrounded by land

Water play area-any on-site water play, such as an inflatable water slide, sprinkler play, water balloon games, or other water play activity that takes place at the Clubhouse.

Land-based activity- describes youth members participating in, near, or on the shore of an aquatic facility or aquatic environment, but do not engage in water play or swimming activities.

Off-Site Locations with Lifeguards

The off-site pool will have two lifeguards on duty, both certified in CPR, First Aid, AED, Oxygen, and American Red Cross for Lifeguards, plus the active supervision of water safety-trained YDP staff. The community pool will be closed to the public while BGCWCH youth utilize the facilities. The staff/child ratio while using the off-site swimming pool will be 1:10.

Before using the facility and in addition to CPR/First Aid, AED training, YDP staff will also receive training in:

- Additional supervision responsibilities specific to the venue,
- Emergency procedures in the event of an injury or submersion incident,
- Procedures in the event of a missing participant,
- Supervision of children who are not actively swimming (and non-swimmer protections),
- Implementation and enforcement of the buddy system and
- American Red Cross training in:
 - General Water Safety
 - Water Safety Today
 - Basic Water Rescue

BGCWCH is committed to implementing proven prevention efforts to ensure that youth who utilize the community pool are safe. BGCWCH will use the Test. Mark. Protect. swimming assessment and wrist band marking system.

- **Test.** All youth who enter the aquatic area are subject to testing before entering the water. Lifeguards will administer the test to all youth to evaluate swimming competency. Any youth who does not pass or chooses not to take the test is treated as a non-swimmer.
- **Mark.** Upon completion of the swim test, the youth will be given a colored band. Green bands will be given to those who can fully complete the swim test. Yellow bands are given to swimmers who can stay in shallow water but may not cross the float rope. Red bands are for non-swimmers.
- **Protect.** Protect everyone. Float ropes will be used to restrict youth wearing yellow bands to the shallow end. Youth will be within arm's reach of a YDP staffer in the water. Youth wearing red bands will utilize the splash pad or kiddie pool areas only. All youth, regardless of wrist band color, will still be within arm's reach of a YDP staffer while in the water, utilizing the splash pad, and/or kiddie pool.

BGCWCH YDP staff will adhere to safety guidelines for non-swimmers, including but not limited to youth using US Coast Guard-approved (USCGA) life jackets/vests or other personal flotation devices (PFDs), youth staying in designated area(s), and conducting buddy checks.

Flotation Devices

Non-swimmers should wear a Type II OR III USCGA personal flotation device (PFD) for flotation. It provides safety while allowing the swimmer to become comfortable enough in the water to learn. It allows for the necessary horizontal arm and leg movements and is safe and reliable. Make sure it is labeled as "approved by the US Coast Guard"-that means it is impact tested.

PFDs should fit properly. When worn, it does not rise above your ears in the water or above your shoulders on land. PFDs should have the following characteristics:

Snug Fit-it should fit securely without being too tight or loose. There should be no excessive gaps between the PFD and the body.

Comfortable Movement-It should allow for free movement of arms and legs for swimming or maneuvering.

Proper Adjustment-Straps and buckles should be adjustable to maintain a secure fit.

Buoyancy-the PFD should not ride up or slip over the head when tested in the water.

Condition of PFDs

Parents/guardians will be responsible for checking the condition of youth PFDs before arriving at the Club. All PFDs must be in good condition. If not, they will not be allowed to be used for any water activities. To check if a PFD is in good condition, start by inspecting the material for any visible damage like rips, tears, or punctures. Ensure all buckles, zippers, and straps are functional and adjust properly for a secure fit. Check that the flotation foam is intact and hasn't become compressed or waterlogged, which can reduce buoyancy.

Commented [MS1]: The ratio at the pool might need to be smaller.

Commented [LW1R2]: What would this ratio need changing to?

Commented [LW1R3]: Ratio was changed to 1:10

Commented [LW1R4]: Definitions were added.

Commented [MS2]: Where would this training come from?

Commented [LW2R2]: YDP are required to take water safety training (which includes pool safety) courses thru Spillet. All YDP staff are up to date

Commented [MS3]: The city pool starts at 5 feet to 10 feet. So a yellow band member would need to meet or exceed the height of shallow end. If they are shorter they are only allowed on the non-swimmer area.

Commented [LW3R2]: Diane stated yellow band swimmers will only be allowed in the shallow end regardless of height, or they can utilize the splash pad or kiddie pool.

Commented [MS4]: Who provides the flotation devices or life jackets? I don't think the city pool does.

Commented [LW4R2]: Parents must provide US Coast Guard approved flotation devices. No pool noodles allowed.

Examine the label to confirm the PFD is USCGA and ensure it hasn't expired. Lastly, look for signs of mildew, dry rot, or any other wear from storage or sun exposure.

Types of Life Vests

Types I & V vests -provide the highest level of flotation. They are designed to turn an unconscious person onto their back in the water and are primarily used for restricted uses or activities like offshore boating, deep water, ocean environments, board sailing, or commercial whitewater rafting. These vests are not necessary for water play while at the Club.

BGCWCH suggests using the following USCGA types of life vests for off-site and on-site water play days.

Type II vest-classic preferred floating device used for calm, inland water where there is a chance of fast rescue. It is comfortable for recreational swimming, and most (not all) will turn an unconscious person face up in the water.

Type III vest- is used in calm water where there is a good chance for fast rescue. It is designed more for boating, but great for swimming and water parks. This vest will generally turn an unconscious person face up. Child-sized vests are usually a Type III for over 30 pounds.

Puddle Jumpers

Puddle jumpers are USCA for open water and encourage vertical movement instead of horizontal movement, making it difficult to float properly. Puddle jumpers should be used for youth who do not intend to go underwater but would like to be in the water (i.e., those youth using the kiddie pool).

Floaties, Arm Bands, Swim Rings, and Pool Noodles

These devices are NOT lifesaving and will NOT be allowed for use during on-site or off-site water activities at the Club. They do not keep youth afloat in the water and can be easily punctured and spontaneously deflate in water.

On-Site Water Days

During the program hours for on-site water days, the YDP staff will oversee the safety of attending youth. The water activities available will involve splashing and wading in a water play area, with a maximum water depth of 2 ft. or less.

Should the water become excessively dirty during its utilization or if any bodily fluids contaminate it, YDP staff will be accountable for draining the water, disinfecting the equipment, and refilling it with fresh water before its subsequent use.

The water in any inflatable water device, plastic pool/bucket, and water toys will be rinsed with fresh water and allowed to air dry, and any debris will be removed at the end of its use.

Sun Safety

All participants, including adults and youth, should limit their sun exposure whenever possible by wearing sun-protective clothing (e.g., wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, long sleeves, longer shorts) and broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen. Sunscreen of 30 SPF or more should be applied to all uncovered areas at least 15 minutes before going outside and then every two hours. No sunscreen is waterproof. Sunscreen should be reapplied after swimming or excessive sweating.

Hydration is also important for keeping the body temperature regulated. All participants should come to aquatic activities with a refillable water bottle.

Changing Areas and Restrooms

Youth are encouraged to arrive at the Club in appropriate swim attire with cover-ups. Cotton garments are not permitted in the water at the off-site pool location.

Club staff, volunteers, and youth will utilize their assigned restrooms, adhering to the BGCWCH restroom usage policy both on-site and off-site. Staff and volunteers are required to change clothes at the Club before heading to the off-site water location, while youth members will also change at the Club before and after aquatic activities. If necessary, youth may access off-site restrooms and changing facilities. The buddy system is recommended, and the Club will instruct youth members to report any inappropriate behavior among peers.

Emergency Response and Communication Plan

The approved off-site facility has implemented an emergency response and communication plan, which will be adhered to by the staff and youth of BGCWCH. In the event of water emergencies during the BGCWCH youth's presence at the facility, all YDP staff will receive training on the facility's emergency action and communication plan.

It is essential to comply with both the facility and BGCWCH rules regarding incident/accident forms and mandatory reporting policies. The Site Director or Director of Operations will be responsible for notifying the CEO immediately.

Club staff will have blank incident report forms, emergency contact and medical information for youth, and an appropriate communication device (e.g., cellphone or radio) on hand. Any injuries or illnesses that require minor first aid may be performed at the aquatic facility by Club staff or an on-site lifeguard who is not providing active supervision.

In the case of any water emergencies that occur on-site, the YDP staff will strictly follow the incident/accident protocol set by BGCWCH. A YDP staff member who is certified in CPR/First Aid will be assigned to supervise the youth while they participate in on-site water activities.

Inclement Weather and Natural Disasters

For any water or other outdoor activity, Club staff will plan and review the weather conditions and forecast. There are times when the Club may stay open and continue to operate, but water or other outdoor activities may be limited or cancelled for the health and safety of Club staff and members. This includes but is not limited to thunderstorms, high winds, or an Air Quality Index (AQI) between 150 and 300, indicating very poor air quality, which may impose a significant health risk.

Inclement weather may cause temporary or long-term activity changes. In temporary situations, such as a passing rainstorm, Club staff will determine if they should wait it out, delay departure, seek shelter, or return to the Club. Thunder and lightning storms, as well as long-term or larger disasters, should be avoided, and all staff and youth members should leave the area as safely and swiftly as possible.

PROHIBITION OF PRIVATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION POLICY

Boys & Girls Club of Walker County is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff, and volunteers. To further ensure their safety, the organization prohibits all one-on-one interactions between Club members and staff and volunteers (including board members). All staff and 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.
- Communicate with 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, a member, or a volunteer and a single member.
- Never transport one Club member at a time. This includes transportation in Club or leased vehicles.

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, 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 and 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 game 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.

Exceptions to policy

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

- When the emotional or physical safety of a member is at risk and private, one-on-one communication is deemed necessary by Club leadership.
- In emergencies 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 be made, the Club should have policies in place to monitor interactions, including but not limited to:

- Disclosing the meeting to Club leadership and regularly checking in with the members and adults 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, disclose the situation to another staff member before engaging in one-on-one interaction.

RATIOS & GROUP SIZES

Standards for staff/child ratios and group sizes are a way to ensure the safety, well-being, and development of children in BGCWCH after-school programs.

- Staff/child ratio is the number of children for whom each YSP staff member is responsible for supervising. Required staff/child ratios differ by age.
- Group size is the max number of children allowed to be in the care of a YDP or team of YDPs in a specific setting or area.

The overall staff/child ratio within program areas at the Club, as well as controlled areas where any BGCWCH youth are present, will be maintained at 1:20.

Various ratios will be established for tutoring groups, van/bus capacity, off-site field trips, on-site splashing/wading water activities (2 ft. of water or less), off-site swimming (2 ft. of water or more), and community events/activities.

Texas Alliance Groups	1:8	On-site Splashing/Wading Activities	1:20
Van Capacity	2:12	Off-site Swimming	2:20
HISD Bus Capacity	3:60		
Off-site Field Trips	2:20		

CHILD ABUSE POLICY, PROCEDURES & MANDATORY REPORTING

The Boys & Girls Club of Walker County is committed to protecting the safety of its members. As professionals working with children, BGCWCH staff are mandated by state law to report incidents of child abuse/neglect of members and/or any potential criminal matter. BGCWCH supports this mandate and requires all full/part-time staff, volunteers, and board members to follow applicable procedures when warranted. Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Child abuse/neglect must be reported **within 24 hours** of when it is discovered or suspected. All incidents of abuse or neglect will also be reported to the CEO and Boys & Girls Club of America **within 24 hours**. Written documentation is required regardless of validity.

The staff person identifying the situation must:

- Inform the Site Director (if unavailable, Director of Operations or CEO).
- DOCUMENT THE EVENT-Complete a Child Abuse and Reporting Form (incident report)
Include date, location, incident details, witnesses, contact information, all involved persons' names, and all notifications that were made (i.e., Family Services, Police, Parents, etc.).
- MAKE THE REPORT-There are two ways for reporting to the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.
 - Call the Abuse Hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free (1-800-252-5400)
 - From the internet browser, go to <https://txabusehotline.org>

BGCWCH is legally bound to report and investigate these issues. Once the allegations are reported, the Club will conduct an immediate investigation and notify the necessary parties of the Club's findings. BGCWCH has a zero-tolerance policy for illegal activities. Local law enforcement will be called if a child engages in illegal activities at the Club.

If any situation is discovered that has not been reported, the individual(s) involved are subject to disciplinary measures up to and including separation of employment.

RESTROOM POLICY & MONITORING

The Boys & Girls Club of Walker is committed to providing a safe environment and enforces the following restroom policy for members, staff, volunteers, and other adults.

Restrooms shall be regularly monitored in between youth use by designated staff at a schedule set by Club leadership. Monitoring includes walk-throughs, inspections, and/or cleaning set by Club leadership.

Staff shall:

- Only use designated adult restrooms. Should separate restrooms be unavailable, staff shall use restrooms at designated intervals to ensure they are not using restrooms at the same time as youth members.
- Limit the number of children and staff in restrooms. 1:2 staff to member ratio, when applicable
- Prohibit younger children and teens from utilizing the restrooms at the same time.
- Position themselves near restroom entries to maintain auditory supervision of space, if applicable
- Intervene and notify Club leadership should inappropriate conduct be observed.
- Ensure restrooms are regularly cleaned and sanitized.

Staff observing unacceptable restroom conditions shall:

- Immediately notify Club leadership.
- Complete a Repair Request Form and submit to Club leadership.
- Document, in writing, restroom conduct incidents and report them to Club leadership as soon as possible in compliance with the Club's Incident Reporting Policy.

SHARED-USE RESTROOMS

Staff members and volunteers will adhere to the shared-use restroom policy when Club members need to use restrooms off premises or in public areas.

Staff shall:

- On a field trip or when using a public restroom, never allow youth to enter the restroom alone unless it is a single-stall restroom that is empty.
- Shall follow the "rule of three" in using public restrooms, with at least two youths and an adult walking to the restrooms and three youths entering a multi-stall facility together. An adult will remain outside the restroom door to provide auditory surveillance.
- Whenever possible, monitor and clear public restrooms before use by members to ensure that the facility is free of adults – and clear of youth not involved in the Club program – before allowing youth to use the facilities. Alternatively, staff members will stand in the restroom doorway and/or hold the door at least partially open when supervising member(s) use of public restrooms. Staff may position themselves inside the restroom near the sinks if

positioning at the door is not feasible or is deemed ineffective.

- In a shared-use facility, Boys & Girls Clubs will utilize the best practice of shutting the exterior door to the restroom and using an "Occupied" sign outside of the door to alert others that they must wait until Club members have exited the restroom before they can enter.

TRANSPORTATION

BGCWCH will provide transportation for members participating in activities outside the building, such as field trips, special programs, etc. Parental permission slips will be required, and a member attendance roster will accompany the departing members. A duplicate of the attendance roster will remain at the Club.

If the Club is closed upon youth returning from a Club-sponsored trip (local or out-of-town) or activity, staff should ensure that transportation from the Club has been arranged.

When transporting youth members ages 12 and under, a minimum of three people (a combination of members and staff) must be on the bus/van at all times. Avoid a one-on-one staff-to-member ratio. This may necessitate making special arrangements (two staff members).

BGCWCH will consider the following to accommodate single children:

- Modify bus or van routes so single children are not 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.

CLUB CODE OF CONDUCT

BGCWCH has a simple code of conduct:

RESPECT THE CLUB; RESPECT YOURSELF; RESPECT OTHERS.

All Club rules are designed to provide a positive, safe, secure, respectful, and orderly environment. No illegal activities, acts, or behaviors of any kind will be tolerated. Authorities will be immediately notified!

The following acts are causes for immediate suspension:

- Possession of a weapon or an item which could cause bodily harm (PERMANENT SUSPENSION).
- Defacing or destruction of Club property.
- Theft of any other person's belongings, or of any Club property.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Below is a list of prohibited behaviors and general rules that parents/guardians should go over with their child(ren). There may be other rules that will be instituted, as needed. Failure to adhere to the rules could result in suspension or termination of membership.

Prohibited

- Violence against another member or Club staff; rudeness; roughness
- Cursing, use of racial slurs and/or signals; name-calling, bullying, or any other use of inappropriate language.
- Possession of drugs, alcohol, guns, knives, or any other weapon
- Display of gang paraphernalia, signs, or any action showing affiliation or activity
- Aggressive action or group demonstration that is disruptive and interferes with Club activities.

- Bullying on social media
- People entering or attending the Club under the influence of an illegal or banned substance.
- No vaping, smoking of any kind.
- No gum chewing.
- Persons caught stealing will be subject to suspension and/or prosecution. No exceptions!
- Fighting will lead to suspension. Members must keep their hands/feet to themselves.
- Members are not allowed to gamble under any circumstances.
- No sneakers with wheels or lights.

General

- All members should help keep the Club neat and clean.
- Members may not wear suggestive garments or inappropriate attire. Pants/shorts/skirts/tights must be worn on the hip, not sagging or around the buttocks.
- Members should always show respect and cooperation toward each other and the staff.
- Running is not allowed within the building, except in the gym.
- BGC is not responsible for stolen or lost items. No member's personal devices, toys, electronics, etc., are allowed.
- If a member has a problem, a question, or an injury, they should see a staff member immediately.
- Members use only the main door to enter and exit the building.
- Food and snack items are eaten in the designated area only.
- Public displays of affection are not allowed (i.e., kissing, hugging, holding hands, hitting, etc.).
- ALL visitors must sign in at the front desk.

DRESS CODE

We respect the individuality of all of our members and their choice of fashion; however, the following attire is **NOT PERMITTED** at the Club. Club members will not be allowed to enter the Club in the following attire:

- Tight-fitting and/or revealing clothing.
- Oversized clothing (including bell bottoms/extra wide leg pants that may pose a safety issue)
- Dirty clothing
- Hats, caps, hair rollers, scarves, do rags, bonnets, or any other headdress (except for religious purposes)
- Inappropriate advertising on clothing or shoes
- No house slippers
- No colored shoestrings.
- Visible tattoos
- Brands/Branding anywhere on the body.
- Earrings and/or other rings/piercings-**FEMALES** in any body part except ears; **MALES**-earrings or other rings in ear, nose, or other body part.

BULLYING & NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

We are committed to creating a Club setting where everyone is treated with dignity. To make this possible, we recognize that one of our most important responsibilities is to create and sustain a safe environment so our members can enjoy participating in our program. To achieve this goal, we must acknowledge that bullying can occur within our Club.

BULLYING

To clarify the definition of bullying and to help prevent it from occurring, we have outlined the following information:

- Both boys and girls can be bullies; BGCWCH will not tolerate an attitude of “boys will be boys” and “girls will be girls” to excuse social cruelty or physical harm.
- Bullying can be direct or indirect, blatant, or subtle. It involves an imbalance of power and repeated and intentional action.

- Bullying is any behavior considered physical aggression, social aggression, verbal aggression, written aggression, intimidation, sexual harassment, or racial/ethnic harassment.
- Bullying is cutting someone off from essential relationships.
- Bullying includes isolating the target by making this person feel rejected by his or her community.
- Bullying is malicious gossip and rumor spreading.

Bullying often occurs outside of the physical grounds of the Club, yet these actions impact the safety of our members as though they occurred at the Club site. Any bullying behavior demonstrated at the Club or outside of the Club that affects our Club community will be addressed by Club Management.

Examples of bullying outside the Club could be (but are not limited to) the following:

- Electronic communications that include physical threats and/or malicious gossip and slander.
- Hit lists or polls via e-mail or other methods of communication naming specific members and/or staff.
- Sending humiliating photographs to others
- Stealing passwords and misrepresenting oneself
- Changing other people’s personal profiles or creating fake profiles of others
- Hazing, or any ritual that degrades, humiliates, threatens, or physically hurts another person as a pretext for joining a team or other formal or informal group.

As an organization, we take any report of bullying seriously. Bullying will be responded to through a variety of consequences and interventions up to and including suspension from the Club, depending on the frequency and severity of the behavior. Any member who is suspended will not be permitted to return to the Club without a parent/member re-entry meeting with the Site Director.

All situations of bullying will result in a phone call to the parent/guardian, and possible consequences could be suspension or expulsion from participation in all Club activities. Membership is a privilege, not a right. If temporary or permanent expulsion becomes a likely outcome, BGCWCH will notify you. If your child(ren) is a target of bullying:

- Notify the Site Director so that the incident can be documented.
- The incident will be addressed as quickly as possible. Please allow us 48 business hours to respond. Please feel free to call us for a follow-up.

Please understand that we want all our members to feel safe, valued, and respected in our Club. These situations are hard for everyone—parents, Club staff, and members alike, but it is in these moments when we truly show what we stand for as a community. Working together, we can do our best to ensure that our Club is a safe and positive environment where great futures can start for every child.

NON-DISCRIMINATION PROTECTION POLICY

Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Walker County shall not be discriminated against based on age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, handicap or disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender, identity, and/or gender expression. A substantiated charge of harassment against another member or employee shall result in disciplinary action.

The report will be investigated, and even if determined not to be discrimination or abuse, the individual making the report will not be retaliated against. There will be no punishment for reporting problems, including membership revocation, suspension, harassment, or any other kind of discrimination.

There are several ways to make a report of suspected discrimination or abuse:

- Call our Administrative Office @ (936) 291-6054
- Send an email to info@walkercountykids.org
- Submit a report in writing.

Here's what we will do to investigate the report and follow up on our findings:

- Provide the person who is filing the report with a summary of our findings.
- Take steps to deal with the issue addressed.
- Take the next necessary steps (which may include law enforcement and contacting BGCA).

DISCIPLINE

BGCWCH strives to keep the consequences for unacceptable behavior clear, appropriate, and timely. Any member who disrupts programs or creates a dangerous situation will be disciplined appropriately. Members who do not follow rules can expect to lose privileges and are subject to the following consequences. Parents will be called to remove any member(s) who fails to curb his/her disruptive behavior and/or is behaving aggressively or violently that creates a dangerous situation for themselves, fellow members, staff, volunteers, and visitors. When a member is suspended, we will complete a written suspension report that we will give to the parent/guardian (or person picking up the member) in-person. Should you have any questions, please contact the Site Director and schedule a date and time to meet to discuss the incident concerning your child(ren).

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to the following:

- ❖ Verbal Counseling
- ❖ Suspension from the program area
- ❖ Loss of Club privileges
- ❖ Suspension from Club (1 day-2 weeks)
- ❖ Indefinite suspension (until the situation can be resolved)
- ❖ Expulsion (Permanent)
- ❖ Contacting the proper authorities (if necessary)

Members are expected to respond to discipline without incident. Staff members are trained and fully expected to adhere to the policies and procedures in place to maintain full control of any situation that occurs in their program area and will NOT tolerate anything that threatens that control. Parent support and involvement are vital to our success. Please contact the Site Director if you have any questions concerning disciplinary measures.

PROHIBITED FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

Actions that are aversive, cruel, or humiliating, and actions that may be psychological, emotional, or physically painful, discomfoting, dangerous, or potentially injurious are prohibited. Prohibited actions include:

- Spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment.
- Verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks about a child or the child's family.
- Physical restraint, binding/tying to restrict movement or enclosing in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box, or similar cubicle; and/or
- Withholding or forcing meals or snacks.

REACTING PHYSICALLY

Use of force as a response to violent behavior should be the last choice of action for staff. This should be done only when serious bodily harm can occur without physical intervention, or when separating individuals who are fighting. Staff who are physically assaulted should protect themselves as appropriate. Getting free of conflict should be the primary goal.

Again, if a weapon is involved, the recommended action is for staff to remove themselves and others from the range of the weapon and to involve police in the resolution of the situation.

If staff determines that it is necessary to forcibly remove an individual because that person refuses to leave voluntarily:

- Staff should immediately seek back-up from other staff, including the staff in charge.
- All members and others should be cleared of the area to isolate the individual.
- The police should be notified.
- The police, not staff, should remove a severely disruptive person who refuses to cooperate.

CONSEQUENCES TO STAFF FOR REACTING PHYSICALLY

In cases where a physical response is used, the designated Site Director will meet with the staff involved to review what occurred.

The incident will be fully documented, and a report will be submitted by the Site Director to the Director of Operations and the CEO. Because each situation is unique, consequences for staff can range from no action taken to disciplinary action up to and including termination, depending on the facts of the situation and the Club's personnel policies. The Club's primary concern is the safety of its members.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

"Restorative Practices can change behavior by challenging core beliefs, rather than simply managing behavior."

Restorative practices create a positive learning environment where members have the necessary skills to self-regulate their own behavior and recalibrate their learning experiences. Restorative practices have been found most effective when implemented as a whole club approach by aiming to:

- Develop emotional literacy, truth-telling, accountability, and responsibility.
- Improve- behavior, attendance, learning environment, and teaching
- Increase empathy, happiness, social, and communication skills.
- Reduce- bullying, exclusion, conflict, need for sanctions.

Restorative Practices are based on four key features:

- Respect- for everyone by openly receiving opinions and learning to value them.
- Responsibility- taking responsibility for one's own actions.
- Repair- developing the skills within a Club community so its individual members have the necessary skills to identify solutions that repair harm.
- Re-Integration- working through a structured, supportive process that resolves the issue and ensures behaviors are not repeated, allowing members to remain in mainstream education while also achieving all the above.

Restorative Practices:

- **Orientation of expectations is** presented to members regularly. Behavior expectations are established and stated positively.

- **Redirection** is used to promote desirable behaviors, reduce punishing interactions, and promote learning and exploration.
- **Verbal Check-In** is a courtesy provided to members, letting them know you are aware they are not meeting the expectations at that time, and re-evaluate the choices they are making.
- **Reflection Sheets & Restorative Reasoning** provide an opportunity for each member to be heard. This helps members tell the incident through their perspective, how it affected them, and helps them develop future actions and/or solutions.
- **Earned Privileges** occur when the member continues to be disruptive. Members will be removed from the activity for a short period of time. This allows the member to gain control of a difficult situation. Reflection Time can include activities that might lead the child to consider alternate behaviors.
- **Member Moments** occur when the member continues to demonstrate undesirable behavior and/or when a behavior is particularly dangerous to the member, staff, or others. Parents will be made aware, and members will be placed in specialized programs to promote positive behavior.
- **Restorative Council:** the Club Director, member, and parent(s)/guardian(s) meet when the member's behavior puts him/herself, staff, or other members in danger. At this time, parents/guardians will be made aware of all efforts made to redirect the member(s), and an Interval of Assessment will be recommended. If Restorative Councils occur regularly, referrals to alternative programs will occur.

PUNITIVE DISCIPLINE VS RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Punitive Discipline	Restorative Practice
Misbehavior breaks the rules.	Misbehavior is a violation of people and relationships.
The offender is accountable only to the Club Staff/Authorities	The offender is accountable to those harmed and the community
Accountability is equated with punishment, usually exclusion	Accountability is defined as taking responsibility and repairing the harm
Those harmed are peripheral to the process	Those harmed play a key role in response to wrongdoing
Offenders are defined by their deficits (the misbehavior)	Offenders have the capacity to take responsibility and change their behavior

Youth place significant attention on how they are treated. When punished, it is easy for them to fixate on the harm they experience rather than how their behavior may affect others. This focus on self leads to resentment towards the punisher, and resentment turns into resistance to participation in activities and disassociation and/or aggression towards others.

THROUGH RESTORATIVE PRACTICES, members will:

- Have an opportunity to be heard
- Understand the greater impact of one's actions
- Learn to take responsibility
- Repair the harm one's action may have caused
- Recognize one's role in maintaining a safe Club environment
- Recognize one's role as a positive contributing member of the Club and Community

MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

We will continue to follow our expectations outlined in the Parent Handbook, but members can easily remember our Member Expectations:

RESPECT THE CLUB; RESPECT YOURSELF; RESPECT OTHERS.

BEHAVIOR RECOGNITION AND REWARDS

Staff will promote, encourage, and acknowledge positive behavior within and around our Program Area. Staff will be keeping a record of members' behavior in the Member Assessment Report (MAR). The MAR is kept in the Member's File.

In addition, Staff may nominate members for formal recognition through local and national BGC Programming:

- Star of the Week
- Core Area Leaders
- Jr. Youth of the Month/ Youth of the Month
- Jr. Youth of the Year/ Youth of the Year

PROGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

If a member's behavior is not aligned with the Member Expectation, staff will take corrective action by following the BGCWCH Restorative Practices Continuum. Redirection, Verbal Check-In Reflection Sheets will be used, and all actions will be documented in the MAR and placed in the member's file. If the behavior does not change, staff should complete the Progressive Behavior Report (PBR) recommending Specialized Programming for the member, along with a Member Moment. The Director will review the PBR and meet with the member. The member's parent/guardian will be made aware through a parent call and given a copy of the PBR. A copy will also be placed in the member's file. BGCWCH will work directly with parent/guardian(s) who are listed on the standard membership application to respect our members' privacy.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES DOCUMENTATION

BGCWCH Staff will document all occurrences at the Club following the procedures below.

- Repeated Verbal Check-Ins are documented in MAR
- Reflection Sheet/Reasoning is documented on MAR. Group circles will be held so members can see and reflect on how their actions affect other members.
- Earned Privileges are documented on MAR, and the member will be considered for Specialized Programming.
- Member Moments is documented on the MAR, and parents will be made aware through a parent call, and a copy of the MAR will be provided.
- Restorative Council is held with the Club Director, Member, and Member's parent(s)/guardian(s). At this meeting, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be made aware of all previous actions taken and will be suggested an Interval of Assessment for the member to reflect on their actions and how to better handle the situation next time. If this is a repeated occurrence, the member will be removed from the program, and other resources for after-school care will be made available.

PROGRAMMING:

Affective Statements are expressions of personal feelings, both positive and negative. They are not intended to shame or vent personal stressors, but to develop empathy, establish boundaries, and provide authentic observations. Instead of criticizing or scolding the member, an effective YDP communicates how the student's behavior makes them feel.

Reflective Check-In takes place at the beginning of every program day. This will give members dedicated time to gain perspective on their day and how to better it. This also allows YDPs to gauge members' behavior/attitude for the day.

BGC Programming BGCWCH offers tested, proven, and nationally recognized programs in five CORE Program Areas that closely align with the development needs of all young people:

- Character and Leadership Development
 - Empowers youth to support and enhance their Club and community, sustain meaningful relationships with others, develop a positive self-image, participate in the democratic process, and respect their own and others' cultural identities.
- Education and Career Development
 - Enables youth to become proficient in basic educational disciplines, apply learning to everyday life, and embrace technology to achieve success in a career.

- Health and Life Skills
 - Develops young people's capacity to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals, and live successfully as self-sufficient adults.
- The Arts
 - Enables youth to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through knowledge and appreciation of the visual arts, crafts, performing arts, and creative writing.
- Sports, Fitness, and Recreation
 - Develops fitness, positive use of leisure time, skills for stress management, appreciation for the environment, and social skills. Youth have access to team sports and to the game room.
- Torch Club
 - The Torch Club is a group for members 9-13 years of age, and is similar to the Keystone Leadership Club, but on a less formal basis. Staff members provide direction and guidance to provide community service projects for the Club, school, and community.
- We also undertake specialized initiatives that cut across more than one program area and/or address the unique needs of special populations.

Group Circles will be utilized when a member's behavior affects the group. This will allow members to express their feelings and will also shed light on how their feelings and actions affect others.

Specialized Programs focus on social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making. Members will be placed in a Specialized Program to help the member(s) develop their awareness and make better decisions.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Members

A Technology Acceptable Use Policy defines appropriate use of computer equipment and the internet for both staff and members, as approved by the Board of Directors and signed by each staff member and placed in their membership file.

Responsible Computer Use Guidelines for Members

Boys & Girls Club of Walker County ("Club") computer network and internet access are available to members to enhance their educational experience and help them become literate in an increasingly technological world.

The purpose of this Technology Acceptable Use Policy is to foster the appropriate use of the network, email, and the internet. The following guidelines apply to all users whenever they access any of the Club's network connections.

Educational Purpose

The Club's network has been established for educational purposes, limited to classroom activities, school-to-career development, and scholastic research on appropriate subjects.

The Club's network has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. The Club has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material members access or post through the system. Members are expected to follow this Technology Acceptable Use Policy (as well as other Club rules and policies applicable to members) when in the Technology Center or accessing the network.

The Club's network is considered a limited forum, like a school, and, therefore, the Club reserves the right to regulate that forum for valid educational reasons. The Club will not restrict speech based on a disagreement with opinions you, the members, are expressing.

Youth should expect only limited privacy with the content of their personal files on the Clubs' network. This situation is like the rights youth have in the privacy of their locker at school.

The Club reserves the right to search for files if there is a reasonable suspicion youth violated this Technology Acceptable Use Policy, Club rules and policies, or the law.

Online Gaming Tips for Youth, Tweens, and Teens

All youth should know how to protect themselves and their personal information while playing online.

Take control.

- If another player is making the youth feel uncomfortable, the youth should tell a trusted adult. Remember that youth can always kick a player out of the game if they are making them uncomfortable.
- Youth should learn how to block and/or report another player if they are making them uncomfortable. Keep a record of what the other player said, but do not engage.
- Youth should use a disguise when playing with people they don't know or who aren't their good friends.
 - Use a safe game name.
 - Use an avatar instead of the webcam.
 - Use the voice-altering features if you have them. Otherwise, youth should avoid voice chat to protect their anonymity.

Keep a Clean Machine.

Gaming systems, computers, smartphones, and other web-enabled devices all need protection from viruses and malware. Parents should make sure their youth devices have the latest security software, web browsers, and operating systems to protect against online threats.

Protect Your Personal Information

Youth's personal information is any information that can be used to identify accounts. Examples include their name, address, phone numbers, usernames, passwords, pictures, birthday, vacation plans, and social security numbers.

Parents/guardians should:

- Secure accounts: Ask for protection beyond passwords.
- Make passwords long and strong: Combine capital and lowercase letters with numbers and symbols to create a more secure password. Youth should not share passwords with anyone other than their parents. Parents should know their children's passwords.
- Own your online presence: Parents should set the privacy and security settings on websites to appropriate comfort levels for information sharing of youth.

Be Web Wise

Youth should be open with their parents about what they're doing online.

Parents/guardians should stay informed of the latest internet developments and know what to do if something goes wrong.

Both parent/guardian and youth need to be wary of communications that implore them to act immediately, offer something that sounds too good to be true, or ask for personal information.

Do not accept downloads from strangers; this includes cheat programs that allow youth to perform better in games.

Be a Good Online Citizen

Maintain the same level of courtesy online that you would in the real world. What youth do online has the potential to affect everyone, at home and around the world. Practicing good online habits benefits the global digital community.

Unacceptable Uses and Personal Safety

Youth must not post personal contact information about themselves or other people. Personal contact information includes (but is not limited to) home, school, or work addresses; telephone numbers; and email addresses.

Youth must never agree to meet with someone they have met online without parent/guardian approval. A parent or guardian should always accompany the youth to such meetings.

Youth must promptly disclose to a Club staff member any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.

Youth are prohibited from all one-on-one contact with staff, volunteers, and board members. These interactions include technology-based interactions between youth and staff, volunteers, board members, and other youth during and after Club hours.

Illegal Activities

Youth must not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Club's network, or to any other computer system through the Club's network. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or accessing another person's files. These actions are illegal, even if only for "browsing."

Youth must not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses.

Youth must not use the Club's network to engage in any illegal act, including, but not limited to, arranging for the purchase or sale of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs; engaging in criminal activity; or threatening the safety of another person.

System Security

Youth are responsible for their individual user account and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no circumstances should youth provide their password to another person.

Youth must immediately notify a Club staff member if they have identified or witnessed a possible security problem.

Do not look for security problems, because this may be construed as an illegal attempt to gain access.

Inappropriate Use

Restrictions against inappropriate use apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on web pages. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored.

The following are not permitted:

- Sending or displaying unkind or offensive messages or pictures, pornography, or hate literature
- Using unkind or obscene language
- Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
- Intentionally damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws
- Using another person's password
- Trespassing into another person's folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources (i.e., distributing mass email messages, participating in chain letters, creating or participating in unauthorized newsgroups, and storing files on file servers without proper authorization)
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, political activities, or lobbying

- Installing additional software without prior approval
- Using portal or proxy websites
- Syncing personal devices to computers/tablets, Club networks, and/or other Club devices.

Violations may result in the loss of access, as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

Respect for Privacy

Youth must not re-post a message that was sent to you privately, without the permission of the person who sent the message.

You must not post private information about another person.

Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

You must not plagiarize any work that is found on the internet. Plagiarism is taking ideas, writing, or pictures of others and presenting them as your own. It is dishonorable and is prohibited from use at this facility.

Youth must respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when you reproduce a work that is protected by a copyright without authorization. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, youth should follow the expressed requirements. Copyright law can be confusing; therefore, if youth have any questions, please ask a teacher or Club staff member.

Disciplinary Actions

Members who violate the Technology Acceptable Use Policy may be denied future internet and/or network privileges for a defined period and may be subject to other disciplinary measures set forth by Club policies.

E-Gaming and Digital Gaming Policy

Boys & Girls Club of Walker County is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate environment that supports the academic success, character development, and overall well-being of all members. Electronic gaming (e-gaming), when offered, is implemented as a structured, supervised activity that aligns with the mission and core values of Boys & Girls Club of America.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents and guardians of the expectations, safeguards, and standards governing e-gaming activities at the Club. All gaming activities are designed to promote positive youth development, responsible technology use, teamwork, and digital citizenship while maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

Approved Games and Content

- All electronic games offered at the Club are **carefully selected, age-appropriate, and aligned with recognized content-rating systems** (such as Entertainment Software Rating Board [ESRB]).
- Games containing mature, violent, explicit, or otherwise inappropriate content are **not permitted**.
- Game selection is determined by Club leadership and trained staff and reflects the developmental level of the participating member(s).
- The Club reserves the right to approve, remove, or restrict games at any time to ensure safety and appropriateness.

Supervision and Monitoring

- All e-gaming activities are **fully supervised by trained Club staff**.
- Gaming sessions are monitored to ensure respectful behavior, appropriate communication, and adherence to Club rules.
- Online features such as chat, messaging, or multiplayer interactions are restricted, monitored, or disabled as necessary to protect member safety.
- The Club emphasizes responsible participation, positive sportsmanship, and constructive social interaction during all gaming activities.

Use of Club Equipment Only

- Members may participate in e-gaming activities **only using Club-owned equipment**, including consoles, computers, and accessories.
- **Personal devices are not permitted** for gaming or accessing games while at the Club. This includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, tablets, handheld gaming systems, and personal laptops.
- Members may not download, install, modify, or access unauthorized games, applications, or online platforms on Club equipment.

Alignment with Technology Acceptable Use Policy

- This e-Gaming Policy operates in conjunction with and is governed by the Club's **Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Members**.
- All expectations, rules, and disciplinary procedures outlined in the Technology Acceptable Use Policy apply fully to e-gaming activities.
- Failure to comply with this policy may result in loss of gaming privileges and/or further disciplinary action as outlined in Club policies.

Behavioral Expectations

- Members are expected to demonstrate respect, responsibility, and good sportsmanship during all gaming activities.
- Bullying, harassment, inappropriate language, misuse of technology, or unsafe behavior will not be tolerated.

Club staff may suspend or revoke gaming privileges if behavior does not align with Club values and expectations.

PARENT ROLE & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

The Club's purpose is to aid parents, as they play a vital role at the Club, and it is important that each parent be involved in the growth and development of their child(ren). In an effort to help ensure your child's development positively, we ask that you, as the parent/guardian, agree to the following:

- To make every effort to follow all BGCWCH program policies & procedures as expressed in this handbook. You understand that it is your responsibility to read and comprehend the policies set forth and to follow them to the best of your ability, and to ask questions regarding any policy and/or procedure that is not clear to you.
- To attend family events and round table discussions for further knowledge of club expectations, experiences, programming, and the ability to further educate yourself through our parent workshops. Attendance in these events is key to success in the club, school, and home for both child and parent.
- To strive to support the program in the way you communicate with the members, the staff, and other parents.
- To be courteous, use appropriate language, and refrain from making threats and taking actions towards any member (yours or others), staff, or other parent(s)/guardian(s) either at or near BGCWCH Clubs or at any BGCWCH Club functions/events.
- To not approach any member other than your own to obtain confirmation, clarification, or "their view" on BGCWCH Clubs-related issues, disputes, or disagreements between members. Such matters must be brought to the attention of the BGCWCH Club Director.
- Do not approach any staff member requesting confidential information regarding any member but your own.
- To understand there are NO REFUNDS or EXCHANGES on any membership fees. Understands that if a parent does not agree with the BGCWCH Parent Code of Conduct, BGCWCH reserves the right to dismiss all access to the club facility.

If a problem arises, please direct your concern to the Site Director or Director of Operations. If the problem is not resolved, you may request a meeting with the Chief Executive Director. Please call 936-291-6054.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS ON CHILD'S PROGRESS

BGCWCH parents, members, and guests receive and sign the parent handbook that includes BGCWCH's Rules and Regulations and Bullying. These policies clearly state that some violations may result in immediate suspension or termination of membership. In all but the most serious violations, however, staff will work with the member and his/her family to restore the child's good standing in the Club.

Parents also agree to ensure that their children abide by these rules. If a child breaks a rule, this violation will be documented and placed in the child's file. Depending on the severity of the infraction, parents will be contacted. In the case of children who are picked up by a relative, the Site Director will verbally inform the family member the same day that the violation occurs. More serious or repeated violations will also be conveyed via written notice. Parents are welcome to review their child's file **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. They can also meet with Club leadership regarding their child's behavioral or safety issues in order to develop a strategy for improvement.

PARENT COMMITTEE

BGCWCH needs qualified and enthusiastic volunteers. The Parent Committee is comprised of parents who want to contribute more to the BGCWCH by helping with the structure and impact of the programs in which all members participate. The committee is also involved with coordinating special events and fundraisers. The committee meets as advised by the Site Director. Parents who meet with the Site Director are instrumental in supporting the staff and must fill out a volunteer application and consent to a background check.

GUIDELINES ON STAFF/MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS

The essence of the Club's mission is to support young people as they develop and build values, skills, and self-esteem. Employees and volunteers are hired and/or selected to carry out that mission. They are expected to perform their job responsibilities at all times in a professional manner. Any employee who acts inappropriately in the presence of or toward a Club member, co-worker, or management is subject to discipline, up to and including immediate termination.

SPECIAL NOTICE:

*Please be aware that staff are **NOT** allowed outside contact with any member in our program. This includes but is not limited to babysitting, house sitting, email/phone/social media contact, personal transporting, etc. Any prior relationships staff may have with members and/or families must be disclosed on an Off-Hours Contact with Boys & Girls Clubs of Walker County Staff and Minors form and will be kept on file.*

LOST AND FOUND

We are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items brought from home. Please help us by labeling everything with your child's name and leaving valuables at home.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The Site Director should communicate with parents upon pick-up or drop-off regarding any pertinent information about the child's well-being.

STEPS TO FILE A COMPLAINT

1. Contact the Site Director and complete a parent complaint form. If it is not resolved, proceed to Step 2.
2. Contact the Director of Operations. If it is not resolved, proceed to Step 3.
3. Contact the BGCWCH Administrative Office at 936-291-6054 and schedule a date/time for a meeting with the CEO.
4. Allow 24-48 hours for a response from the CEO.

SAFE PASSAGES PROGRAM

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

One of the Club's primary concerns is the safety and well-being of the children we serve. Our pick-up procedures are designed to protect the children we serve.

Children will be released only to those people authorized on the BGCWCH Membership Application. When the child is picked up, the parent/guardian must sign out the child. Parents must notify the Club Director in writing of any changes regarding people to whom the child may be released, or if there are any variations in departure time.

Parents picking up their children must do so by closing time and complete the sign-out sheet. If parents or other designated people are late in picking up children, staff will remain with the child until they are picked up. Parents may be asked to withdraw their child(ren) after multiple late pick-ups. Staff is not responsible for the child's transportation to and from the program. If the child is not picked up at closing time, the local law enforcement or child protective services will be called.

RELEASE TO AUTHORIZED PARENT/GUARDIAN

Only BGCWCH provides a safe and secure environment for its club members. Club staff is responsible for ensuring members are picked up by only those adults who are authorized to pick up each member. Each member's parent/guardian is to fill out a form listing the individuals authorized to pick up their child each day. If applicable, a copy of any legal document(s) prohibiting certain individuals' access to the child will be kept in the file.

PARENT SAFE CODE

In the event an authorized parent/guardian is unable to pick up a member(s), the parent/guardian will need to call the Club and advise the front desk of the new person picking up the member(s). All parents/guardians will be required to state the parent's safe code to authorize the temporary change. BGCWCH suggests that parents/guardians do not disclose their parent safe code to ensure that any changes made to a member account are authorized by a legal parent/guardian and for the member's safety.

Each time a member is picked up from the Club by a new designated person(s), staff will check the adult's ID to ensure the child is leaving the Club with the authorized adult.

RELEASE TO PARENT/GUARDIAN WHO APPEARS IMPAIRED

If the parent or guardian who is picking up the child appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol, staff will contact another adult on the pick-up authorization form. The child will not be released to the parent under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The child will remain in staff care until the arrival of an authorized adult who is capable of taking responsibility for the child's release.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF WALKER COUNTY

Acknowledgement & Receipt of Parent Handbook

As we strive to provide a safe and high-quality experience for your child, we also seek the involvement of parents/guardians to help our members achieve their full potential. Please acknowledge that you have read, understand, and agree that all gaming activities are supervised, age-appropriate, and conducted using Club-owned equipment only. Participation in e-gaming is a privilege and may be restricted or revoked if my child does not follow club rules or behavioral expectations. Your signature acknowledges receipt of the handbook, as well as the rules, regulations, and expectations outlined for both the member and their family regarding:

- Membership Requirements and Safety & Security
- Health Emergencies
- Prohibition of One-on-One Contact & Child Abuse
- Code of Conduct & Bullying Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Technology Acceptable Use Policy & E-gaming/Digital Gaming Policy
- Parent Role & Family Engagement
- Safe Passages

Child(ren) Covered by This Policy

Please list all children for whom this consent applies:

1. Child Name: _____ Age: _____
2. Child Name: _____ Age: _____
3. Child Name: _____ Age: _____
4. Child Name: _____ Age: _____

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approved 1/2026