Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County

"To enable all young people,
especially those who need us most,
to reach their full potential as productive,
caring, responsible citizens."

- Mission Statement of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County

www.bgcofcc.org

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

Welcome

PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised on: March 12, 2024

Welcome to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County; providing a safe place to learn and grow! Students in our centers have the opportunity to develop ongoing relationships with caring adult professionals, receive life-enhancing programs and character development experiences.

We offer youth ages six to eighteen years old the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities. All of our Clubs are actively involved in promoting successful character development through the Youth Development Strategy. Our Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of youth by instilling:

- A Sense of Belonging – A setting where young people know they "fit" and are accepted.
- A Sense of Usefulness – The opportunity to do something of value for other people.
- A Sense of Power or Influence – A chance to be heard and to influence decisions.
- A Sense of Competence – The feeling there is something that each person can do well.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County offers before, after-school and summer programs for students ages 6 and up. The programs offer activities in the following five core areas:

- Character & Leadership
- Education & Career Development
- Health & Life Skills
- The Arts
- Sports, Fitness, and Recreation

Our quality programming is youth centered and is designed to enhance the education, social, emotional and physical well-being of all participants. All of our programs provide diverse activities that meet the interests of all youth.

Mission & History

The mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County has been helping school age children in Charlotte County since 1997. Over the past 27 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County has been working hard to make a strong presence in our community. The Club provides a safe, positive environment for kids to learn & grow.
Every child receives homework help, tutoring, fitness, arts, leadership & character development. They also receive health and life skills to help them reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County locations:

*Please contact the appropriate site to enroll your child or visit our website at **www.bgcofcc.org**

Revised on: March 12, 2024

❖ **Administrative Office**
21500 Gibralter Drive
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Executive Director:
Lynn Dorler**:** lynn@bgcofcc.org
Resource Development:
Natalie Ressel: nressel@bgcofcc.org
Maria Jenkins: mjenkins@bgcofcc.org

Hours: Mon-Friday
8:00am -5:00pm

❖ **Port Charlotte Club**
Family Services Center
21500 Gibralter Drive
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Club & Education Director:
Jenna George
Phone: 941.743.1507 ext. 5956
jgeorge@bgcofcc.org

School year: 3pm-6:30pm
Summer Camp: 8:00am-5:00pm

❖ **Englewood Club**
3385 South Access Rd
Englewood, FL 34224

Englewood Area Director:
Jessica Anderson
Phone: 941.875.5415
janderson@bgcofcc.org

School year: 3pm-6:30pm
Summer Camp: 8:00am-5:00pm

Parent Responsibilities

Parental involvement is a key role in providing quality programs and services. Open communication and positive relations between the parents and staff members are vital to ensure your child has a successful experience. The following are **MANDATORY** parental responsibilities for participation in our program:

- Keep the Club informed of any changes in contact information (home phone, cell, address, etc.). This is a ***very*** important safety issue. Also inform the club of any changes regarding emergency contacts or any other family dynamics/situations that could affect the youth while at the Club.
- You must join Remind to receive the most current updates from the club. This can be done through the app with a phone number or web based with email.
- A **valid picture ID** is required when checking your child out. It is vital that you or any other authorized person that is picking your child up understand this policy. We do this for the safety of the members. Any person failing to show proper identification will not be allowed to leave with any child. If you want to add/drop someone from your pick-up list; this MUST be done in person and put in writing.
    - We will not call your child to the front until you have been identified by our Staff.
- Monthly payments are due on the SECOND FRIDAY of each month. Money Order, and Debit/Credit Cards - **NO CASH OR CHECK.** Payments can be made over the phone by calling 941-743-1507.
    - Excessive past due fees can result in memberships suspended or revoked.
    - Scholarship information is available at the front desk.
- Please pick up your child on time during the dismissal hours of 6:00pm-6:30pm during the school year and 3:30-5:00pm during summer camp. If your child requires an early dismissal, we ask you to not send your child to the Club that day. If you know you are going to be late, even by a minute, please call the Club or send a message through Remind to make the staff aware of your situation.
    - If there is an emergency we understand, however, excessive lateness may affect your child's membership. Late fees are $1.00 per minute per child and are due upon arrival.
- If any person picking up a child appears to be under the influence of any drugs or alcohol, including medicinal marijuana, we have the right to refuse pick up.

- In the event that your child becomes sick our staff will contact you and notify you to pick up your child. We ask that you do this in a **timely** manner. We will only contact you if we feel it is in your child's best interest to go home. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy.

- Have your child leave all personal items at home. These items include, but are not limited to: electronic devices, toys, games, Pokémon cards, sports equipment, etc. We will not be held responsible for the loss, theft or damage of these items if brought to the Club**. Cell phones are prohibited and will be taken from student and returned to parent upon pick-up.** If you need to contact your child during program hours, please call the site directly.

- If school is closed for business or weather conditions the club will be closed as well.

- The Boys & Girls Club of Charlotte County has an Open Door Policy. PLEASE get to know the Unit Directors and the club staff. Our staff wants to make your child's experience at the Club as positive as possible and getting to know our parents and having your involvement is very helpful. We encourage your participation in programming, activities, and events.

- Please direct all questions concerning your child to the Unit Director.

Member's Responsibilities

The Club has three basic rules & procedures that every member must follow. These three rules will help to ensure the safety of all participants and will also contribute to creating a fun, positive and memorable experience at the Club. The three rules are:

- Be RESPECTFUL
- Be RESPONSIBLE
- Always be ready to LEARN and have FUN in doing so

The Club has a "Zero Tolerance" Policy for physical harm towards others and actions that risk the safety to self or others and bullying. Any such act will result in a suspension and/or expulsion from the program. Students **MUST** report instances of the above immediately to a staff/site supervisor so they can be handled appropriately.

Any verbal threats insinuating bodily harm with a weapon will be reported to the sheriff's office and will result in a suspension and/or expulsion from the program. Use or possession of weapons, any tobacco product, illegal drugs and/or alcohol, and sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in expulsion.

All Boys & Girls Club members are required to adhere to the same dress code as the Charlotte County Public Schools, please reference the following web address for specific details: www.yourcharlotteschools.net.

***If it's inappropriate for school……it's inappropriate for the club!

Sneaker/tennis style shoes (that tie or Velcro) are required to participate in physical activities at the club.

All Boys & Girls Club members are expected to actively participate in all scheduled programs and activities during club hours. These programs include SMART Programs, Healthy Habits, Triple Play, Etc. Continued refusal to participate in programming may affect club membership.

Discipline Procedures

Our staff works to prevent negative behavior by providing activities that are engaging, fun and foster positive moral values. In the event that a youth displays undesirable actions, staff has been directed to take the following logical consequences:

- You break it…You fix it.

- Verbal warning and/or time away.
- Loss of privilege(s).

If behavior is reoccurring the following will take place:

- Written referral administered and signed by member, parent, staff/Unit Director.
- Habitual referrals (2 or more) will result in a parent conference with Unit Director.
- If this occurs parents will be encouraged to provide steps to successfully implementing an accountability plan.
- If all the above measures are still not effective possible restrictions, suspension and expulsion may occur.

Rules, Waivers and Regulations

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is not liable for the loss of property or injury unless such loss or injury results directly from Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County negligence or the willful act of an employee of the organization.

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County has permission to authorize and obtain medical care in case of illness and injury when neither parent/guardian is available to grant permission for emergency treatment.

- Membership dues are not refundable at any time for any reason.

- Under the open-door policy, it is understood and agreed that all members may come and go, as they desire. Therefore, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County will not be held liable for your child leaving the building and or/grounds.

- I fully understand and agree to all of the conditions stated on this form and have counseled my child to conform to these rules and the authority of the employees of the organization.

- I understand that my child's membership may be suspended or cancelled any time, the sole decision resting in the judgment of the Director.

- The Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County has a no nit and no lice policy. If your child is found to have lice or nits, they will need to be picked up immediately and may not return until their head is clear of lice and nits.

- I understand that if the Boys & Girls Club staff contact me regarding my child being sick, hurt, or insubordinate that I will pick up my child immediately or make arrangements for them to be picked up.

- I understand that access to Boys & Girls Clubs' network and the internet are designed for educational purposes and the Boys & Girls Clubs have taken precautions to educate members on appropriate educational materials. However, it is understood that no matter how much supervision and monitoring that the Club can utilize, there will always be the possibility of my child coming in contact with inappropriate material, and I will not hold the Boys & Girls Clubs responsible for materials acquired on the network.

- I also understand that my child will not be allowed to use any instant messaging program or social networking site – examples (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Roblox, Etc.)

- I understand my child is required to promptly disclose to a Club Staff Member about any message they could receive that is inappropriate or may make them feel uncomfortable.

- I understand that I will be required to attend an orientation before my child can start attending the Boys & Girls Club. An orientation will be scheduled and the parent will be given the date and time. I understand that if I cannot make the orientation that my child cannot start attending the Club until another orientation is rescheduled and attended. This includes any member past or present.

- I understand that my child will participate in assessments including but not limited to: Surveys for outcome measurements, schools, household demographics, and customized surveys built for specific programs (i.e. SMART Moves, NYOI, etc.).

- I understand the Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County will maintain all member files in a confidential manner. I give permission for pertinent information (i.e. all academic information, report card information, state testing ie FCAT or tutorial information) may be shared professionally with the Boys & Girls Clubs staff member.

- I understand that all information that has been provided to me is subject to change. This includes, but is not limited to; schedule changes, dates of closure, and changes in hours of operation, etc.

Programs

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County teaches preventative programs, such as, SMART Families & Gang Prevention. These programs help young people resist the most immediate threat to their wellbeing: alcohol, gang involvement, tobacco and other drugs. The programs are designed to reduce member's vulnerability by giving them the tools they need to help themselves. We also teach several other youth development programs throughout the year to help the children. (Positive Action, Healthy Habits, Net Smartz, TOP®, Etc.

CLUB SAFETY

The number one priority of Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is the physical and emotional safety of its members, staff, and volunteers. Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County maintains a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse.

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.

Mandated Reporting

Every staff member or volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect must immediately report to Club leadership. Club leadership is responsible for reporting the incident immediately to the appropriate authorities according to statewide mandated reporting laws, as well as to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) within 24 hours via the critical incident system. **Club Employee(s) are required by law to immediately report the incident to the Florida Department of Children & Families Abuse hotline immediately. This report can be done by phone or online.**

Required Training

Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County conducts and reports through a BGCA-approved process the following training for all staff members and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with young people (at the intervals noted for each).

Before providing services to young people, and annually thereafter:

1. BGCA-approved child abuse prevention
2. BGCA-approved mandated reporting
3. BGCA-approved grooming prevention

Interactions

Every staff member and volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is required to maintain appropriate

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

Appropriate	Inappropriate
Side hugs Handshakes High-fives and hand slapping Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)	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
Positive reinforcement Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content) Encouragement Praise	Name calling Inappropriate jokes (adult-only content) Discussing sexual encounters or personal issues Secrets Profanity or derogatory remarks Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate youth

One-On-One Interaction Policy

Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte 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).

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.

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.

Supervision

Boys and Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is committed to providing a safe environment. All Club activities and program spaces shall always be under continuous supervision by sight or sound (for restroom supervision) by an appropriate adult staff (18 or over). To ensure appropriate supervision, staff, and volunteers:

- Must abide by the prohibition of private one-on-one interaction policy.
- Must abide by all the organization's disciplinary policies and procedures.
- Must ensure that at least one adult staff (18 and over) is present when supervising members.
- Must always maintain proper supervision ratios.
- Must be trained on appropriate supervision tactics and behavior patterns.
- Must ensure that all youth staff and volunteers are supervised by an adult (18 and over) staff member.
- Must immediately notify Club leadership and/or submit written reports detailing supervision issues, accidents, or critical incidents.
- Must never use electronic devices such as cell phones, PDAs or other communication devices while supervising members unless for Club purposes, as defined in the Acceptable Technology Use Policy

Background Checks

Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County is committed to selecting and retaining effective staff and volunteers to serve our youth. As part of the selection process and in accordance with state background check regulations, background checks and screening procedures are conducted in accordance with this policy.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County conducts criminal background checks of all employees, including minors; board volunteers and others who serve on a standing committee; and all other volunteers, including partners and minors, who have direct repetitive contact with minors.

Name-based & fingerprint-based record searches may be used in any combination, but the background check shall at a minimum:

- Verify the person's identity and legal aliases through verification of a social security number.
- Provide a national Sex Offender Registry search.
- Provide a comprehensive criminal search that includes a national search.
- Provide a comprehensive local criminal search that includes either a statewide or county level criminal search, depending on jurisdiction *(a current list of jurisdictions can be found at www.bgca.net/childsafety)*.
- Include any additional background check criteria required by organizational policies, funding or licensing agencies or required in the applicable jurisdiction, such as motor vehicle records, child abuse registry or credit checks.

Such checks will be conducted prior to employment and at regular intervals not to exceed twelve months.

All background check findings shall be considered when making employment or volunteer decisions, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Charlotte County will not employ potential staff or engage potential volunteers if such individual:

a. Refuses to consent to a criminal background check.
b. Makes a false statement in connection with such criminal background check.
c. Is registered, or is required to be registered, on a state or national sex offender registry.

d. Has been convicted of a felony consisting of:
    1. Murder
    2. Child abuse
    3. Domestic violence
    4. Abduction or human trafficking
    5. A crime involving rape or sexual assault
    6. Arson
    7. Weapons
    8. Physical assault or battery
    9. Drug possession, use or distribution in the last five years
e. Has been convicted of any misdemeanor or felony against children, including child pornography.