



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF TOPEKA**

HANDBOOK

Parent & Club Member Information and Resources



It is our pleasure to welcome you to Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka. Thank you for entrusting us with your child. Working together, we will make every effort to ensure your child, as a member of our Club, is safe and secure and that his/her experience is a positive one.



July 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka. Our purpose is to inspire and empower Club youth to achieve success and to nurture young people's self-esteem by instilling in them a sense of belonging, usefulness, influence and competence. We assure positive developmental experiences through five key elements for positive youth development:

- 1) Providing a safe, positive environment
- 2) Fun
- 3) Supportive Relationships
- 4) Opportunities and Expectations
- 5) Recognition

In addition, we offer targeted programs in three key youth outcome areas:

- 1) Academic Success – our vision is that every member progresses to the next grade level on time and graduates with a plan a place for the future
- 2) Good Character & Citizenship - to inspire a generation of civically engaged youth who balance self-concern with concern for others
- 3) Healthy Lifestyles – empowering youth to make healthful choices

It is our commitment to do everything possible to ensure youth have opportunities outside of school and home that promote healthy development and enable them to be successful adults.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn McWilliams", written over a horizontal line.

Dawn McWilliams
Chief Executive Officer



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

We accomplish our mission by:

- Providing opportunities in the following core areas: Character & Leadership Development, Health & Life Skills, Education, Technology, Career Development, Sports, Fitness & Recreation, and the Arts.
- Utilizing a team of positive, caring, committed staff and volunteers.
- Establishing services in locations that are safe, affordable and accessible.
- Providing support for families in the development of their youth.
- Enhancing core services by partnering with other organizations.
- Ensuring program activities meet established outcome measures through ongoing evaluation and modification.
- Utilizing our Youth Development Strategy – each child should have a Sense of Belonging, Usefulness, Competence, and Power/Influence.



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OUR FOCUS AREAS

Academic Success

Tools and skills to help your child do well in school and graduate high school

Good Character & Citizenship

Tools and skills to help your child grow as a person and give back to those around him/her

Healthy Lifestyles

Tools and skills to help your child live a longer and healthier life

THE CLUB GIVES MEMBERS...

A safe place with programs to help children learn and grow

Relationships with caring adult staff

Hope and opportunity

A sense of **Competence**:

We want to give members the skills to feel ready for anything.

A sense of **Belonging**:

We want members to feel they always have a place to fit in at their Club.

A sense of Power and **Influence**:

We will listen to what our members have to say and ask their opinions whenever possible.



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Club Membership to Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka is open to any child, regardless of sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or any other protected status who meets the following criteria:

- Children must be currently enrolled in or have completed Kindergarten to enroll at Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka.
- To attend our Teen Center location, members should be enrolled and attending 6th-12th grade
- Completed enrollment packet
- Membership fees paid
- Completed consent to treat (green) form.

MEMBERS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka is excited to have your child at the Club. For us to best serve your child with any emotional, physical, psychological or behavioral needs, please indicate on your member application and fully describe any unique requirements of your member. Club facilities are accessible for most youth and additional accommodations may be made as needed.

Please call the Club if you have questions regarding children with special needs. We will make every attempt to serve members who have emotional, physical, psychological or behavioral needs. Though we are not a special needs facility, we will do our best to help all members have a positive and successful experience. Please note that we are unable to provide one on one support.



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HOURS OF OPERATION

Administrative Office hours are from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday - Friday. The administrative office and Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka will be closed on the following holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

All sites will be closed for staff training and program preparation for a period of time at the beginning and end of summer programming. We will also be closed one Friday each quarter of the academic year for staff development.

Adams Club 3:30 pm - 7:00 pm

North Area Units 7:00 am - 9:00 am
USD 345 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

West Area Units 7:00 am - 9:00 am
USD 437 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Tecumseh Area Units 7:00 am - 9:00 am
USD 450 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

School Day Out Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm

*On school days out we consolidate sites to aid in staffing. Locations for school days out are as follows: Logan, Tecumseh North and Adams.

Summer Hours: 7:00 am - 6:00 pm, Monday - Friday



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INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of school closures due to inclement weather, Club locations may be open, delayed or closed. The decision to close locations is largely dependent upon staff safety. Any changes to normal programming hours will be communicated to parents via email as early as possible.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Anything of value should be left at home. Cash, toys, cell phones, video games, gaming devices, iPods, jewelry, tablets, weapons, or anything that looks like a weapon, trading cards, or any other item that would upset the member if it was lost, broken, or stolen should be left at home. We will not be held responsible for the loss, theft, or damage to any items if they are brought to the Club and/or on field trips.

We will not provide reimbursements for any lost, stolen, or damaged items that are brought to the Club and/or on field trips.

NOT ALLOWED ON BOYS & GIRLS CLUB PROPERTY

- Gum
- Rags, drawings, signs and conversation related to gang activity
- Tobacco products, alcohol, drugs or drug paraphernalia
- Weapons, or anything that looks like a weapon



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ELECTRONICS POLICY

Members are not permitted to use electronics, which include personal video games, phones or tablets, while at the Club. No pictures or video should be taken at the Club. Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY OR ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill (vomiting, accident, fever, etc.) at Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka, he/she will be comforted away from program areas. Parents/Guardians will be notified and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible.

In the event of a medical emergency or accident, staff (after attending to the child) will attempt to contact parents or legal guardians. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, staff will take whatever emergency medical measures necessary for the care and protection of the child. By signing the Permission for Medical Treatment form you are giving Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka staff authorization to take emergency medical measures.

If your child should receive a minor injury, they will be given first aid and you will be notified at pick up.

HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

If your child has a known medical condition (asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, food allergy, etc.), we need to be informed. Please identify the medical condition and/or medication on the enrollment form in the applicable areas. If your child takes medication or has a specific need, you will be required to have your child's physician fill out an Individualized Care Plan. The plan outlines what should be done if a problem should occur during program hours.



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Please make sure that any medication is available and that the appropriate information has been provided to us in writing, with instructions for us to follow in the event of emergency.

USE OF MEDICATION

Medicine must be kept at the Club in a secure area – members are not allowed to keep their own medications, except in medically necessary circumstances.

The Club cannot administer any medication to any member, except in life-threatening situations. Members requiring medication during Club hours must self-administer medicine in the presence of staff. Member must be able to read the instructions for the medication as well as dispense and take the correct dose. Further, the member must have previously taken at least one dose of the medicine away from the Club to help ensure that no unexpected reactions to medicine will occur at the Club. Club staff must be thoroughly apprised of any possible reactions to, and the storage needs of, the medicine. To ensure this process occurs, a meeting must be arranged with the Club Director before any medicines are brought to the Club.

Additionally, a member must present a physician's order for us to file on all medications. All medication must be delivered to the Club Director in the original packaging or prescription bottle. **This includes non-prescription medicine such as Tylenol.** Prescription medication must be in its original container, with current label, and physician's instructions for administration. Any medication or medication containers not collected by parent/guardian will be thrown out upon expiration or membership lapse.



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CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka is licensed by KDHE. All staff receive training on the prevention and identification of child abuse. As per state law, all staff are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Families.

DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka operates as a licensed Drop-in Program for school age children and youth. According to state regulations, this means that a child may come and go at his or her own volition. Parents and guardians must select one of two options on the enrollment applications. The first option states, "My child is free to come and go at his or her own volition from Club program and activities." The second option states that "Based on the individual needs of my child, I request that my child not leave the Club premises or Club activity without my permission. I or another authorized person will pick up my child from Club programs.

Members must enter the building and check in at the designated check in station, where the information will be recorded in our membership management system. After signing in, members will go to the designated area to join their group.

Members will remain with their group until pick up. Adults documented on the enrollment form must come into the building for member check-out. If you arrive before the bus to pick up your child, they must still enter the building to check in before they leave with you. Please do not call to request your child to get ready for pick up or to meet you in the parking lot.



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Safety is our number one priority at Boys & Girls Club and Club members will not be permitted to leave the Club unless the parent/guardian has authorized in the enrollment form that the Club member can leave the Club on their own volition.

Only authorized adults may pick up members and they will be required to show a photo ID.

Even as staff gets to know authorized adults, we will run random ID checks on all persons picking up members. To ensure the safety of our members, persons dropping off and picking up children are asked to park in a designated parking spot and come into the building to pick up their child. Please do not stop or park in front of the ramp, behind parked cars, or in the travel lane for traffic.

It is Club Policy that members be picked up on or before Club closure time. If a caretaker arrives after Club closure they may be subject to a late fee of \$1.00 (per member) for every minute after the Club closure time.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Membership in the Club is a privilege, and the focus of our programs is impacting our members' lives in a positive manner. Members of Boys & Girls Clubs have high standards for their behavior. Acceptable behavior is defined by the following:

- Respect for themselves
- Respect for others
- Respect for staff
- Respect for Boys & Girls Club



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While our primary focus in working with members is to acknowledge positive behavior, at times consequences are necessary. As often as possible, Club staff will attempt to use the following methods before resorting to a more formal disciplinary procedure:

- Reminding members that certain behavior is inappropriate and using redirection toward positive activities
- Using preventative management techniques and encouraging self-discipline
- Stressing positive behaviors
- Providing an enriching environment to diminish disruptive behavior
- Offering a selection of interesting activities and giving choices
- Changing environments (i.e. removal from program) before behaviors escalate
- Facilitating the settlement of disputes versus intervening
- Letting children experience the consequences of their actions when appropriate
- Establishing mutual respect

We ask parent/guardians to please let us know if anything exceptional or unusual is happening at home or in other aspects of the child's life. Having this information will help us when working with your child(ren).

Occasionally, misbehavior is so severe or repetitive that additional steps must be taken. In these cases, a progressive discipline policy will be implemented. When this occurs, the Club staff will select an appropriate level of



discipline. Those levels include the following:

Verbal Redirection - Club staff will ask the member to choose a different behavior and give them logical consequences for failure to comply. (i.e. apology, sitting out for a period of time, leaving the area, etc.)

Think Time - Required time away from the group to reflect on how positive choices could have changed outcomes, also time to refocus and regain self-control.

Written Warning - Member's behavior is formally documented and parents/guardians are notified of the member's behavior. Written warnings are given to ensure parents/guardians know that continued behavioral issues may result in future suspension.

Suspension - Member is removed from Club programs for 1 or more days. The Club may also include certain requirements for a member to return to the Club. There will *not* be a refund of fees due to suspensions.

Suspension/Termination of Membership - May result in response to continued inappropriate behavior. The Club Director and any member of the Senior Management Team are the only staff persons authorized to suspend members. (Parents will be notified by phone call and/or conference when the child is picked up). In this instance, no refund of fees will be given.

Actions that may result in suspension and/or termination are listed below but are not limited to:

- Violent behavior that may endanger other Club members or staff



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- Striking a staff member in any way
- Excessive or abusive language
- Not complying with the Club rules
- Bringing a weapon into the Club or onto Club property
- Fighting
- Theft
- Vandalism or abuse to building, property, or equipment
- Bullying or harassing of another member
- Excessive arguing
- Anything in the form of sexual misconduct
- Bringing illegal drugs/alcohol into the Club
- Attending the Club while under the influence of an illegal drug and/or alcohol
- Excessive continual suspensions could lead to termination of membership

Any level of disciplinary action may occur on the first offense or any subsequent offense depending upon the nature of the situation and the age/maturity of the member involved. Each member shall be informed of the offense and shall be afforded an opportunity to explain his/her behavior before disciplinary action is taken.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka is funded through a variety of sources including individual donations, grants and membership fees. The fee structure for each location is largely influenced by the type and amount of grant money that is available to off-set costs incurred at each site. The collection of membership fees is critical to keeping costs low for families. Please contact the Membership Coordinator at membership@bgctopeka.org or (785) 234-5601 for additional information regarding membership fees.



BUS POLICIES

Riding on the Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka's buses is a privilege. We strive to make safety our number one priority and transporting your precious cargo – our Club members – is no different. The main goal of any of our drivers is to transport Club members to their destinations safely. Each time a member does something that requires the driver's attention, time is being spent with his/her eyes not on the road. This could be a Club member being too loud or distracting, not sitting properly, demonstrating bullying behavior, using inappropriate language, etc. Depending on the severity of the action, or the number of times a member requires redirection, a bus misconduct notice will occur in conjunction with the consequences listed below.

First write-up: Verbal warning or a 3-day suspension from the bus

Second write-up: 3-5-day suspension from the bus

Third write-up: 5-10-day suspension from the bus

Fourth write-up: 1-month suspension from the bus

Fifth write-up: Member will be suspended for the remainder of the summer session or school semester

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka will reserve the right to issue a higher consequence depending on the action of the member involved. Please support us in helping our members to be safe on the bus and assist the drivers in all efforts to provide a positive atmosphere while riding.

RULES FOR RIDING THE BUS SAFELY

- Take your seat promptly and sit properly, facing forward at all times.



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- Place bags under your seat or on your lap.
- Keep the aisle of the bus clear at all times.
- Always keep your head, hands and arms inside the bus.
- Throwing objects inside or outside of the bus is not permitted.
- Talk quietly; the driver needs to concentrate to safely drive the bus. Fighting, shouting, or use of obscene language is not permitted.
- Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad crossing.
- Participate in all bus evacuation procedures.
- Dangerous, disturbing, or annoying objects are not permitted on the bus.
- Eating and drinking (this includes chewing gum) is not allowed on buses at any time.
- Always follow the bus driver's and BGCT staff instructions.

RULES FOR LEAVING THE BUS SAFELY

- Remain in the seat until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- When you leave the bus, hold the handrail.
- If everyone is getting off the bus, the people at the front leave first. Do not push.
- If you drop something near the bus, do not pick it up. Tell an adult.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU AS A PARENT/GUARDIAN

Club staff will use training and support to act in a manner that helps to de-escalate members' behavior. This will be done in a manner that is mindful of the individual, responsive to the specific situation, and done with respect, care, and concern



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for the child. Staff will interact with parents/guardians in the same regard. As a parent/guardian, it is expected that conflicts/challenges/concerns are addressed with Club staff in a manner that is mutually respectful. Staff will not be yelled at, threatened, or demeaned by parents/guardians. Every effort to reach an agreement should be done with reasonable attempts made from both sides (staff and family). In the event that this does not happen, parents/guardians will be addressed via the Senior Management Team regarding resolution to the problem.

The Club is frequently confronted with conflicting requests from the parents of our members – parents who may be separated or divorced, parents may argue about who is to deliver or pick up the child, parents may demand that the Club prohibit one or the other from taking the child.

It is our policy to deliver the child to either parent, guardian, or authorized caregiver unless a court order regarding the subject is presented to the Club directing us to act in a specific manner. In addition, the Club will not disclose attendance information contained on our membership tracking system without an order from an appropriate court requiring us to do so.

STAFF TO MEMBER RATIO AND TRAINING

All Club activities are under continuous adult supervision with an appropriate ratio of adult staff or volunteer –to– members. The ratio complies with Boys & Girls Clubs of America best practices:

Instructional:	1 adult to 20 youth
Drop-In:	1 adult to 25 youth
Group Clubs:	1 adult to 15 youth
Teams:	1 adult to 15 youth
Day camp:	1 adult to 10 youth



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Day trips:	1 adult to 8 youth
Swimming:	1 spotter to 10 swimmers
Overnight:	1 adult to 6 youth <i>(min of 2 adults present)</i>

Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka prides itself on being a safe place for kids. Our staff and volunteers receive a very thorough orientation and training process in the following areas:

- Appropriate interactions between adults and members
- Safe supervision of Club activities
- Reporting accidents and incidents
- Emergency response procedures for CPR/First AID
- Crisis Prevention Institute-Nonviolent Crisis Interventions
- Abuse and Neglect awareness and reporting
- Professionalism

Thank you for the opportunity to share in your child's life!

All Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka sites are licensed by KDHE and chartered by Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Visit our website and social media pages for additional information:

www.bgctopeka.org



@bgctopeka



@bgctopeka



@BGCofTopeka