

# BGCPDA CHILD SAFETY POLICY



## **AT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE PEE DEE AREA, CHILD SAFETY IS JOB NO. 1**

The Safety and Well-being of Young People is Our Number One Priority: We work every day to create a safe, fun environment so kids can have every opportunity to be successful in life. We have ZERO tolerance for inappropriate behavior of any kind, including child sexual abuse or misconduct, and we provide significant resources to ensure this priority is achieved.

**Culture of Safety:** BGCPDA continually updates robust safety policies, programs and training for our staff and volunteers. These policies are designed to promote child safety and protect young people from threats that are present in our society.

**Safety Policies:** BGCPDA has comprehensive safety policies in place that protect youth including, but not limited to, supervision, transportation, communication, and prohibition of one-on-one contact with anyone under the age of 18.

**24-hour Toll-Free Child Safety Hotline:** We require all staff, members and families to report any incident or situation they feel is unsafe. Through our national partnership with Presidium, one of the nation's leading safety experts, BGCPDA members and staff have access to a confidential 24-hour, toll-free Child Safety Hotline, 866-607-SAFE (7233) or email [SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com](mailto:SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com).

**Mandatory Background & Drug Testing Checks:** We conduct criminal background checks pre-employment and every 12 months of all employees, as well as all volunteers who have direct, repetitive contact with children, through national and South Carolina background check avenues. Our background checks must also meet Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) membership requirements. In addition, BGCPDA is a "drug free" workplace. All employees and volunteers are subject to random drug testing.

**Club Visitors:** To ensure the safety and well-being of our Clubs, staff, volunteers, and visitors must check in with the Club's front desk personnel upon entry.

**Safe Passage Policy:** BGCPDA requires all members to check in and out each day with the Club's front desk personnel. In addition, members may not leave the Club unescorted unless they have included in their membership application written parent/guardian consent.

**Required Immediate Reporting:** BGCPDA staff and volunteers are all mandated reporters. We are required to report any critical incident/safety concern to local authorities immediately. We are also required to report any critical incident to Boys & Girls Clubs of America within 24 hours.

**Mandatory Annual Safety Assessments:** We conduct a safety assessment each year to ensure we continually make improvements to safety at our Clubs.

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**Safety Trainings:** Ongoing training and supervision of staff is critical. We participate in a wide variety of child safety trainings each year. We also engage leading third-party safety experts to provide guidance for our policies and procedures.

**Safety Committee:** BGCPDA has a dedicated safety committee to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies.

**State and Local Laws:** We comply with federal, state and local safety laws, including those impacting facilities and vehicles.

**Safety Partnerships:** Locally, we partner with local law enforcement agencies where our Clubs are located, as well as 3rd party Safety Consultants and various outside agencies committed to the protection of our youth.

Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America works with leading experts in the areas of safety, security and technology to develop state-of-the-art solutions for Clubs. Partners include:

National Child Safety Advisory Task Force, made up of leading experts and organizations

Blue Ribbon Task Force comprised of local Club leaders charged with providing input on the safety direction and key safety initiatives.

Mental Health First Aid, a national program that teaches skills to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse.

Crisis Text Line, a confidential text message service for youth in times of crisis.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America advocated for the passage of the U.S. PROTECT Act, which improved background screening systems and access. The national organization has also partnered with the FBI, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Centers for Disease Control to contribute to the development of safety practices that benefit ALL youth-serving organizations.

America's young people deserve nothing less than our constant focus on their safety and our firm commitment to protect every child who is entrusted to our care at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Pee Dee Area. To learn more about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Child Safety page at <https://www.bgca.org/about-us/child-safety>.