

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF METRO ATLANTA

Parent Handbook
2018-2019

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Mission, Vision & Core Values:

At BGCMA, our mission is to save and change the lives of kids and teens, especially those who need us most, by providing a safe, positive and engaging environment and programs that prepare and inspire them to achieve Great Futures. Our vision is to ensure that 90% of the youth who come to our Clubs 3 days or more each week will graduate from high school on time with a plan for their future, adopt healthy lifestyle, and give back to their community.

Six core values guide the work of BGCMA:

Kids First | Integrity Always | Embrace Diversity | Think Big | Be Courageous | Deliver Excellence

What is the Boys & Girls Club?

We are a youth development agency that provides safe environment for kids through a positive and engaging program that prepares and inspires youth to achieve Great Futures. We work alongside parents/guardians to help youth get college & career ready, live healthy, and become leaders.

BGCMA:

- Provides both After-School and Summer Camp programs for youth ages 6-18
- Has full-time professional leadership, supplemented by part time support staff and volunteers
- Does not turn families away for the inability to pay
- Is for youth of all races, religions, and ethnic cultures
- Is building-centered
- Is non-sectarian
- Is a drop-in facility which operates under a Safe Passage Policy
- Operates in a large group supervision format
- Offers a variety of programs and activities to engage youth
- Is guidance-oriented
- Uses a Positive Discipline Strategy

Statement of Policy

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta makes no discrimination in admissions or determination of enrollment on the basis of race, sex, religion, creed, national origin, sexual preference or any other protected group.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America and United Way Affiliations

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta is a private, non-profit organization affiliated with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and a United Way member agency.

Who Can Join

Any youth aged 6-18 may join a Boys & Girls Club; except for partnership sites. (See Site Director for more information).

Membership/Registration

How to Register:

- A parent or guardian must fill out a membership application, pay the membership fee and transportation fee if applicable.*
- We accept credit & debit cards only. No personal checks or money orders will be accepted. Cash is only accepted for transactions that are less than \$5.00.

- An application is considered complete when it is completely filled out, signed in all the appropriate areas, and supported by the required documentation.
 - If your child is 6 years old a copy of their birth certificate must be submitted.
- Membership is good for the current school year and following summer.

*Please see club staff for all current fees.

- Registration for our after school program begins in July and continues until all spaces are filled.
- Registration for the summer program is open to our regular members* first (usually near the end of February), and if all spaces are not filled at that time, registration will be open to the general public. Registration will continue all spaces are filled.

*Regular members are those that are registered by February 1st, and who attend the After School Program at least three days per week through the school year (minimum of 50 visits).

Refund/Transfer

Membership and summer fees are non-refundable.

Transfers must be approved by Regional Operations Director. Transfers will be evaluated on any remaining financial obligations and overall standing with the current club.

Membership Cards & Membership Tracking

Each child will receive a membership card that must be used to sign in and out of his/her Club daily.

Signing in daily is extremely important for not only tracking attendance, but also for emergency situations and to determine your child's cost for the summer program (member's attending 50 times or more by February 1st receive special summer program rate).

We are not responsible for your child's supervision until your child scans in to the club. When applicable the parent should escort their child into the club.

Orientation

Parent orientation is mandatory for both after school program and summer camp participation. Parents must sign an orientation attendance roster and acknowledgment of handbook receipt, acknowledging that they understand all policies and procedures.

Transportation

1. Transportation service is first-come, first served and is subject to fill-up. Numbers served are dependent on timing and the number of vehicles available at each location.
2. A transportation service permission form (located in the membership application) must be signed before any member can ride the vehicle from school or for evening drop-off (when available).
3. The Club's Commitments apply while riding the club vehicles or any chartered vehicle used for transporting members.
4. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta reserves the right to remove a member from bus service for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Not utilizing the bus 3 or more times a week.
 - b. Ongoing behavior problems (violations of the Club's Commitments) while riding the bus.
 - c. Continuous failure to arrive at the designated pick-up location on time

In the event that a member should be removed from the transportation service, the parent will be given written notice so that alternate transportation arrangements can be made.

Safe Passage Policy

The safety and protection of the children we serve is our highest priority and this policy is in place to protect your kids and teens. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta is a drop-in facility and our Safe Passage Policy that is as follows:

- Members must scan in and out each day.
- Members under the age of 13 must be picked up inside the Club by a parent, guardian, or other authorized person. Only contacts on your authorized list will be allowed to pick up members.
- Members who are 13 and older may scan out of the Club and leave unescorted with written permission from a parent or guardian and a signed release of liability.
- Members who are 13 and older may also scan out and escort other members of their family from the Club with a signed release of liability.
- No member, regardless of age, will be allowed to return to the Club once they leave the premises for the day.
- Because we are not a licensed day care facility we will not physically restrain members who insist on leaving without parent or guardian permission, but members who do leave without written permission will face disciplinary actions.
- Uber/Lyft are not allowed to pick up members under the age of 18 at the Club as it is against policies.

Member Pick-up

A parent or guardian must come into the building to pick up their member(s). *Parents should contact their child only via club phone during program hours.*

Late Pick-up

During the After School Program, members must be picked up no later than 8:00 p.m. During days designated on the club calendar which include but are not limited to School Holidays, Early Release and the Summer Program, members must be picked up no later than 6:00 p.m. If not picked up on time, the following consequences will apply:

- If your child is not picked up by closing time, you will be assessed a late fee. At 5 minutes after closing you will be charged \$5 and \$1 for every minute thereafter up to \$25.
- At 30 minutes after closing your child will receive a minimum suspension of 1 day.
- If a member is not picked up by 1 hour after closing time, either DFACS or the local Police Department may be notified (if no notification & club staff has exercised all contacts).
- Members cannot return to our program until the late fees are paid in full. There will be an increased number of days suspended for habitual offenders.

Emergency Closing

There may be occasions when the Club will have to close unexpectedly. Parents will be notified immediately if such occasions occur through email, Remind.com messages or phone calls. Some

examples for emergency closings include, but are not limited to: inclement weather, water main break, gas leak in area or extended power outage.

Medical/Injury

With written permission (located in the membership application) the Club will administer basic first aid (i.e., band aids, ice, etc.). If your member is on medication that you would like staff to dispense or if your child needs to self-administer medication, you must fill out the appropriate Authorization forms which can be obtained from your Club's Executive Director. No member should have medication in their possession at the Club. For safety purposes, all medication will be held by the Executive Director.

Additional information may be required, if your child has special medical conditions, in order to facilitate your child having the best club experience possible.

No child will be allowed to remain at the Club if they are ill, have been ill and not fully recovered, or if there is a reasonable assumption that they are ill. This includes any accidents that soil clothing (incontinence, vomiting, etc.). Parents should use the utmost discretion when considering whether or not to send their child to the Club.

A Medical Release is included in the membership application packet authorizing the Club to seek treatment for your child in case of serious injury or illness.

BGCMA Club-Family Commitments

At the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta, staff and youth come together to set the standard for how we treat each other. Listed below are our universal commitments that set the foundation for how members behave in our clubs.

1. **Do you know the Platinum Rule?** TREAT PEOPLE (MEMBERS AND STAFF) THE WAY THEY WANT TO BE TREATED.
2. **Let's use words that build us up.** PRACTICE POSITIVE LANGUAGE.
3. **It can be hard to tell the truth sometimes, but you owe it to yourself and others.** PRACTICE HONESTY.
4. **If there is a problem, let's talk and solve it!** PRACTICE RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS IN A HEALTHY WAY.
5. **Games/Sports are a great way to learn about ourselves and others.** PLAY FAIRLY SO WE ALL GET THAT CHANCE!
6. **Recognizing accomplishments and encouraging others, connects us and makes us stronger.** APPLAUD THE EFFORTS OF OTHERS.
7. **You deserve the best.** HELP TAKE CARE OF YOUR CLUB SPACE AND SUPPLIES.
8. **Show us your style but enjoy being young.** DRESS APPROPRIATELY FOR YOUR AGE.
9. **Everyone here deserves to feel comfortable and welcome!** FIGHTING, INSTIGATING FIGHTS AND/OR BULLYING CAN LEAD TO SUSPENSION/EXPULSION AND WE WOULD MISS YOU!!
10. **We want you to be healthy and safe.** DRUGS AND WEAPONS ARE NOT ALLOWED AT CLUB OR CLUB EVENTS. TO HELP KEEP EVERYONE SAFE, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING UNSAFE, TELL A CLUB STAFFER YOU TRUST.

There may be other commitments for special events however on a day-to-day basis these are the commitments that we abide by. All Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta staff and members are expected to uphold it, both in and out of the Club.

We ask parents to assist their member(s) in adhering to the commitments and upholding the standards of behavior for themselves as well.

BGCMA Programs

Success for us = Helping kids reach their full potential.

Through our programs we enable our youth to reach their full potential as responsible, healthy, productive and caring adults. Our programs are the heart of our promise for the future. They engage young people in activities with adults, peers and family members that enable them to learn powerful life skills and introduce them to new experiences. Based on the interests and needs of the boys and girls we serve from different communities, our Clubs offer diverse program activities through three foundations that lead to six programmatic pathways. Our programmatic strategy is framed by the needs of 21st century learners, and in keeping with relevant theory and best practices in the field of youth development.

Foundation: Leadership and Service

Pathways: Character & Leadership and Social & Civic Engagement

The foundation of leadership and service is made up of the Character & Leadership and Social & Civic Engagement pathways. These pathways provide opportunities for our members to learn to lead, and to engage their communities through multiple avenues including community service and volunteerism; at present, 75% of Club members volunteer in their community at least once per year, and 55% volunteer in their community at least once per month.

Foundation: Academic Innovation and the Arts

Pathways: STEM & Literacy and the Arts

Academic Innovation and the Arts is comprised of two pathways, STEM & Literacy and Arts. As a whole, this strand of programming engages members in rigorous opportunities to practice digital arts and digital literacies, to learn through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), to become more engaged readers and writers, and to explore art through various mediums.

Central to the Academic Innovation foundation and the STEM & Literacy pathway is the concept of *play*: we want our members to engage academics from a playful, youth-focused core. Research shows this is just as effective, if not more so, than traditional Chalk-and-Talk methods of learning. Conceptually, the set of programs under Academic Innovation and the Arts provide opportunities for 21st century skill building through design, literacy and artistic pursuits.

Foundation: Physical and Emotional Literacy

Pathways: Physical Health and Social Emotional Development

Physical and Emotional Literacy is comprised of two pathways, Physical Health and Social Emotional Development. This strand of programming is rooted in the concept of self-care and resilience; the BGCMA programs team is working on the development of cutting-edge programs that allow members to learn more about, and practice, these two concepts.

Physical health encompasses league and non-traditional sports, like Double Dutch and yoga, as well as gardening programs. Central to our work in this area is the concept of physical literacy, which is a measure of a person's skills, confidence and desire regarding physical movement, and is *a better predictor of a healthy lifestyle than fitness levels at any one point in time*. By helping our members develop physical literacy, they cultivate an appreciation for sports and physical activity that will last a lifetime. It is vitally important to this area of programming that we find a way to engage more of our

female members in physical activity: by 2020, our goal is that 50%+ of our female members will report being physically active five or more times per week

Technology Guidelines

We want your child to be plugged in at the club and tech savvy. We do not want electronic devices to interfere with programming and our fun with each other so they must be used in a productive and positive way and only during the time set by staff. BGCMA is pleased to offer club members access to a computer network for desktop work, Internet access, and digital arts.

- *Parents should contact their child **only** via club phone during program hours*
- *Filming or taking pictures of other members outside of specified programs such as Image Makers or Film clubs is prohibited*
- *Personal technology device (cell phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) usage in the Club is limited to program use or time set designated by staff.*

Should a parent prefer that a member not have computer access they must notify Executive Director.

Club members are responsible for appropriate behavior on the Club's computer network. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General Club commitments for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that members will comply with Club standards. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The Club members are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that is inappropriate which includes but is not limited to content that is sexual in nature, abusive offensive.

Privacy – Network storage areas may be treated like school lockers. The Club staff may review communications to maintain system integrity and will ensure that Club members are using the system responsibly.

Storage Capacity – Storage is not available on BGCMA computers however members can save documents via USB/personal storage drive.

Illegal Copying – Club members should never download or install commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks. Club members should neither copy others' work nor intrude in their files.

Inappropriate Materials or Language – Profane, abusive, or impolite language should not be used to communicate nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of Club behavior. A good rule to follow is never to view, send, or access materials that you would not want your Club staff or your parents to see. Should members encounter such material by accident, they should report it to the Club Staff immediately.

Discipline Policy

We follow a positive discipline approach to behavior management. Positive Discipline focuses on supportive and corrective behavior management guided by these PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE:

- Kindness and firmness.
- Respect for youth, respect for adults.
- Youth learn and become equipped for life from a system that promotes their responsibility rather than leaving it all to the adult.

- The goal of discipline is to solve problems and teach, not to make youth suffer for their misbehavior.
- Youth do better when they feel better, not when they feel worse. The goal of all behavior is to find belonging and significance.

Positive Discipline is...	Positive Discipline is NOT...
A way of dealing with youth that is kind and firm.	Letting youth have their way.
Allowing youth input in decisions.	Giving youth more power than adults.
High expectations for behavior.	Letting youth set all the standards.
Adult follow through to hold youth to commitments.	Hoping youth will follow through.
Providing youth opportunities to develop responsibility and accountability	Adults make all rules, decide who is guilty and punish them.
Recognizing there are reasons youth do what they do, and responding accordingly.	Using a cookie cutter approach to discipline or punishments and rewards

Our behavior management and correction typically follows the following steps:

1. Verbal Warning & Redirecting.
2. Time Out & Reflection (depending on how disruptive the behavior is this can be in or out of program area).
3. Written documentation of desired behavior change.

Parents will be notified of ongoing/consistent behavior or behavior issues that are serious in nature. Multiple documented minor offenses may result in either in-club or out-of-club suspension.

Examples of consequences for minor offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Exclusion from a particular program area
- Exclusion from field trips or other special activities
- Reflection log
- In-Club suspension (exclusion from all program areas and activities)
- Out-of-Club suspension

All major offenses can constitute an automatic suspension without warning. Examples of consequences for major offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Behavior that endangers the member or others
- Refusal to follow instructions from staff
- Inappropriate Language (i.e., cursing, name-calling, or other offensive or explicit language)
- Stealing
- Vandalism/Destruction of Property
- Inappropriate Touching/Inappropriate Sexual Behavior
- Gang Activity
- Bullying
- Drug and Alcohol use/possession/distribution

Please note, these are only guidelines. Actual consequences are determined on a case-by-case basis and are at the discretion of the Executive Director or designee. If a pattern of ongoing behavior (i.e.: continuous verbal warnings or time-outs for the same offense) is noticed, consequences may be given with or without documentation, and regardless of the severity of the offense. The length of a suspension (in or out-of-club) is determined by the severity of the offense and the number of previous offenses. In general suspensions are 1-5 days. Repeated offenses can result in an indefinite expulsion from the Club. Suspensions of 1-3 days must be approved by Executive Director. Suspensions over 3 days must be approved by the Regional Director. Expulsions must be approved by the Vice President of Field Operations or the Chief Operations Officer.

Dress Code

The following types of clothing are prohibited:

- 1) See-through or mesh clothing, unless worn over other apparel
- 2) Garments that expose the midriff
- 3) Halter tops and tank tops
- 4) Excessively tight or short shorts
- 5) Pants not worn at the waist (exposed undergarments)
- 5) Open toe shoes, flip flops, or sandals
- 6) Bare feet in the Club or on the club transportation
- 7) Garments or accessories that display emblems relating to abusive substances, sex and/or obscenities
- 8) Any type of hats or other head gear (do-rags, wave caps, bandanas, etc.), except for religious reasons
- 9) Any gang-related colors or symbols

Directors reserve the right to determine if other items of clothing are inappropriate for wear at the Club and/or during Club field trips or other special events.

Field Trip Policy

Before any Club member participates in a field trip, he/she must have a signed permission slip that gives parental consent. For field trips that require a fee, credit or debit cards are the only accepted form of payment. No personal checks or money orders will be accepted. Cash may be accepted for transactions that are less than \$5.00.

Personal Items

Members are responsible for all of their personal items. Please label all belongings to increase the potential of lost items being returned.

- We recommend that members avoid bringing high value items to the club such as Cell Phones, Electronic Devices (Tablets, MP3 Players, Gaming Systems, Toys, Radios, Trading Cards, etc.).

The Club is not responsible for these items and **will not provide any reimbursement** in the event that personal property is lost or stolen.

Club Member Insurance Policy

BGCMA provides insurance for uninsured members in the event that they are injured at the Club or during a Club event. This coverage is provided by an outside agency and serves as primary insurance for the uninsured and secondary insurance for insured members. Parents must fill out the insurance claim form with the Executive Director and submit any incurred bills. Claims for medical injuries will not be submitted until the parent has filled out the necessary paperwork in its entirety.



PARENT ORIENTATION & HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have attended orientation and I have been made aware that the parent handbook is available at BGCMA.org. I understand that we (my child(ren) and myself) are responsible for reading and understanding this information. I understand there is always a copy to review at the Club's front desk and is available online at BGCMA.org.

Club Member Name:

Printed Parent Name:

Parent Signature:

Date:
