



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE BEMIDJI AREA

Parent Handbook

Updated January 2018

This handbook is intended to provide information about Boys & Girls Clubs of the Bemidji Area's policies and procedures to the parents and guardians of members. It is not a contract and is subject to revision at any time, without prior notice, by the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Bemidji Area.

It is the goal of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Bemidji Area to continue to provide affordable, quality youth programs in a safe environment. To accomplish this goal, we ask for your commitment to the policies and procedures in this handbook.

Equal opportunity and program provider.

Our mission:

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

Organization:

The Boys & Girls Club of the Bemidji Area (BGCBA) is a non-profit organization that provides youth development programs and educational opportunities to its members on a drop-in basis. The Club is not a licensed childcare program or fee-for-service program.

Eligibility by age:

Members must be at least six years old and have completed kindergarten. Twelfth graders through age 18 may attend through the summer immediately following their high school graduation.

Membership:

Membership is open to all children, ages 6-18, regardless of race, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion or creed.

Membership cost:

Annual membership is a non-refundable \$25 with a \$75 maximum per family with three or more siblings. Family is defined as immediate family, not extended relatives. Membership covers January-December of each calendar year, therefore renewal must be completed every January.

Club funding:

Club funding comes from a combination of individual and business donations, as well as private and public grants. It costs the Club more than \$850 annually to serve one child. So, if you are able, please consider a tax-deductible donation to support the Club using the pledge form at the back of your membership application form. Or give online at bgcbemidji.org.

New or renewing membership:

- **Membership requirements:**
 - complete and sign a membership application and waiver of liability form,
 - pay a \$25 annual membership fee and
 - attend an orientation session with a parent/guardian.
- **Parent/guardian orientation:**
 - Every Club member and at least one parent or guardian must attend orientation prior to joining the Club and then attend annually at membership renewal. No youth may become a Club member until orientation is completed by the youth and guardian even if another family member has already attended. **Orientation is offered by appointment through Feb. 16, 2018, and then every Monday at 5:30 p.m.**

Membership is a privilege:

Completing the Club membership application form and payment does not guarantee membership. The Club may require meetings or additional information prior to membership acceptance to ensure the Club has the capacity, facilities and professionals to meet the needs of the youth requesting membership. Once membership is accepted, families and youth must follow Club rules and guidelines. If a youth's needs change or new information is disclosed, the Club will review its capacity, facilities and professionals to reassess whether the Club can continue to meet the youth's needs.

Success Plan:

If you as a parent/guardian have concerns about your child in terms of special needs, medical needs, behavioral challenges or other needs, please contact the Club's unit director. Staff will work with you to create a written Success Plan to help ensure that your child has a positive and successful experience at the Club. Club staff may also request that you meet to create a Success Plan if your child is struggling to follow Club rules and guidelines.

Membership information:

Information provided on the membership application form is critical to ensure the safety of your child. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardian to notify the Club of any changes to the contact information, the list of individuals authorized to pick up your child, etc., as soon as the change occurs.

Age groups served:

Programs are offered in three separate age groups: Elementary (1st – 4th), Tweens (5th – 7th) and Teens (8th - 12th). Each age group participates in its own program space, although Tweens and Teens may sometimes be combined in one space.

Bringing a friend:

Members may bring a friend as a guest until the next orientation, which is held at 5:30 p.m. every Monday. For example, a friend who attends on a Thursday, may attend Thursday and Friday, then must attend an orientation session on that following Monday. The orientation session must be attended by the youth and a parent/guardian. Guest must provide parent/guardian to staff for safety purposes.

Club hours:

Every day after school, M-F

Elementary (1st-4th grade) 2:50-6 p.m.
Tween and teens (5th-12th grade) 2:50-7 p.m.
3:10-3:50 p.m., healthy snack served daily

Summer hours, M-F

1st-12th grade 12:30-5:30 p.m.
12:30-1:00 p.m., healthy lunch served daily
3:30 p.m., healthy snack served daily

No-school days

1st-12th grade 12:30-5:30 p.m.
12:30-1:00 p.m., healthy lunch served daily
3:10-3:50 p.m., healthy snack served daily

The Club reserves the right to change its hours and days of operation. If changes occur, parents/guardians will be notified in advance.

General school year daily agenda:

Structured Activities	2:50-3:50 PM
Healthy Snack	3:10-3:50 PM
Announcements	3:50-4:00 PM
Power Hour	4:00-4:30 PM
Program/Activities	4:30-5:00 PM
Structured Activities	5:00-5:30 PM
Free Time	5:30-6:00 PM
Tween/Teens only	6:00-7:00 PM

General summer daily agenda:

Healthy Lunch	12:30-1:15 PM
Structured Activities	12:30-1:15 PM
Big Group Game	1:15 – 2:00 PM
Programs/Activities	2:00-2:45 PM
Outdoors Activities	2:45-3:30 PM
Healthy Snack	3:30-3:45 PM
Structured Activities	3:45-4:00 PM
Power Hour	4:00-4:30 PM
Program/Activities	4:30-5:00 PM
Structured Activities	5:00-5:30 PM

Incentives

- **Club 52/105** rewards Club members for regular Club attendance. Earn a silver lanyard when you attend the Club for 52 days during the school year. After 105 days of attendance, you will earn a gold lanyard. Each level offers special perks.
- **Be GREAT Cards** will reward Club members for positive behavior and acts of kindness. Your Be GREAT card is located on the back side of your Club card and contains 50 boxes. When Club staff catch you being kind or helpful, using good manners or other positive behavior, they will mark a box on the back of your card.
- **Be GREAT parties (elementary only):** If you earn 50 boxes on your Be GREAT Card by the end of the month, you will be invited to the monthly Be GREAT party, typically held the second week of the next month. Honorees stay for an extra hour after closing for the celebration, which includes dinner.

- **Club's PowerPoint store:** Do homework, earn points and spend them at the Club store. Club members who participate in homework or tutoring sessions can earn Power Points to make purchases at the Club store.

Club cards

- Every Club member receives a Club card, which could be required to play foosball and carpet ball, to check out board games, use a computer and be involved in some of our daily activities.
- Cards are kept at the Club where members pick them up upon entering the building and return them when departing.

Programs:

What we do every day helps improve the lives of children. All Club activities support youth development in at least one of three key program areas:

- **Academic success** to help youth achieve academic goals, stay in school, explore career interests, learn new skills and consider post-secondary education options.
 - **Project Learn** engages Club members in tutoring, homework help, service projects and fun learning activities.
 - **Power Hour**, ages 6-18, time set aside for working on homework, every day after school.
 - **Tutoring**, ages 6-18, trained tutors work with Club members in specific subject areas.
 - **Bemidji Area Reading Canines** ages 6-12, read aloud to a specially trained dog to help youth build confidence in their reading skills.
 - **Money Matters**, ages 13-18, builds basic personal money management skills, including budgeting, saving and investing.
 - **National Fine Arts**, ages 6-18, encourages artistic expression through drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, collage, mixed media and sculpture.
 - **STEM/Technology Lab**, ages 6-18, builds digital literacy by teaching kids how to use basic software and be safe online.
- **Healthy lifestyles** to help youth engage in positive behaviors that nurture well-being, set personal goals and grow into self-sufficient adults, including daily physical activity, healthy food choices and an appreciation for the outdoors.
 - **Triple Play** activities promote a healthy mind, body and soul.
 - **Healthy Habits**, ages 6-18, incorporates healthy living and active learning in every part of the Club experience with an emphasis on good nutrition, regular physical activity and improving overall well-being.
 - **Club greenhouse**, ages 6-18, on-site greenhouse engages youth in gardening, including cultivation and harvesting, planning healthful meals and snacks and selling fresh produce to area businesses and the Bemidji School District.
 - **Laketrails**, ages 13-18, introduces up to 15 teen Club members to the wilderness with an eight-day canoeing adventure on Lake of the Woods.
 - **SMART Moves**, ages 8-17, helps youth resist the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, and avoid premature sexual activity.
- **Character and leadership** to empower youth to become engaged in the Club and the community, sustain meaningful relationships, respect one another and participate in the democratic process.
 - **Million Members, Million Hours**, ages 6-18, focuses on a variety of events that provide opportunities for youth to engage as volunteers in the community or at the Club.
 - **Youth of the Year**, ages 14-18, every year our Club recognizes a teen Club member who exemplifies excellence in service to the Club, commitment to community and family, academic success, strong moral character, life goals and public speaking.
 - Youth of the Year, established in 1947, is the Boys and Girls Club of America's premier recognition program for Club members. Striving to achieve the award helps youth build character, community engagement and leadership. Each month, we recognize one Youth of the Month and in April select our Club's Youth of the Year, who then competes at the state level.

- Our local winner receives a \$1,000 scholarship and then competes in St. Paul with other candidates throughout the state. The competition includes a three-minute presentation followed by one-on-one interviews with local and state judges. The state winner receives a \$10,000 scholarship and the opportunity to compete for the Midwest Region Youth of the Year. Five winners each receive a \$10,000 scholarship and advance to the national level in Washington, D.C.
- The National Youth of the Year receives up to an additional \$50,000 in scholarships and is installed by the President of the United States.

Weather-related closings:

- The Club follows ISD #31 weather closings. If school is cancelled or dismissed early due to inclement weather, the Club will be closed.
- If afterschool activities are cancelled, the Club will remain open for the convenience of parents and safety of children, but only until 4 p.m.

Severe weather

When the National Weather Service issues a severe weather warning, the Club will execute its severe weather plan. When the Club is on lockdown for a tornado warning, the Club is not allowed to let a child leave, but a parent/guardian may enter.

The Club will be closed for the following holidays and breaks:

- New Year's Eve Day, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Day and Christmas Day;
- ISD #31's winter break; and
- Labor Day week for staff in-service and building maintenance.

Check the Club front desk, Facebook or bgcbemidji.org for information about closings, hours or special events.

Transportation to the Club

The Club contracts for services with Paul Bunyan Transit and uses its Club van to transport elementary children after school from Central (M-F) and Lincoln (T,Th,F). Availability is limited, and arrangements must be made in advance. Please complete the Club's Transportation Form available at bgcbemidji.org and at the front desk. For more information or to be added to the waiting list, contact Sara Collins, member services assistant director.

- **IMPORTANT:** You must attend an annual Club orientation session and have a completed and signed membership application form and Transportation Form on file at the Club for your child to ride the Club van or take Paul Bunyan Transit.
- **From Bemidji Middle School:** You may arrange with ISD#31 to have your child take the bus from the Middle School to JW Smith and then walk to the Club.
- **Other schools not listed above:** should contact ISD#31 transportation office at 218-333-3225 for availability.

Arriving at the Club

Book bags, backpacks, coats, hats, toys and personal electronics, etc. must be signed in at the front desk when Club members arrive. Cell phones must also stay behind the desk for 1st-4th graders.

- Sign-in sheets are organized by grade. Members with higher attendance having assigned numbers.
- Members with assigned numbers must write their initials in the appropriate box.
- Members without assigned numbers write your first and last name on the designated line, front desk staff will assign you a number.
- Your number for the day will be used to store your items.
- Use your number to retrieve your belongings at the end of the day. If you forget your number, ask at the front desk.
- Once you sign in, you will receive your Club card and will be buzzed through the security doors. Keep your card with you until you sign out for the day.
- When Club members are departing for the day they need to return their Club card to the front desk.
- Tweens will have a choice of keeping their stuff with them or being assigned a hook following the process above.
- Teens will be bring their personal items to the Teen Center with them.

Members should not be dropped off on Club property prior to Club operating hours. The Club is not responsible for any youth who is not signed in and admitted at the front desk.

Departing the Club

In the interest of safety for all our Club members, the Club has adopted a Safe Passage Policy to protect children as they depart from the Club. Please review this policy with your Club member and make appropriate arrangements for picking up your Club member. Please select the appropriate box(es) on the membership application form under the transportation section.

Safe Passage Policy

- Members under the age of 12 must be escorted from the Club by a parent, guardian or other authorized adult unless providing written permission stating otherwise.
- Members age 12 and older may leave the Club unescorted with written permission from a parent or guardian and a signed release of liability.
- Members 12 and older may also escort other members of their household from the Club provided that a parent or guardian has given written permission.
- No member, regardless of age, will be allowed to return to the Club once they leave the premises for the day.
- Members who leave unescorted without permission will face disciplinary actions up to and including suspension and termination of membership.

Picking up your child

- You must enter the building to sign your child out at the front desk.
- Only individuals authorized by you in writing will be allowed to sign out your child.
- Front-desk staff will page your child who will retrieve his/her belongings and meet you in the entry way.
- IMPORTANT: Club members are not allowed to “hang out” on Club grounds, in front of the building or in the parking lot. Tweens and teens who are waiting for rides must remain in the lobby.

Late pickups

- The Club day ends promptly at 6 p.m. for elementary students, 1st-4th grade, and 7 p.m. for tweens and teens, 5th-12th grade, during the school year. In the summer and on no-school days, the Club day ends at 5:30 p.m. You must pick up your child on time.
- A \$10 fee will be assessed for any late pick-ups. The fee increases to \$20 for any late pickups that exceed 15 minutes.
- If your child has not been picked up within 15 minutes after we close, we will call the numbers of authorized individuals who you have listed on your membership application form.
- If we have not reached an authorized individual within 30 minutes, we will call law enforcement to pick up your child.

Illness

- If your child misses school due to illness, he/she is not permitted to attend the Club that day.
- If a youth arrives ill or becomes ill while at the Club, the parents or guardians will be notified, and immediate pickup is required.
- Do not bring youth to the Club if he/she is ill or has been ill earlier in the day.
- The Club follows ISD#31 “Illness and Keeping Your Child at Home” guidelines as available on their website at <http://www.bemidji.k12.mn.us/parent/health-services/illness-keeping-your-child-at-home/> and as shown below:

Often an early morning decision that parents have to make is whether their child is well enough to go to school. Not only may the child feel too sick to learn very much on those days, but they are also infecting other students and staff. Below are some guidelines, which will help you decide whether to send them or keep them home.

- **Fever:** If a student has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, parents should keep their children home. If they have 100 degrees or more fever at school, parents will be called to come to pick up their

child. They need to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Tylenol, Ibuprofen, and other similar medications will bring a fever down, but it does not mean that the child is still not sick. **They need to be fever free without taking medication for 24 hours.**

- Often temperature rises during the day. A slight fever in the morning will get much higher by noon. Often with a borderline temperature (99-100), kids might feel quite ill. Use your judgment about sending them when their fever is less than 100.
- **Vomiting and diarrhea:** Keep them home! Vomiting and diarrhea are not considered “normal”. Often children will feel better after vomiting, but will quickly become ill again. Keep them home until they are free of symptoms for at least 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- **Antibiotic treatment:** If your child is on antibiotics for a communicable disease, such as strep throat, pink eye, etc, keep them home until they have been on the antibiotics for 24 hours. The exception would be for pertussis (whooping cough). They need to stay home for 5 full days of antibiotic treatment before returning to school. If they are going to continue on antibiotic treatment at school, be sure to follow the school’s medication policy. Please follow your doctor’s orders for antibiotics. Stopping them when the child feels better may cause the child to become sick again. Giving them for the entire time the doctor prescribes will help insure that the infection has been treated.
- **Chicken pox:** Students with chicken pox need to stay home until all of the pox marks have scabbed over—generally 7 days. If the student gets chicken pox from the vaccine, it is usually a mild case. But they still need to stay home until the pox marks are all scabbed over.
- **Pink eye:** Students could have either viral or bacterial pink eye. Bacterial pink eye needs to be treated with antibiotics—usually eye drops—for 24 hours before returning to school. No exclusion is necessary for viral pink eye, but only a doctor can diagnosis whether it is viral or bacterial.
- **Head lice:** Once children with head lice have been treated and had the nits carefully removed from their heads, they can return to school. When they return, parents are to bring them to the health office to have their heads checked before going to class. They will be examined again at intervals to make sure no head lice were missed.
 - Head lice are very treatable. Everyone in the family and close contacts should be checked for head lice and treated if found. Many different treatment methods are available. Pamphlets on treatment are available in the school health offices or contact the district school nurse.
 - Bemidji School district allows only 2 days absence for treatment of head lice. Many parents are able to treat the children and return them the next day.
 - Head lice are a bother, but in the scheme of things, temporary. Anyone can get head lice, although head lice do not jump from one person to another. Encourage your children not to share combs, brushes, hats, headbands, or other hair clips.
- **Keeping healthy:** During the season of flu and colds, it is important to try to remain as healthy as possible. Adequate sleep and nutrition will help. Keeping sick children home when they are ill, will prevent others from becoming ill. Vital is encouraging good, frequent hand washing.

Infestations or contagious conditions

Any suspected transferable infestations or transmittable contagious conditions will be addressed as follows:

- The parent or guardian will be contacted immediately to remove the child from the Club facilities.
- Proof of treatment from a healthcare facility or receipt of medication purchased will be required prior to the child being allowed back into the Club facility.

Medications

- The Club is not permitted, by policy, to dispense, store and/or oversee the use of medication of any kind, including non-prescription medications.
- Parents and/or guardians must come to the Club to administer any required medications to their child.
- If your child is responsible for taking his/her own medication, a parent/guardian must sign a medical release form found at the front desk.
- If your child’s medication is changed, please notify Club staff so that they are better able to support your child.

Medical emergencies

In a life-threatening situation, the Club will call an ambulance first and then the child's parent/guardian. The Club is not responsible for the costs of any medical attention or treatment.

Child abuse and reporting

Club employees are mandatory reporters. Any staff member who suspects that a child may be abused or neglected is to immediately report to the Department of Social Services or law enforcement.

Personal property

- The Club is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items.
- Members are encouraged to leave personal belongings at home.
- Any personal belongings brought to the Club must be left at the front desk at check-in and retrieved when your child checks out.
- Firearms and weapons of any kind are prohibited.
- Any personal property that remains after closing will be placed in lost-and-found in the front entry.
- Unclaimed lost-and-found items will be cleaned out at the end of the month and donated to charity.

Phone calls at the Club

- Club members will not have access to Club phones unless it is an emergency.
- Make any necessary arrangements before your child arrives at the Club.
- If a parent/guardian calls to speak their child, the front desk will take a message and relay it to the child.
- If you need to speak with your child because of an emergency, please notify the front desk receptionist.

Cell phones

- Elementary students (1st-4th grade) must check cell phones at the front desk along with any other personal belongings. They are prohibited from using cell phones at the Club.
- Tweens and teens (5th-12th grade) are prohibited from using cell phones except at designated times.
- Club members are prohibited from using the camera functions on their cell phones while at the Club. This includes taking selfies and/or photos of other Club members and sharing photos through Snapchat, Instagram or other photo sharing apps.
- Tweens or teens who misuse their cell phones at the Club may be required to check them in at the front desk or lose the privilege of having a cell phone at the Club.

Confidentiality:

Information obtained in the Club membership form will be kept strictly confidential. Information may be used as compiled data without personal identification to help the organization seek public or private funding. Please read and sign the Tennessee Warning Notice to ensure that you understand your rights.

General Club rules

- Be honest and respectful.
- Cooperate with staff and follow directions.
- Wear shoes and shirts.
- Walk in the Club. No running please.
- Keep hands, feet and any objects to self.
- Use positive language and gestures.
- Follow the law. Do not use any tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.
- Take good care of the facility and equipment.
- Clean up after yourself and throw waste in the garbage.
- Ask a staff member for a bathroom pass before using the bathroom.
- Eat and drink only in the canteen areas or in the community room.
- Never bring a firearm or weapon to the Club.
- Never show gang signs or symbols at the Club.

Member Code of Conduct

The Club provides a safe and engaging environment for members to build academic success, healthy lifestyles and good character and citizenship. This includes holding Club members to a high standard of behavior that demonstrates respect for peers, staff and volunteers. Please review this Code of Conduct with your Club member so that they understand the behavior standards expected of them.

Teachable moments

Club staff will use teachable moments to remind Club members of appropriate behavior and choices. Staff will take corrective action once a member reaches three teachable moments in one day or five teachable moments within a five-day week. Teachable moments may include, but are not limited to behaviors such as:

- Using inappropriate language
- Repeatedly running in the Club
- Eating outside of the Canteen
- Showing disrespect toward others
- Entering an unsupervised program area without permission
- Misusing Club equipment
- Failing to follow bathroom policies

Consequences:

- Three teachable moments in one day: The member will be immediately dismissed from the Club for the remainder of the day and/or possible additional days. Club staff will call a parent/guardian.
- Five teachable moments within a week: The member will be immediately dismissed from the Club for the remainder of the day and/or possible additional days. Club staff will call a parent/guardian meeting.
- Consequences will continue to become more significant if the Club member continues to make poor choices. Staff will also call a parent/guardian meeting to develop a success plan to help the youth succeed while attending the Club.
- When a member engages in more serious behaviors such as bullying, physically harming an individual, substance abuse, etc., the result is an automatic suspension as outlined in the Club's Discipline Policy. Staff will complete an incident report and schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian. If another Club member is involved or injured in the incident, the victim and perpetrator will both receive incident reports.

Zero tolerance for bullying: Bullying by a member or group of members will result in an automatic suspension as outlined in the Club's Discipline Policy. Prior to readmission, parents and their Club member may be required to meet with Club staff to ensure that this behavior does not reoccur. If you suspect that your child has been bullied, PLEASE REPORT it to Club staff immediately and encourage your child to do the same so that staff can intervene.

National hotline for safety

If you have safety concerns with the Club that you wish to share anonymously, please call the **See it Say it Hotline** provided by the Boys & Girls Club of America at 866-607-SAFE.

Discipline Policy

The following schedule outlines disciplinary actions that will be taken when a Club member engages in more serious behaviors. These consequences are weighted by the severity of the behavior and the age of the Club member. This policy is not intended to address every possible scenario but provides a fair and consistent approach for most situations. The Club reserves the right to impose whatever consequences it deems most appropriate to any situation, including permanent suspension from the Club. Law enforcement will be called whenever an incident involves weapons or sexual violence.

This discipline policy applies to Club members at all Club-related events and activities on Club property or elsewhere, including when using Club vehicles and non-Club buses.

Behavior	1st offense	2nd offense	3rd offense	4th offense
Physical Violence/Aggression				
1st - 4th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
Weapons				
1st - 4th graders	Unit and Executive Director will decide on further consequences			
5th - 12th graders				
Sexual Violence				
1st - 4th graders	Unit and Executive Director will decide on further consequences			
5th - 12th graders				
Bullying				
1st - 4th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
Insubordinate/Disrespectful - Behavior that disrupts normal Club operations, refuse to take direction				
1st - 4th graders	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	7 days	9 days	11 days
Damage/Destruction of Club or person property				
1st - 4th graders	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	7 days	9 days	11 days
Substance/Tobacco use				
1st - 4th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	10 days	15 days	20 days
Technology/Telecommunication misuse				
1st - 4th graders	2 days	3 days	4 days	5 days
5th - 12th graders	5 days	7 days	9 days	11 days

Emergencies, questions & concerns:

- Sara Collins, member services assistant director, bgcba.memberservices@gmail.com
- Shelby Weckwerth, unit director, sweckwerth@paulbunyan.net
- Nate Skar, good character & citizenship assistant director, nathanskar.bgca@yahoo.com
- Morgan Morganstern, academic success assistant director, bgcba.academicsuccess@gmail.com
- HollieAnn Schnitzler, healthy lifestyles assistant director, bgcba.health.ad@gmail.com
- Andrea Ohnstad, executive director, aohnstad@paulbunyan.net