

Child Abuse Prevention

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

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay implements policies and procedures for members, employees, volunteers, and visitors to report any suspicion or allegation of abuse.

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

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

In accordance with the mandated reporter laws in Florida, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay policy requires any staff member or volunteer who becomes aware of or suspects child abuse or neglect to report such incidents immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline. This initial report should be promptly followed by communication with the Club Operations Leadership and Risk Management Team.

Furthermore, Executive Management is responsible for ensuring that these incidents are reported to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and/ or any other entities requiring critical incident reporting. All Critical Incident reports must be completed within 24 hours of the initial discovery or suspicion of abuse or neglect.

This policy is established to ensure the safety and well-being of all children under our care and aligns with our commitment to comply with state laws regarding the mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.

REQUIRED TRAINING

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay conducts trainings through Spillet Leadership University 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. Spillet Leadership University Foundations: Preventing Abuse in Youth Serving Organizations

Annually:

- Safety Procedures Packet for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay.

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

Every staff member and volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay is required to maintain appropriate physical contact with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Every staff member and volunteer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay is required to maintain appropriate verbal interactions with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content) • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

ABUSE AND SAFETY RESOURCES

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay prominently displays BGCA-approved collateral that shares information on ethics hotlines, crisis text lines, and safety helplines with members, staff, volunteers, and families. All safety policies are provided to parents and guardians upon receiving a youth membership application through the My Club Hub and our website.

National Child Abuse Hotline (800) 422-4453

Provides free 24/7 access for adults and youth to professional child abuse crisis counselors who offer crisis intervention and confidential referrals.

Child Safety Helpline (866) 607-7233

Praesidium provides employees, volunteers, parents, and youth with an anonymous helpline to report suspicious or inappropriate behaviors regarding children.

Ethics Point Hotline (866)295-3701

Provides employees, volunteers, and parents with anonymous reporting of any unethical or illegal workplace activities

Crisis Text Line Text CLUB to 741741

Provides free 24/7 access for adults and youth to confidential support with professional crisis counselors

Report to Child Protective Services (DCF)# (800) 962-2873

Provides 24/7 access for adults and youth, local anonymous reporting of child abuse and/or neglect

Staff to Child Ratio

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tampa Bay supports a staff-to-child ratio of 1 adult to 20 youth (1 adult to 15 youth at JWB-funded Clubhouses).