

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

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

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

DEFINITIONS

One-on-One Contact Prohibition: Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay prohibits isolated one-on-one interaction between Club participants and staff or volunteers, including board members. This includes prohibiting one-on-one contact at any time at the Club, in vehicles, or by phone, text, social media, or other means.

According to professional guidelines, exceptions may only be made when delivering approved medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional. All staff and volunteers, including minors who serve as Junior Staff or Junior Leaders (under age 18), are strictly prohibited from meeting Club participants outside of any Club-sponsored activities. The only exception to this rule is if the Club participant is a child or sibling of a staff member or volunteer.

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 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, such as full-frontal hugs that last too long, lap sitting, or other "accidental" touches

MANDATED REPORTING

Every staff member or volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect must immediately report to Club leadership. Club leadership is responsible for reporting the incident immediately to the appropriate authorities according to statewide mandated reporting laws and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) within 24 hours via the critical incident system.

REQUIRED TRAINING

Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay conducts and reports through a BGCA-approved process the following training 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. BGCA-approved child abuse prevention
2. BGCA-approved mandated reporting
3. BGCA-approved grooming prevention

Annually:

- All the policies, including all safety policies, for Boys & Girls Clubs of Tampa Bay

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

Every staff member and volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of 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
Side hugs Handshakes High-fives and hand slapping Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)	Full-frontal hugs or kisses Showing affection in an 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 Boys & Girls Clubs of 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
Positive reinforcement Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content) Encouragement Praise	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 Tampa Bay prominently displays BGCA-approved collateral that shares ethics hotline, crisis textline, and safety helpline information with members, staff, volunteers, and families. We also share all safety policies with parents and guardians upon receiving a youth membership application.

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 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