



PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome

The Boys & Girls Clubs welcomes you to our program. We are excited about helping your child grow socially, educationally, and physically while participating in recreational activities and educational opportunities.

The **BE GREAT ACADEMY** is the after school program of the Boys & Girls Clubs. We have a lineup of tested and proven nationally recognized programs that address today's most pressing youth issues, teaching young people the skills they need to succeed in life. We offer programs with a purpose in an affordable, safe, fun environment.

Our programs revolve around five core areas of focus:

- **Character & Leadership Development** – Programs in Character & Leadership Development empower youth to support and influence their Campus and community, sustain meaningful relationships with others, develop a positive self-image, participate in the democratic process, and respect their own and others' cultural identities.
- **Health & Life Skills** – Programs in Health & Life Skills develop young people's capacity to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals, and live successfully as self-sufficient adults.
- **Sports, Fitness, & Recreation** – Programs in Sports, Fitness, & Recreation develop fitness, positive use of leisure time, skills for stress management, appreciation for the environment, and social skills.
- **Education & Career Development** – Programs in Education & Career Development enable youth to become proficient in basic educational disciplines, apply learning to everyday situations, and embrace technology to achieve success in a career.
- **The Arts** - Programs in The Arts enable youth to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through knowledge and appreciation of the visual arts, crafts, performing arts, and creative writing.

More than 25 national programs are available in the areas of education, the environment, health, the arts, careers, prevention of risk behavior, leadership development, and athletics. We provide programs for youth after school and during the summer months that are designed to meet identified needs and interests of the participants.

Our challenge is to teach our members things they need to know using things that they like to do. Our mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us the most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

Parents or guardians are invited to visit any of our Campus locations at any time. If you are interested in sharing your talents or hobbies with members please contact the Service Center to obtain the necessary applications to become a Boys & Girls Clubs volunteer.

Your Rights

Your Rights as a Child in the Program

As a child in our program you have the right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner and have the freedom to express and practice religious and spiritual beliefs. We encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program to the Site Director.

Your Rights as a Parent

As a parent concerned with your child's well-being and education, we encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program to the Site Director whenever they occur. If any issue is still unresolved, you may request a meeting with the Executive/Area Director. You also have the right to visit the program at any time. We want to build a partnership with you, and therefore encourage you to be in close and frequent communication with us.

Philosophy

The Boys & Girls Clubs believes the services rendered are of vital importance to the growth and development of our youth. Our program is committed to providing a quality learning environment that promotes development through all possible resources.

Because we believe each child to be an individual with many talents and gifts, we strive to assist them in reaching their potential. Children will learn to appreciate and respect people of all walks of life. It is our goal to involve family members in the various aspects of our program, and exchange information with staff, ensuring the safety and welfare of each child.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is selected based upon their character and desire to improve the lives of children, as well as their education and experience in the youth development field. Once hired, every staff member receives extensive training throughout the year in the areas of youth development and effective program implementation. Training is ongoing and designed to ensure staff members are current in program policies and procedures, as well as acceptable youth development practices. All program staff are required to have state and federal background checks, as well as current CPR and First Aid Certifications.

Staff members are trained and experienced in the youth development strategy and will work closely with youth in five Core Program Areas: **Character & Leadership Development; Education & Career Development; The Arts; Health & Life Skills; and Sports, Fitness, & Recreation** to promote a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence in the lives of our youth.

Services Offered

We offer several ways to participate in Boys & Girls Clubs programs: **Before and After School Care**, **Vacation Camps**, and **Community Membership**. Please see below for specifics and eligibility to determine which service is right for you and your child. Not every Campus offers every program.

Before and After School Care & Summer/Vacation Camp Participants

- Are signed in and out of program by a designated adult.
- May participate in all programs that are offered and available.
- May choose from numerous additional programs based upon their interests *at no additional charge*.
- Have first priority to sign up for early dismissal days, school holidays, and summer camp.

Transportation to the program is provided from targeted schools to targeted locations (please visit our website or contact the Service Center for a list of schools and Campuses).

Teen/Community Membership (offered at specific locations)

- May come to the program when they want, stay as long as they want, and may leave when they want.
- DO NOT REQUIRE AN ADULT TO SIGN THEM IN OR OUT OF THE PROGRAM.

Teen/Community Membership requires a nominal annual membership fee for members living within three miles (walking distance) of the Campus.

Teen/Community Members must provide proof of residency (current electric bill, water bill, or lease) and have parent signed disclaimer on file. The disclaimer states:

“I understand that my child is able to access and leave the Boys & Girls Clubs program and facility upon their own free will. The Boys & Girls Clubs is not responsible or liable in any way in the event of harm or injury occurring to the member. It is agreed that the parent or guardian will not hold Boys & Girls Clubs responsible for the welfare or whereabouts of the member. If the Parent or Guardian does file a complaint against the Organization the Parent or Guardian agrees to pay for Boys & Girls Clubs' legal fees.”

Age of Community Members accepted varies by location. However, teens who are 18 applying for membership must be enrolled in high school – not college, trade school, or vocational school.

Hours the Campus is open to Teen/Community Members may vary.

Parents have the option to enroll their child in the BE GREAT Academy program offered at some locations.

Club Closure Dates

The Service Center and Campuses may be closed on the following days (actual closing dates may vary by location):

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- The day after Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

Programs located on school property are also subject to close at the school's discretion.

If you have any questions about these dates, please see your Site Director for clarification.

Hours of Operation

Early and Before School Care

Early Bird Care (drop off at 5 am) and **Before Care** (drop off at 7 am) services are offered at some Campuses. Please check the website (www.BeGreatAcademy.com), Service Center, or speak with your Member Service Specialist for the most current list of participating Campuses.

After School Care

Regular school days: Dismissal – 6:30 pm

Early release days: Dismissal – 6:30 pm

The closing time may vary slightly depending on the needs of the school.

Summer Camp & School Holidays

7:30 am – 6:30 pm

Incllement Weather Policy

Boys & Girls Clubs will follow the school district policy for school closures, cancellations, and delays. For Campuses not located in schools, the policy of the district in which the members attend school will be followed.

Membership Fees & Charges

Rates are determined by the number of days open throughout the school year. Payments are distributed evenly throughout the school year for consistency. Weekly prices will be fixed (remain the same) through the school year, and include all partial weeks. Parents will receive a payment schedule upon completion of enrollment.

Please see website for current pricing.

Discount Programs

- Reduced rates are available for qualifying families. If you qualify, simply send the required documents to our Service Center and we will adjust your rates.
- Military rates are also available for qualifying families. Please complete the discount price forms to see if you are eligible.
- Corporate discounts are available for our corporate partners – see a Member Service Specialist for details.
- ABC Vouchers are accepted at most locations.

Please visit our website (www.BeGreatAcademy.com) or call our Service Center for more information or to see if you qualify for a reduced rate.

Only one discount per participant may be applied.

Payment Policy & Options

Your registration is held with payment of one day of service. You are charged for the weekly rate whether you use the service or not (drop in rate available if more suitable). Withdrawals from the program require a two week notice and all charges for those two weeks must be paid. This policy allows us to better plan for staffing and program supplies needed to provide quality service to all members.

Auto Pay

Payments will be made during the month of service based on the following choice of frequency and day of the week:

1. Weekly – drafted every Monday
2. Bi-weekly – drafted every other Monday

Manual Pay

Payment in full is due the Monday of the current week. We accept payments by check, money order, credit card, and cash. Checks and money orders can be mailed to: PO Box 423, Columbia SC 29202 or deposited at any First Citizens Bank branch. Cash is only accepted at any First Citizen Bank branch or at our Service Center at 500 Gracern Road, Columbia, SC 29210. Credit card payments can be made via the Parent Portal. **For the safety of our staff and members, no payments will be accepted at our Campuses.**

Returned Check Policy

All checks returned to the Boys & Girls Clubs because of insufficient funds will be turned over to Chexchange (collection agency) for collection.

Parents must make a cash payment to the Boys & Girls Clubs for their service fees. This amount does not go towards their returned check; they still need to pay that amount to Chexchange.

Once Chexchange has collected on the returned check, the payment will be credited towards the member's account.

Declined Auto Draft Policy

Auto draft payments that are declined due to insufficient funds will be treated the same as checks with insufficient funds, and the Organization will charge a \$5 late fee to the membership account.

Parents with declined payments will be removed from auto draft and switched to a prepaid weekly plan.

Late Pick Up Policy and Fees

All members must be picked up by designated closing hours.

Late fees of \$1 per minute beyond closing time will be charged to the parent for late pickup for the first five occurrences. Beginning with the sixth late pickup, late fees of \$5 per minute beyond closing time will be charged to the parent.

If an authorized adult is later than the designated pick up time the following steps must be taken:

1. Make every attempt to contact any and all authorized contacts for one hour beyond closing.
2. The Campus School Principal and Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director will be contacted and non-emergency police will be called.
3. BGC staff will remain with the child until appropriate transfer of custody can take place.
4. Staff will transfer custody of child to police.
5. The incident will be documented on the Incident Report.

The parent(s) will need to make their payment online, at the Service Center, or any First Citizens Bank.

Late pick up fees must be paid with the next scheduled payment or the members will not be allowed to return to the program.

Excessive lateness may result in removal from the program.

Enrollment/Registration

Registration for all programs is completed **online** at Portal.BeGreatAcademy.com.

Codes of Conduct

The Organization strives to provide a positive place for all members to learn and grow. It is important for the staff to maintain structure and order in our facilities to ensure the safety and well-being of all members. We expect all members and staff to respect themselves, members, staff, and the Organization by following our rules. Below are basic codes of conduct:

- Play fairly and be honest
- Be respectful to the Boys & Girls Club staff
- Resolve disagreements in a positive way
- Be respectful of other members and their property
- Take care of the Boys & Girls Club equipment
- No inappropriate language
- Exhibit good sportsmanship
- Only run in the gymnasium or outdoors
- Stay in your age groups or assigned groups at all times
- Dress appropriately at all times (including appropriate shoes for physical activities)
- Do not have tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons in your possession
- Follow school rules if program is located in public school
- Be respectful of others' race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The Organization strives to provide a positive place for all members to learn and grow. The safety of our members is our primary concern, and therefore we have no tolerance for fighting, bullying, harassment, or damage to property. If a child acts out in an aggressive manner with the intent of harming another child, staff, or causing damage to property he/she will be suspended for no less than one day. We understand each altercation is different and some incidents are more severe than others, and as a result discipline may vary depending on each individual incident.

The parent/guardian of any child that is suspended or dismissed from the program for inappropriate behavior is responsible for transportation or arrangements of transportation from the program within one hour of being notified that the child is being suspended or dismissed from the program.

Discipline & Guidance Policy

It is the goal of the Organization to encourage the moral and character development of its members. Our programs are designed to help youth develop the skills to make necessary and responsible decisions and to accept the consequences of their actions. However, the Boys & Girls Clubs must operate in a safe manner to ensure the well-being of all participants. The following are discipline procedures implemented by the Organization in the event of a violation of our codes of conduct. These procedures may not be applicable to severe infractions. In the case of a severe infraction, the Organization reserves the right to discipline appropriately; this may mean immediate suspension without going through the warning procedures.

Issues of Disrespect

Offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Name calling;
- Cursing;
- Walking away from staff;
- Non-compliance to staff requests;
- Disruptive behavior;
- Non-compliance to program area rules;
- Inappropriate public displays of affection.

For each of the offenses outlined below, an Incident Report will be completed. Copy of report will be given to the parent, submitted to the Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director, and the original filed at the Campus.

1st Offense – Verbal warning – A staff member will explain to the child the rule that has been broken and the importance of following the rules.

2nd Offense – Age appropriate time out – Should a child commit the same infraction after receiving a verbal warning he/she will be required to sit time out. The length of time is determined by the age of the child and should not exceed 15 minutes.

3rd Offense – Age appropriate time out extended – Should a child commit the same infraction for a third time, the child will be required to sit in time out for an extended period of time. The length of time is determined by the child's age and should not exceed 20 minutes.

4th Offense – Parent Conference -If the child commits the same infraction for a fourth time, the parent and child will be required to meet with the Site Director to discuss appropriate consequences. Continued misconduct may result in suspension.

5th Offense – Suspension – If the child commits the same infraction for a fifth time, the child may be suspended up to five days (or longer) depending on the severity of the infraction. A parent may be contacted and asked to pick the child up immediately.

Ongoing/regular issues of disrespect will result in parent conference and potential expulsion from the Boys & Girls Clubs.

Incidents involving issues of safety (i.e. running away from a program area) can result in immediate suspension or removal from the program.

If a member has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) on file, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the behavior modification steps outlined in the Plan, with regard to issues of disrespect. No accommodations can be made for behavior infractions falling within the Zero Tolerance Policy.

ALL suspensions must be documented and a copy forwarded to parent, Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director, and school representative if program is housed in a school. Only an Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director can authorize suspensions or dismissal from program. Dismissal from program may be applied for serious or ongoing documented behavioral problems.

Staff will not use corporal punishments as a method of dealing with behavior modification.

Programs located on school property are also subject to rules and laws enforced by the school.

Payment is still due for days a child is suspended from the program.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure

Parents will be expected to wait with their child until the Campus opens. Children must not be left alone. **Each child must be signed in and out by his/her parent, guardian, or other adult, as authorized by the parent.**

Parents must designate authorized pick-up information when enrolling a member and must update the member record in the Parent Portal as changes occur. It is the parent's responsibility to change or update this information as needed. It is important that the information remains current in the event of an emergency.

Parents must come into the building to drop-off and pick-up their child(ren). All authorized pick-up persons should be prepared to show photo ID upon request from BGC staff.

Alternative Transportation

Uber/Lyft

Members will not be released to Uber or Lyft drivers. It is against both Uber and Lyft company policies for drivers to transport riders under the age of 18 without an accompanying adult.

Traditional Taxi Services

Members will not be released to traditional taxi service drivers.

* Please see information regarding McKinney-Vento below.

Children's Transportation Services

Members may be released to services that cater to parents needing transportation for their children (i.e. Are We There Yet – not an endorsement, just an example) if the following conditions are met:

- The company performs background checks on its drivers
- The parent has listed the company as an authorized pick up
- The driver comes in to sign the member out

McKinney-Vento Members

School districts often use traditional taxi services as the means of transportation for McKinney-Vento students. If this is the case, the Campus should be notified by a school or district official that this will be the transportation provided for the student, and should provide the name of the taxi service and a contact phone number. In these cases, the following steps must be taken for the member to be released:

- The driver comes in to sign the member out
- The Site Director makes a photo copy of the driver's license (if the driver is unwilling to provide his/her license, the Site Director should contact the taxi service to request a different driver)

Food

A nutritious, USDA approved snack is provided for each child during the After School Care Program. Breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack are provided to Summer Camp participants. In accordance with USDA rules, food must be eaten on the premises during the regulated times (the only exception is pre-approved field trips).

Allergies and Medical Conditions

It is **imperative** that parents indicate any allergies to food, medications, or any medical conditions that may affect their child's well-being on their membership application. The staff will be made aware of these allergies and conditions.

Parents must complete the Medical Information Form providing information about the allergy or medical condition. If medication administration is required while the child is in the program, the parent must also complete the Medication Form.

Medication Policy

Staff may administer medication only if the following conditions are met:

1. Medication to be given at Boys & Girls Clubs must be accompanied by the Medication Form, complete with parent or guardian signature, and be provided to the Site Director in the original labeled container provided by the pharmacist who filled the prescription.

2. "Sample" medications must be provided in a container that appropriately identifies the medication, and must be accompanied by a note signed and dated by the prescribing health care provider that includes the child's name, directions for proper administration, and the name, address, and phone number of the prescribing health provider.
3. Over the counter medications must also be accompanied by official documentation from the health care provider.

Sick Children

Sick children will be sent home from the Campus due to any illness that keeps them from fully participating in the program. After notification, parents must pick up the ill child within two hours. Until that time, sick children are separated from the large group and provided a comfortable place to rest.

Emergency Procedures

The following procedures will be taken when children develop health problems or become severely injured while in the program:

1. Parent will be contacted with the condition of the child.
2. The Site Director will recommend whether a child is to be picked up.
3. Following an injury, an Incident Report will be written and kept on file. Parents will be provided with a copy.
4. In extreme emergency situations an ambulance will be dispatched. Parents will be notified and Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director will be contacted by phone.

ADA Policy

The Organization will provide services to children with disabilities or other special needs to the extent it is reasonably able to do so in the same manner as services are provided for other children of comparable age.

Parents have the obligation to disclose significant medical, physical, or behavioral issues at the time of the member's enrollment and on an ongoing basis. Due to the large group format of the program, it is not possible to provide one-on-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

Families who have children with significant medical, physical, or behavioral issues must communicate with the Executive Director/Area Director/Territory Director for the Campus the member will attend, and provide them with the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Smoking

To create a safe and healthy environment for the children, smoking (to include e-cigarettes, vaping, and smokeless tobacco) is not allowed in the Service Center or anywhere on its premises. All Campuses are also smoke-free zones.

Field Trips

Field trips are one of the most exciting parts of our summer program. They are opportunities for vivid and memorable learning experiences. Children are eligible for field trips based upon behavior and participation. There are no additional fees for field trips. All field trips require signed parental permission slips by the date of the event.

Lost & Found

Any articles found should be turned in at the front desk. The Site Director will make every effort to distribute the articles daily. All unclaimed articles will be given to the school lost and found or donated. The Organization is not responsible for lost or donated items.

Grievance Policy

Parents and members have the right to file a grievance without interference or retaliation.

Parents or members who have a grievance against BGC that they are not comfortable discussing with the Site Director (the direct supervisor at the Campus) or the Site Director's Supervisor (Executive/Area Director) can submit their grievance to the Customer Service Department by calling the Service Center at (803) 231-3300. The grievance will be routed to and handled by the appropriate management staff.

Timely notification of the resolution and an explanation of any further appeal, rights, or recourse may be provided in person, via telephone, or via email. Parents have the right at any point to request a written summary of the resolution.

Member Files

All member information and files are confidential. However, during the course of normal business operation, it may be necessary for BGC to share member information with the school, oversight bodies, or reviewers.

Mandated Reporters

As child care providers in the state of South Carolina, all BGC employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, BGC will notify the proper authorities without seeking parental consent.

Electronic Device Policies

Elementary School-Issued Device Policy

As it pertains to school-issued devices (laptops, tablets) in the possession of members during the afterschool program, the following requirements apply:

- Members will only be allowed to utilize the device for homework during designated homework time.
- The expectations for the use of the device are the same as the school policy. Any violations of this will result in the member losing the ability to utilize the device during Be Great Academy, and the incident will be reported to both the parent/guardian and the school administration.
- The member is responsible for the device at all times. Be Great Academy is not responsible for devices that are lost, stolen, or damaged.

Please note that non-school-issued devices are not permitted at Be Great Academy for members in elementary school.

Middle School/Teen Center Electronic Device Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the acceptable use of personal electronic communication devices (ECD) brought by any member to any Be Great Academy (BGA) activity. Both members and their parents/guardians should be aware of all statements and expectations concerning ECDs.

Use of ECD on school or district grounds and/or access to the network is contingent upon prudent and responsible use. The user will abide by all BGA, school, and district Acceptable Use Policies, which prohibits use of the network for illegal, inappropriate, or unethical purposes. Members will ensure that the network is not negatively impacted and that all resident systems remain secure and intact.

Any member discovered to take any of the following actions will be considered in violation of this agreement:

- 1) Any access, upload, download, or distribution of inappropriate material
- 2) Any transmission of obscene, abusive, or inappropriate language
- 3) Any actions which violate local, State, or Federal statutes
- 4) Any vandalism or damage of property belonging to another member, school district, or BGA
- 5) Any access of another person's materials, information, or files without the implied or direct permission of that person

6) Any violation of copyright or other use another person's intellectual property without their prior approval or proper citation.

Any ECD brought to BGA is the member's personal property and/or a school-issued device for which he/she is responsible, and not the property of Be Great Academy. The member is solely responsible for its safekeeping. None of the aforementioned will assume responsibility for this device and will be held blameless in the event of damage, loss, theft, or any cost incurred with the use of the device.

Responsibility for the care of the device and member behavior while using this device belongs solely to the user.

BGA members who misuse ECD in any of the following ways may face disciplinary action up to expulsion from the program:

Refusal to Turn Off an ECD. Students in possession of an ECD must turn it off when directed by a BGA staff member.

Cyberbullying or Harassment.

- *Harassment* means a gesture, an electronic communication, or a written, verbal, physical, or sexual act that is reasonably perceived to have the effect of:
 - (a) Harming a person physically or emotionally or damaging a person's property, or placing a person in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage; or
 - (b) Insulting or demeaning a person or group causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the program.
- *Cyberbullying* refers to bullying that is done electronically through ECDs and that meets the above definition of harassment. This form of bullying may either be sent directly to the victim or indirectly through messages sent to others. This includes, but is not limited to, blogging and posting on social networking sites. Students who engage in cyberbullying or harassment face disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from BGA.

Sexting. Sexting means taking, sending, forwarding, or asking to receive messages, photos, or videos of persons who are partially or completely undressed or are pretending to or actually performing a sexual act.

Threats. Students may not use ECDs to communicate intent to harm or assault anyone.

Violations of this policy may result in one or more of the following:

- Cancellation of authorization to use of device privileges during BGA
- Suspension or expulsion from BGA
- Disciplinary action and/or civil or criminal liability under other applicable laws.