

SAFETY POLICIES AND ACTIONS



As the national organization founded to serve and enable the 1,100 Boys & Girls Club organizations that run 4,300 local Boys & Girls Clubs, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's (BGCA's) absolute top priority is the safety of the 4 million children who attend a Club each year. BGCA's Child & Club Safety Team is composed of safety experts who provide support to local organizations on a variety of issues, including physical and emotional safety, facilities management, emergency management, child sexual abuse prevention and disaster preparedness. BGCA has taken extensive actions to provide safe and secure environments for children, as outlined below.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS: All local Club employees and board volunteers must undergo an annual criminal background check, and all volunteers (including minors) who have direct, repetitive contact with children must also receive an annual background check. The requirement also applies to staff and volunteers from other organizations who may work in local Clubs as part of a partnership or collaboration.

24-HOUR HOTLINE: All Clubs have access to a 24-hour hotline (866-607-SAFE) that can be used for confidential advice, guidance and resources through a partnership with nationally recognized risk prevention and safety expert Praesidium.

TRAINING: All Club employees have access to a variety of safety training from BGCA and through partner organizations, and specific courses on overall child safety and supervising young people are available through an online talent development portal. Additionally, BGCA provides Clubs with safety training opportunities at regional and national conferences, through consultations with BGCA's Child & Club Safety Team and via webinars and other learning events.

APPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY: BGCA has developed policies to ensure the safe and appropriate use of technology in Clubhouses, including computers, mobile technology and social media. Resources, trainings and activities are tailored for various audiences and age ranges, including kids, tweens, teens and adult staff members. Additionally, BGCA provides Clubs with digital-use policy templates to help Clubs create their own local policies.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS SAFETY COMMITTEE: The group, composed of four governors, five trustees (one per region) and three BGCA staff members, meets quarterly to provide guidance and advice on child safety. The committee conducts formal reviews of BGCA's child safety strategies, goals, objectives, targets, metrics and response to critical incident reporting.

NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY ADVISORY TASK FORCE: The panel of nationally recognized experts, researchers and thought leaders provides advice and expertise to BGCA leadership and the Child & Club Safety Team on safety trends, issues, initiatives and best practices. The task force meets quarterly, including at least once a year in person.

LOCAL BOARD-LED SAFETY COMMITTEES: BGCA is working to ensure that all Club organizations have a board-led safety committee; more than 400 organizations currently do.

ONLINE ORGANIZATIONAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT: This tool enables Clubs to perform self-assessments that provide immediate recommendations and links to BGCA safety resources to help each organization create a board-driven safety improvement plan. Site assessments are then approved by the CEO and submitted to BGCA. Clubs receive recommendations based on their responses. Resource triggers have also been built in should organizations respond negatively to selected questions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Local organizations are required to report critical safety incidents to BGCA within 24 hours. This enables the national organization to provide timely support and resources.

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: This system provides a reporting mechanism for incidents and the ability to activate support to the Club level or by market. BGCA responds to these incidents within 24 hours and provides critical support to organizations, members and communities, involving local law enforcement when needed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Organizations have access to resources to help guide policy, strengthen safety practices and train their staff and volunteers on how to keep children safe. *Keep Safe: The Club Safety Desk Reference*, a 200-page manual published by BGCA, provides tools, resources and best practices to enable Clubs to develop customized safety strategies. In partnership with MetLife Foundation, BGCA also published *Kids in Control*, a guide of youth-focused safety awareness activities. Both publications are available to every Club.