

24-HOUR TOLL-FREE CHILD SAFETY HOTLINE

We encourage all staff, members and families to report any incident or situation they feel is unsafe. Through our national partnership with Praesidium, one of the nation's leading safety experts, Boys & Girls Club of Van Buren's members and staff have access to a confidential 24-hour toll-free Child Safety Hotline at 866-607-SAFE (7233) or SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com.

MANDATORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mandatory criminal background checks are required upon hire and annually for every staff and board member at the Boys & Girls Club of Van Buren. In addition, criminal background checks are required for any volunteer who has direct, repetitive contact with children. All potential employees and volunteers are run through a screening process through VeriScreen.

REQUIRED IMMEDIATE REPORTING

Boys & Girls Club of Van Buren's staff and volunteers are all mandated reporters and are required to report any critical incident/safety concern immediately. We are also required to report any critical incident to Boys & Girls Clubs of America within 24 hours.

MANDATORY ANNUAL SAFETY ASSESSMENT

We employ a multi-tiered safety assessment approach to ensure we continually make improvements to safety at our Clubs.

SAFETY TRAININGS

Ongoing training and supervision of staff are critical. We participate in a wide variety of child safety training through online courses, conferences and webinars. We also engage leading third-party safety experts to provide guidance for our policies and approaches, including Praesidium, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the National Children's Advocacy Center.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

We have a dedicated Board-led Safety Committee to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies.

MANDATORY EMPLOYEE REFERENCE

Any employee interested in moving to another Boys & Girls Club is required to have a reference from their previous Club, even if the Clubs are within the same community.

STATE AND LOCAL LAWS

We comply with federal, state and local safety laws, including those impacting facilities and vehicles.

SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America works with leading experts in the areas of safety, security and technology to develop state-of-the-art solutions for Clubs. Partners include: National Child Safety Advisory Task Force, made up of leading experts and organizations; Blue Ribbon Task Force, composed of local Club leaders who provide input on safety direction and key safety initiatives; Mental Health First Aid, a national program that teaches skills to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse; Crisis Text Line, a confidential text message service for youth in times of crisis.

OUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT

In July 2020, Boys & Girls Club organizations voted to adopt additional safety measures to further improve safety within our Clubs. Though many of these practices were already commonplace across our Movement, this vote made them mandatory for all Clubs. These include more stringent reference and background checks, enhanced Safety Committee requirements, stronger communication of key safety resources and information, and more. With an unprecedented majority, on July 26, 2021, local Boys & Girls Clubs voted in record numbers to adopt additional membership requirements that further enhance child safety, implementing recommendations from RAINN that began in 2020 and will continue over the next two years—a demonstration of our continued commitment to keeping kids safe.

Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America has advocated for passage of the U.S PROTECT Act to improve background screening systems and access. The national organization has also partnered with the FBI, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Centers for Disease Control to support the development of safety practices that benefit ALL youth-serving organizations.

America's young people deserve nothing less than our constant focus on their safety and our firm commitment to protect every child who is entrusted to our care at the Boys & Girls Club of Van Buren. To learn more about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's [Child Safety \(bgca.org\)](https://www.bgca.org)