



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF
GREATER VERGENNES**

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VERGENNES, VT
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**MEMBER/ FAMILY HANDBOOK
2020-2021**

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OUR MISSION:

To inspire and enable all young people, to reach their full potential as caring, productive and responsible citizens.

Dear Member & Family,

Welcome to the **Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes!** We are thrilled that you are joining our Club community and believe you will find our program to be engaging, fun and rewarding. We are always looking for ways to increase youth opportunities and use our mission to guide us in everything that we do.

Our program offers the opportunity for youth and teens to enjoy a safe and engaging youth-oriented experience. This handbook contains information regarding your child's participation as a member of our Club. It is very important that you read this handbook with your child(ren) to become familiar with our program. It will also answer many of the questions you may have about the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,
Kat Nelson, CEO
802-870-7199
kat@bgcvergenes.org

Board of Directors:

David Small, Board Chair
Scott Hardy, Vice Chair
Annie Hopper, Secretary
Shanon Atkins, Treasurer
Matthew Birong
Susan Burdick
Zoe Kaslow
Scott McArdle
Sherm Grant
John Coburn

PURPOSE

The Boys & Girls Club of Great Vergennes Program is designed to promote success in school, good character and leadership, and a healthy sense of self in order for youth to live full, satisfying, and productive lives. It is important that all programs and activities promote these efforts to their fullest potential.

We will meet the needs of your child(ren) by:

- Offering members an environment of warmth and security provided by caring staff, in which they can all grow, respect and enjoy each other.
- Providing for the development of self-esteem in selection, structure and balance of activities offered.
- Encouraging freedom within set limits.
- Fostering individuality, decision-making and problem solving skills.
- Supporting academic success by providing time and resources when needed.
- Providing nutritious foods that meet the health needs of growing children.

We will meet the needs of your family by:

- Providing the security of a safe and caring environment
- Remaining affordable.
- Creating a bridge between school and home.

CLUB DETAILS

Membership

Membership is open to all students entering the 4th grade to 12th grade. Membership is open to any youth regardless of race, color, religion or national origin. Required paperwork includes a membership application and signed sheet at the back of the Parent/Member Handbook. All forms are available at the Boys & Girls Club and on our website.

Hours

- Regular School Day the Club is open from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Dinner is served from 3:00-3:30pm.
- School In-Service Days and School Vacation the Club is closed
- School Half-Days - 11:30 a.m.to 6:00 p.m. Lunch is served.
- School Snow Days - Club is closed.

- Summer hours are 7:30 to 1:00 PM. Breakfast and lunch are served.

Emergency Closure – We will follow the ANWSD's lead for cancelation of after-school activities due to bad weather. We will post on Facebook and send out an email as soon as possible.

Daily Schedule

A typical day at the Club consists of laughter, creating meaningful relationships, group fun, a healthy meal, stimulating activities, ample time to complete homework, mentoring and the option to participate in physical activity.

Typical Daily Schedule

2:30 - 4:00 Arrive, Meal, Outdoor & Enrichment Games

4:00 - 4:30 Power Half Hour

4:30 - 5:30 Activity time

5:30 - 6:00 Free time

Open Door Policy

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes is a drop-in facility with an open door policy that states:

- Members are not required to attend the Club every day.
- Members are not required to be signed out by an adult.
- The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes is not responsible for any decision your child makes after leaving the premises for the day.
- **If your child may NOT sign him/herself out, you can indicate this on your child's/teen's membership form.**

Pick Up Policy

Only a parent/guardian or authorized representative will be allowed to pick up a child. Staff must receive written approval from the parent/guardian for any unauthorized adult to pick up a child from the Club.

Custody Agreements: If there are custody issues involved with your child, please provide the Club with court papers indicating who has permission to pick up your child. The Club cannot deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation being on file.

Transportation

The Boys & Girls Club does not provide transportation to and from the Club. Elementary students from Vergennes and Ferrisburgh can be dropped off at the Club after school.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child is picked up at the Club by the scheduled closing time.

Field Trips

Permission for trips away from the Club, whether on foot or by contracted driver, is given as part of the Parent/Guardian Permissions section of the membership form.

MEDICAL NEEDS

Illness

Members are asked to stay home when unwell. Those who come to the Club sick WILL be sent home. The parents or guardians will be notified. If a child becomes ill at the Club, all attempts will be made to notify the parent/guardians for pick up.

Members with any form of contagious infection or condition *may* be denied access to the Club until the symptoms have subsided. It may be required for the member to bring a doctor's note to return to the club. Some examples of specific illnesses:

- Fever
- Skin Rashes
- Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis
- Head Lice
- Ringworm

If your child does not attend school due to an illness or is sent home by the school nurse during the school day, they should not come to the Club that day.

Chronic Illness, Dietary Restrictions & Special Needs

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to inform Boys & Girls Club staff of all relevant information so that we may work together to meet the needs of your child(ren) to the best of our ability. Parents/guardians whose children are diagnosed with special needs such as Autism, Down syndrome, ADD or ADHD are encouraged to share home and school setting needs with BGC staff so that we can attempt to mirror successful strategies when possible during our program time and work together to see if this program will be a positive fit for the child.

Medication Needs

If a member requires distribution of medication during hours of operation of the Club or has severe asthma or a potentially life-threatening allergy, please notify the Club to determine the best course of action.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a minor injury to a member beyond band-aids the staff will follow the procedures outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan. Staff will:

- Administer first aid and inform the parent about the injury.
- Complete an Incident Report Form

An emergency constitutes an injury of a child requiring doctor's care or any situation requiring emergency vehicles (ambulance, fire, police, etc.) on the premises. Parents/guardians are responsible for any cost associated with medical treatment for their child.

In the event of a *medical emergency* involving a member, staff will:

- Stay with child and call 911
- Call Parent/Guardian
- Accompany the child to the hospital if a parent/guardian is unavailable, provided there are a reasonable number of staff members to remain on site.
- Remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives and is fully informed about the emergency.
- Complete an Incident Report Form

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB PROGRAM

Age-appropriate activities are available daily and are determined by our members' interests and program plans. Staff work directly with participants to plan and provide engaging activities for all.

Health & Wellness

Members are encouraged to engage in 30 minutes of movement each day. They have access to games inside, as well as basketball courts, athletic fields and tennis courts nearby. Members may sign out to use community facilities independently or participate in staff-led activities. The Club also has a full laundry for members to use as needed.

Academic Support

A designated homework time and academic support from volunteers are available daily. Resources to complete homework such as computer time and printer access are available. Please notify staff in advance should your child need additional resources.

Global Learning

Participants learn about global issues as they become champions of diversity, inclusion and global engagement. We are committed to being inclusive and to embracing diversity.

Leadership

The Boys & Girls Club is committed to developing passionate, cause-driven leaders of the future. Participants gain leadership skills that help them grow to reach their full potential. All members will be given opportunities to practice leadership at the Club and in the community.

Enrichment

Participants choose, create, and participate in Club activity options. These include monthly themes and daily activities facilitated by our staff. We use evidence-based STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) curricula to design activities that support our members' creativity, innovation and achievements in these areas.

Teen Center "The Farside" is an area within the Club, which is open to members in grades 7 through 12 only. Teen Nights will occur on the second Friday of every month during the school year. Teen Nights run from 6:00 to 8:00pm.

PROGRAM SAFETY

Mandatory Reporting

The Boys & Girls Club Program is mandated by the State's child protection laws to report to the Vermont Department for Children and Families any suspected cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. Staff are required to immediately notify the Department of Children and Families when they suspect that a member has been abused or neglected. Board-approved policies and supervision practices have been created to prevent and protect youth from abuse or neglect while at the Boys & Girls Club. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the child protection laws, the Club's policies and practices in this area, or the program's reporting guidelines, please contact the Club at 802-870-7199.

Safety Policy

- No member will be left alone or unsupervised at any time while attending the Boys & Girls Club.
- Members will inform staff if they are leaving the Club and will sign themselves out.

STAFF and VOLUNTEERS

Staff

Our staff is carefully selected for their experience and interests. Staff members serve as mentors to youth and provide direct support to youth during Club hours. All Staff are screened and trained to ensure the safest, highest quality programs for our members.

Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome to assist in programming and special events. Volunteers must submit a completed volunteer application that includes a background check. When the background check has been completed, volunteers go through an Orientation, receive training, and are then placed in a program area matching their interests and skills.

ELECTRONICS

Phone Usage

We understand that personal electronics are widely used and can support growth and development. On occasion, members will be able to use their phones for particular activities. **More often than not, personal phones will be put away during Club hours. If you are having trouble connecting with your child, please call the Club phone, 802-870-7199. Members must ask staff permission to use the Club phone.**

Acceptable Use Procedures for Electronics

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes uses the following acceptable use procedures for electronics in order to maintain a safe and secure environment for members, staff, volunteers and others.

Personal and Club electronics may be used for Club purposes only. This includes program activities, career development, communication with experts and/or Club peer members, homework and Club activities. Members are expected to act responsibly and thoughtfully when using technology resources. Members bear the burden of responsibility to inquire with staff when they are unsure of the permissibility of a particular use of technology prior to engaging in the use. The Club expressly prohibits use of personally owned or Club owned devices restrooms and other areas where there is an expectation of privacy.

Any inappropriate use of a personally owned device or a Club owned device, as determined by Club staff, can lead to disciplinary action as outlined in our behavior management policy.

Inappropriate communication includes, but is not limited to, the following: obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language or images typed, posted, or spoken by members; information that could cause damage to an individual or the Club community or create the danger of disruption of the Club environment; personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks; harassment (persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person) or stalking of others; knowingly or recklessly posting false or defamatory information about a person or organization; and communication that promotes the destruction of property, including the acquisition or creation of weapons or other destructive devices. If a member is told to stop sending communications, that member must cease the activity immediately.

Members may not utilize **any** technology to harass, threaten, demean, humiliate, intimidate, embarrass, or annoy their peers or others in their community. This behavior is cyberbullying, bullying that takes place using emerging technologies and devices. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles. Any cyber bullying that is determined to disrupt the safety and/or well-being of the Club, Club Member, Club Staff or community is subject to disciplinary action.

Members must be aware of appropriateness of communications when using Club or personally owned devices. Inappropriate communication is prohibited in any public messages, private messages, and material posted online by members.

Internet access. Club owned devices used at the Club are not permitted to directly connect to the Internet through a phone network or other content service provider. Club owned devices must access the internet via the Club's content filtered wireless network. Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes reserves the right to monitor communication and internet traffic, and to manage, open or close access to specific online websites, portals, networks or other services. Members must follow Club procedures to access the Club's internet service.

Loss and Damage. Members are responsible for their own devices. Staff are not responsible for the security and condition of the member's personal device. Furthermore, The Club shall not be liable for the loss, damage, misuse, theft of any personally owned device brought to Club.

Parental Notification and Responsibility. BGCGV's Internet Acceptable Use Policy restricts the access of inappropriate material. Due to the wide range material available

on the internet, some material may not fit the particular values of members and their families. Because of this, it is not practical for BGCGV to monitor and enforce a wide range of social values in student use of the Internet. If parents do not want members to access information beyond the scope of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy, parents should instruct members not to access such materials.

MEMBER RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Membership at the Club is a privilege. It is a place where members :

- *Show kind, caring and respectful behavior to self and others.*
- *Are honest, responsible, and reasonable.*
- *Maintain a smoke, drug, alcohol, gang and weapons free zone.*
- *Respect the personal space and property of others.*
- *Use the Club's property as intended.*
- *Use appropriate language refraining from profanity or obscene language*
- *Help maintain a safe and clean Club.*

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes is a private membership organization, not a public entity. Refusal to follow the rules will result in discipline up to and including discussion, suspension or expulsion at the sole discretion of the organization.

Personal Property

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes is not responsible for the lost, stolen, or damaged personal property belonging to children or the parent/guardian, including cell phones. We strongly encourage children not to bring items of monetary or sentimental value to our program services as we cannot guarantee their security.

BULLYING POLICY

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Vergennes is committed to providing all members with a safe and civil environment, and takes a **ZERO TOLERANCE** approach on any form of bullying. It is the Club's expectation that all members adhere to a policy of respectful behavior. The Club will do everything in its lawful power to reduce the incidence of bullying and bully-type behaviors, and to proactively create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance, dignity, and human rights.

We define bullying as:

An attack of intimidation toward another with the intention to cause fear, distress, or harm, that is either:

Physical (e.g., hitting, punching, tripping, pushing)

Verbal (e.g., name calling, teasing, hand signals or inappropriate gestures, yelling, using inappropriate language)

Psychological/Relational (e.g. rumors, social exclusion, mind games, etc.)

Digital (e.g. inappropriate comments on social media websites, posting photos without permission, etc.) “Cyber bullying” and other forms of electronic aggression are defined as bullying.

A real or perceived imbalance of power between the “bully” and the victim. Repeated attacks or intimidation, no matter the severity, between the same youth over time.

Staff and volunteers who observe an act of bullying are expected to take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. If the staff member or volunteer believes their intervention has not resolved the matter, they shall report it to their supervisor and document the incident in writing. The Club Director or appropriate staff member will inform the parent or guardian of any member who was observed as a victim or perpetrator of bullying if the issue has not been appropriately resolved. Depending on the frequency and severity of the conduct, intervention, counseling, correction, discipline and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to remedy the impact on the victim and change the perpetrator’s behavior.

Zero Tolerance for the Following Behaviors

The following behaviors will automatically suspend a member for one day (or more):

- Fighting
- Bullying
- Stealing
- Threatening the safety of a Club member, staff member, or volunteer.
- Damage to Boys & Girls Club facility or equipment --- Members are expected to reimburse Boys & Girls Club for any damage and will be billed to parent(s) or guardians.
- Possession and or being under the influence of alcohol, drugs or tobacco.
- Possession of a weapon of any kind.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Behavior Management Practices

Should a member fail to abide by the Boys & Girls Club Rules and Regulations and/or threaten their own health or the safety of others, the Boys & Girls Club staff will carry out the following practice:

- Take immediate action to discontinue behavior.
- Separate or isolate the member from the situation and promote calm.
- Debrief with each individual involved to understand all sides of the situation. Staff will initiate conversation as to why some actions are not acceptable. Redirection from an activity or situation may be needed.
- If necessary, a parent/guardian will be notified of the situation and informed of the details and a future plan of action.
- If the severity of inappropriate behavior warrants or the member refuses to stop the behavior when asked, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up member from the Club.
- Additionally, staff will attempt to learn the causes of behavior and do everything in their power to help and understand the member's actions and reasoning.

Discipline Procedures

At the Club we ask our members to live by our Club Agreement: Respect, Kindness, and Positivity. We recognize that our members may exhibit behavior at times that don't follow this agreement and together we will work to resolve the unwanted behavior.

When a Staff recognizes concerning behavior they will:

1. Address the unwanted behavior with the individual and provide an opportunity for it to be corrected.
2. If the behavior continues, the Staff will seek support from the Director of Programs or the CEO who will address the individual directly. The individual will be asked to have a conversation to get to the root of the behavior.
3. If the behavior continues and is disrupting the daily program, the Staff will communicate with parents/guardians to discuss ways we can continue to support the individual.
4. If the behavior continues over the course of time, it may be recommended that the individual take time away from the Club.

Termination of Membership

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Vergennes reserves the right to discontinue membership under any of the following conditions:

- Failure to abide by any of the registration conditions as written in the Parent/Guardian Permissions section of the application or failure to fulfill any of the conditions in this handbook.
- Behavior by a member that disrupts program goals and objectives. This includes, but is not limited to: repeated instances of failing to listen to staff, refusal or repeated failure to follow club rules and code of conduct, or physical /verbal abuse towards another participant or staff.
- Failure of parents/guardians to treat staff, other parents or participants respectfully including inappropriate or abusive language, behavior or threats.
- Our Club follows a zero-tolerance policy in regards to weapons and physical attacks. Any person that uses or threatens with a weapon or physical attack will be permanently expelled from the Boys & Girls Club.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB PROMISE

- I will use appropriate language refraining from profanity, racial remarks, verbally abusive remarks or any language that is disrespectful of others' differences.
- I will be kind and respectful to myself and others in my thoughts, words and actions.
- I will follow the rules of the Boys & Girls of Greater Vergennes by being a caring, productive and responsible member.
- I will respect the personal space and property of others.
- I will use the Club's property as intended.
- I will refrain from engaging in gossip or any other type of bullying behavior both in person and electronically.

- I will respect the boundaries between myself and the staff of the Boys & Girls Club and I understand the Boys & Girls Clubs of America policy prohibits member staff interactions on social media.