GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF BROCKTON

MEMBER HANDBOOK
OUR MISSION
To nurture strong minds, healthy bodies and community spirit through youth driven, quality programming in a safe and fun environment.

OUR HISTORY
The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton (BGCB) was founded in 1990 to create a positive place for the youth of Brockton, Massachusetts. It immediately met a need in the community; in the first year alone, 500 youth ages 8-18 signed up as Club members. In the years since, the Club has expanded its scope exponentially by offering a mix of Boys & Girls Club of America (BGCA) nationally developed programs and activities unique to our Club. Since our founding, more than 25,000 Brockton youth have been welcomed through our doors. Today we serve more than 2,000 boys and girls ages 5-18 annually through our academic year and summertime programming.
OUR IMPACT

Our Club is located in Brockton, Massachusetts, a city of 94,000 south of the Greater Boston area. For decades, Brockton has been one of the most economically disadvantaged cities in the Commonwealth. Our Club is located within a geographic area that has an CDI Index rating of 10 out of the maximum 10. This index measures poverty level, crime rates, and other barriers that inhibit children and their families from succeeding.

Our Club provides a critical solution to this problem by inspiring our kids, raising expectations, and providing opportunities for educational support to ensure that our kids can succeed, regardless of their life circumstances.

This is a Boys & Girls Club. It belongs to the children that attend, their parents, and the community in general. As staff we are the stewards of the Club. Our job is to strive to insure that each member has a positive experience at the Club. We encourage parents to provide us with input to improve the Club.

Our programs are developed within the Boys & Girls Club core areas of: Character & Leadership; Education & Career; Health & Life Skills; and Sports, Fitness & Recreation. Club members share in similar programs, but geared to the appropriate age level.

MEMBERSHIP

The Club is open to all youth ages 8-18 for our general program. Youth ages 5-7 must be enrolled in our Kid’s Club program. The membership is valid September 1st through August 31st. This membership must be renewed annually. It is important that parents/guardians read and complete a membership application each year. Additional fees may apply to certain programs and activities offered throughout the year, including specialized sports programs, school vacation weeks, summer day camp, and program related offerings.

Youth ages 5-7 must be enrolled in our Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, Kid’s Club. This school age licensed program is open to youth ages 5-12 but those who are 5-7 years of age are required to be enrolled in the program to participate in Boys & Girls Club of Brockton programming.

New members, with their parents, are required to attend a one-time orientation to receive a tour of the facility, meet staff members, and receive an overview and understanding of club policies and code of conduct. A schedule may be obtained at our member service desk.

We are a membership organization and members are required to have their membership card daily, as it serves for their entry to building. There are no exceptions to this policy. If you child arrives at the club without a card a $8 fee will be charged for a new card or admittance could be denied. This policy is strictly enforced and parent help with this is greatly appreciated.

The Boys & Girls Club has an Open Door Policy (unless registered in the Kid’s Club Program), which means that members must sign themselves in and out of the Club, using their individual membership cards.
MEMBERSHIP FOR ALL & CLUB-CARES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

At our Club, we welcome everyone’s involvement by providing financial assistance through our CLUB-Cares Financial Assistance Program. It’s an important part of our mission.

If you need financial assistance from the Club please visit our website or the Member Services Center for a financial assistance application. Reduced fees are available in the areas of membership, child care, summer camp and other programs.

The amount of assistance is based on need, as determined by family income guidelines and is available to children who participate in the Club. Our Club reserve the right to request back-up documentation for all financial assistance applications. By accepting financial assistance you agree to update our Club should your financial circumstances change.

We count on the generosity of our donors and the community to help our members thrive in our Club. Donations to the Annual Campaign allow us to continue to provide financial assistance to children who would otherwise be financially unable to participate in our programs.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

The Club has an open door policy (unless registered in the School Aged Child Care Program). We do not know on a daily basis how many members will be attending the Club.

As a Parent You Should Know:

- The membership services being offered by the program are not licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care or any other state agency.
- The program is offering drop in services and members will receive appropriate staff supervision that meet programmatic goals and safety standards.
- The program is not responsible for the care or supervision of members beyond program closing time.
- Members may arrive at or depart from the program at any time during their time at the program.
- It is the parent's decision if their child is mature enough to attend the Club.

Other Helpful Membership Information:

All members are encouraged to sign-in on our attendance computer upon entering the building. Members are also encouraged to sign out when they leave. Pre-teen Members, ages 8 through 12, are not allowed to leave the Club without an adult. If they choose to do so they will be reprimanded and their parents notified.

Teen Members, 13 and older; that choose to leave the Club, without an adult or Club staff, may do so; teen members are permitted to leave the facility up to a maximum of one time during their stay, after that they will be revoked entrance for the remainder of the Club’s operational hours that day.

They are encouraged to return within one hour and they are required to check in and out with staff. Members who abuse this privilege or engage in negative activities during this time will lose this privilege. At no time may Club members congregate outside of the Boys & Girls Club building.
MEMBERSHIP HOURS
Administrative hours are Monday-Friday 6:30 am - 8:00 pm during the school year and Monday-Friday 7:30 am - 5:30 pm during the summer.

Club Operational Hours are based on the hours listed below during the school year.
- Youth Members – 2:00 pm - 6:30 pm
- Kid's Club After School Child Care Program – 6:30 am - 9:00 & 2:00 pm - 6:30 pm
- Teen Members- 2:00 pm - 8:00 pm (Entrance is locked for admittance at 7:00 pm daily.)

Hours change during school vacations and early release days in order to accommodate working families. These days are determined according to programming needs and to best accommodate our members. (Any additional hours will be posted for parent/guardian notice)

Club Holidays the Club will be closed for the following holidays:
- New Year’s Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and day after
- Christmas Day

The Club will be closed briefly before and after the summer program. Additional staff training days may be held during the year. Club closings will be posted well in advance for any other reason.

CHILD PROTECTION
The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton takes the prevention of child abuse very seriously. The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton understands that child abuse and inappropriate contact of children is a pervasive problem throughout the United States that must be managed in a proactive manner if we are to protect those in our care. The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton is committed to taking proactive steps to protect children in BGC programs and facilities.

The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton Child Protection Policy outlines policies within the four elements of screening and hiring, training, supervision, and feedback systems. If an allegation does occur the Boys & Girls Club of Brockton will proactively work with the authorities and the family to respond in a prompt and empathetic manner. For a copy of our Child Protection Policy please visit our member service desk.

EARLY & LATE FEE POLICY
There will be a $10.00 fee per 15 minutes that your child is left in the Boys & Girls Club before or after the hours of operation. Children will not be allowed back in until the fee has been paid. Multiple infractions will result in membership suspension.

CELL PHONES & PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES
Cell phones, electronic games, and any other kind of personal electronic devices are not allowed at the Club for all youth members. These devices are banned because they are disruptive during programs and are too easily stolen. If you need to contact your child in an emergency call the Club number and we will have your child come to the phone. If they need to call you in an emergency we will allow your child to call if it is an actual emergency. If your child brings these devices to the Club and are noticed by a staff member they will be taken and secured at the front desk. The parent or guardian will need to retrieve the item from the front desk. Repeated offenses will be subject to further discipline. The use cell phones are permitted in our teen lounge for teen members only.

TRANSPORTATION
We provide guided walking from Arnone Elementary School. We also provide transportation from many of the Brockton schools. The Club does not recommend outside transportation providers for travel between school and club. Please see the member services desk for more information on transportation programs.
**LOST & FOUND**
The Club has a lost and found. Any items found that may be of value will be located in the lost and found and can be claimed by parents. The Club is NOT responsible for lost or stolen items. Children should not bring valuables and treasured items unless the child is prepared to keep track of their items. Found items will be cleaned out the last day of each week and given to local organizations.

Bicycles & Skateboards: A bicycle rack is available at the back of our building where Club members can lock their bicycles while participating in Club programs. Bikes, skateboards, scooters, etc. can not be stored inside the Club.

**HEALTH & MEDICATION POLICY**
We will treat cuts, scratches, bumps, and boo-boo’s. If your child requests treatment of a cut or scratch we will clean the wound, apply an antibiotic/pain reliever and bandages as needed. If your child requests an ice pack we will provide them with one after evaluation by our staff.

The Club staff is permitted to administer “some over the counter” basic care items, such as sunscreen, insect repellent, etc. These items must be furnished by the parent/guardian. Under no circumstances are members allowed to carry any medications, prescriptions or over the counter drugs, on their person while at the Club. Required items must be given to Club staff. The Club is not responsible for reactions or improper use of sunscreen, insect repellent, etc. or any item that is “borrowed” from other members. Parents/guardians of any member requiring emergency health care will be notified immediately.

To comply with health regulations, and in fairness to all members, parent/guardians are asked to keep a member home anytime the child:

- Has a fever
- Has contagious illness
- Has a rash
- Has sore or runny eyes
- Head lice

Any other evidence of illness: Members demonstrating acute symptoms of a contagious illness must be picked up immediately by the parent/guardian or designated adult.

**USE OF PHONE**
Members may ask to use our phone but they will only be allowed to make emergency phone calls. If a member is using the phone excessively then staff will restrict their use. Messages may be left at the Club for members. Cell phones are not allowed at the Club.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**
Our club makes every effort to open during inclement weather to best serve our members and parents. Information regarding our posting during inclement weather is posted on our website, Facebook page, and local radio and television stations, including Fox25, WCVB Channel 5 Boston, and Brockton Public Access.

**NUTRITION PROGRAM**
We provide nutritious meals to our youth each evening during the academic year, and both breakfast and lunch during the summer months to ensure that no member who wishes to eat at the Club leaves hungry. Each day we serve meals to nearly 200 of our members; totaling more than 4,000 meals served per month and nearly 50,000 meals serve annually. In addition to meal service, we work to teach our members how to choose healthy foods when they are not at the Club and to make the connection between eating well and feeling well and healthy. We also aim to eliminate the anxiety that comes with never knowing where one’s next meal will come from. By removing this constant worry from the minds of our members, we can free them up to better apply their efforts in school and to be able to just be kids.
Children are encouraged to enjoy the food the Club provides. We only allow outside packed lunches and do not allow any food delivery or fast food.

**MEMBER INFORMATION**

Club Rules – our rules are really just common sense and mirror the rules children are expected to follow at school.

- The Golden Rule applies: Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you.
- Asking for money from staff or other Club members is not allowed.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Members must stay in their assigned group at all times.
- RESPECT yourself, other members, the staff and your Club.
- Members must check in and out from the Club, check in is at the front desk. (See open door policy.)
- Borrowing, lending, or trading of any items including, but not limited to; money, game cards, toys is not permitted. Members must leave with the same items they brought.
- Youth must be in designated areas only and under the supervision of an adult staff member or approved volunteer.
- We strongly encourage members do not wear flip-flops. They tend to break when a child is active and then the child is barefoot the rest of the day. Sneakers are strongly recommended every day.
- The Club encourages new members.—Visiting youth are required to sign up using a guest form—parent must sign form for one week membership—when they arrive and they must follow the same rules as Club Members. Visitor’s passes are valid for one week before they must join. Visitors must be between the ages of 8-18 years old.
- Eating and drinking is allowed in designated areas only. For the safety of our members and potential food allergies, no outside food is permitted in the pre-teen area of the Club other than packed lunches for meal purposes only. The teen center permits items only for meal service, no food may be ordered from outside retail establishments.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY**

We believe that discipline is not about punishment. It is about coaching and guiding young people to understand the value and benefits of behavior that meets their needs without infringing upon others.

Discipline is a daily learning process for young people. Staff must provide a structured setting that never waivers or changes. Members must understand the rules and limits of their behavior to benefit from their Club experience. Discipline is the proactive process of limiting the time for negative behavior through positive alternatives and interventions. Discipline is not the consequences of poor behavior.

Club members must have reinforcement for their behavior. There is a greater chance that positive behavior will be repeated and developed into a lifetime pattern if adults recognize and appreciate this type of behavior starting at a young age.

If our focus is on the negative, with the absence of positive recognition, young people will misbehave just to secure the attention they desire. Club staff understands that many forms of negative behavior are simply the youngster’s desire for attention and recognition. When negative behavior is not followed by immediate correction a young person will often feel the adults not care and a guidance and bonding opportunity is missed. Our staff understands that in the relationship building effort between a young person and staff members there will be friction and testing. This is just part of the process the youngster attempts during the discipline learning experience. Staff is fair, consistent, preventive, and take immediate action to correct a negative behavior or recognize a positive behavior.
We have high standards for our member’s behavior. Acceptable behavior is defined by the following:

- Respect for yourself
- Respect for others
- Respect for our Club

This is the Club’s motto and it is repeated daily by Club staff and displayed around the Club. Our members need to understand that there are both negative and positive consequences from their personal behavior.

**CONSEQUENCES GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are the approved steps for our staff to use in daily program operations:

**BEHAVIORAL STEPS**

This is the process of reinforcement of positive behavior and not accepting the negative behavior by Club members. Staff creates a program environment that helps youngsters be more successful. Staff ensures that they are proactive in preventing negative behavior to occur through the observation of behavioral and program operation clues. Our behavior steps are based on restorative practice research that encourages positive behavior and seeks to understand the psychology behind negative behavior. The following steps are the new protocol for the Boys & Girls Club of Brockton and will be immediately put into practice for pre-teen and teen populations.

**First (GREEN) Warning:**
Includes but is not limited to failure to respect staff and other Club members and interfering with daily programming.

**Action:**
Verbal warning to Club member. Three verbal warnings in a one-day period will result in a yellow offense.

**Second (YELLOW) Warning:**
Three repeated offenses of disrespect towards staff or other Club members with a one-day period.

**Action:**
Written yellow report that will remain on file and a copy is to be mailed or hand-delivered to parent or legal guardian, immediate phone call at time of action to inform parent or legal guardian of offense, Club service program or 2 day suspension from Club (decision to be mutually agreed upon by staff, parent, and Club member). Report must be signed and returned to Club prior to return to the Club.

**Third (RED) Warning:**
Threat or action of physical harm against yourself or others, destruction of property- Club’s or another member’s. A yellow warming followed by a repeated offense will automatically result in a red warning.

**Action:**
Written red report that will remain on file and a copy to be mailed or hand-delivered to parent or legal guardian, immediate phone call at time of action to inform parent or legal guardian of offense, immediate removal from the Club and a one-week suspension. Reinstatement of membership will occur after a behavior meeting with the Club member, parent, and Unit Director to set mutually agreed upon behavior goals for the future. Reinstatement will also require weekly follow ups between the Club member and the Unit Director. Report must be signed and returned to Club prior to return to the Club.
MEMBERSHIP REVOKED
Continued negative behavior that creates an unsafe environment for fellow Club members and/or staff may result in a child's membership being revoked.

This decision will be at the discretion of the Pre-Teen Director, Teen Director, Unit Director, and the Chief Executive Officer. This decision is not taken lightly and will be a collaborative discussion between all involved parties. The member or parents may appeal this decision within 30 days after the date of the incident. This appeal must be made in writing to Chief Executive Officer outlining the parent's plan to help their child change their behavior while attending the Club.

Zero Tolerance for the Following Negative Behaviors
To ensure the safety of our staff and members to provide a positive experience, the Boys & Girls Club of Brockton has a zero-tolerance policy for the following behaviors and will immediately result in a red warning and possible loss of membership:
  • Fighting
  • Stealing
  • Bullying/Intimidation
  • Threatening the safety of a member or staff member
  • Weapon possession- both real and fake
  • Damage to the facility or equipment- this will result in a bill to repair the damage

DRESS CODE
We follow the same guidelines as the Brockton Public School District regarding attire.
  • No suggestive or revealing attire can be worn to the Club including pants not being worn above the waist.
  • Cubbies are provided for Club members to place their belongings. These areas are not secure.
  • Non-prescription sunglasses are not permitted in the building.
  • Students should wear clothing that does not create a disruption.
  • Clothing with bare midriffs, see-through blouses, and strapless clothing are not allowed. Sundresses will be permitted if modestly cut.
  • Items with provocative, offensive, violent, or drug-related pictures or slogans will not be permitted. Items advertising alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will not be permitted.
  • T-shirts and sweatshirts must have sleeves.
  • No hats, caps, bandanas, hoods, or wallet chains.
  • Members may wear shorts that are no more than three inches above the knee in length when weather is appropriate.
  • Tennis shoes must be worn in the gym. NO FLIP-FLOPS or sandals except during an assembly.

CLUB CLEANLINESS
All club members are asked to help keep their Club clean. They should participate in Club clean up when requested.
INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
The Internet allows members to access thousands of libraries and databases. Transmission of any materials in violation of any national or state regulations is prohibited. These include but are not limited to: copyright materials, threatening or obscene materials. Access is a privilege and not a right. Inappropriate use will result in cancellation of these privileges. While it may be unlikely your child will access objectionable material the Club cannot guarantee that this won’t happen.

There are computers available at the Boys & Girls Club of Brockton for our members’ use. During after school hours, computers are limited to homework only. Technology programs are a part of our daily schedule, and there is also scheduled time for members to enjoy personal time to use computers for communicating and playing games.

Staff members monitor computer usage in order to keep Club members safe as they use technology at the Club. In addition, fire walls are used to prohibit sites that are deemed unsuitable for our Boys & Girls Club environment. Regardless of close supervision and monitoring, there remains the possibility of coming into contact with inappropriate material.

If a member mistakenly accesses inappropriate content, he or she should take the following steps:
1. Turn off the computer’s monitor.
2. Immediately tell a staff member.

Using computers and related equipment at the Club is a privilege that is earned by attending internet safety training. Additional training is required for teens interested in visiting social media sites.

PARENTS & VISITORS
The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton values the health and safety of our members. All volunteers working with our children undergo background checks. Adults (including parents) who are not volunteering are NOT permitted to be in program spaces. Parents who are picking up their children from the Club should stop at the member services desk so their child can be escorted to our desk area.

We do make exceptions for parents and guardians who stay for programs such as or basketball games, talent showcases, etc. Those who are staying for these programs must follow these rules:
- Remain in the designated area (i.e. remain in the gym during games or team practice) at all times.
- Sign-in upon entry, provide a photo ID and wear a visitor badge.
- Utilize staff/adult bathrooms during your visit.
- All visitors must be accompanied by a staff member while traveling throughout the building.

FIELD TRIPS
Occasionally, members are invited to participate in off-site activities. Generally, the Club’s van is used for transportation. A permission slip is always required and provided to parents/guardians in advance. Members are chosen to participate at the discretion of the staff and generally chosen for good behavior, volunteer service, or level of participation.

PHOTOGRAPHS
The Boys & Girls Club of Brockton occasionally makes use of photos and/or videos of members and activities for advertising and publicity purposes. Photos could be used and not limited to the following: newspaper, media, internet, flyers, brochures, etc. If you do not want your child to be photographed for the purposes listed above, please be sure to indicate this desire on your child’s membership application.
MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Bring your Club card everyday
Be respectful to fellow members and staff
Say only good things about others
Keep your hands to yourself at all times
Try your hardest and participate in programs and activities
Play fair and be honest
Avoid improper language
Walk at all times outside of the gym
Practice good manners
Do the right thing all the time