



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF GREEN COUNTRY

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Volunteer Handbook

Volunteer Orientation Copy

Revised: 2/2012

Welcome to Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country

“We need to make a difference in the lives of the youth and be the best possible influence that we can!”



On behalf of the staff of Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country, we welcome you and thank you for your interest in volunteering with our organization. Your volunteer service is highly valued.

The experience, skills, and enthusiasm that you bring will add a refreshing dimension to this organization. Though the work will be challenging at times, rest assured that your efforts will bring enrichment to the lives of our Club Members and empower them to become positive role models and leaders in their communities.

In turn, we hope our volunteer program can offer you the same life-altering experiences. We are confident that, for whatever reason you chose to volunteer, you will find fulfillment through your work at Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country.

The purpose of this manual is to outline Boy & Girls Clubs of Green Country’s expectations for volunteers and to provide you with some basic youth development information so that you can

begin your volunteer commitment feeling confident and prepared. Should you have any questions about any of the topics covered in this manual, feel free to discuss them with Unit Director or the Chief Professional Officer (CPO), at any time.

Thank you, again, for your commitment to the young people of Green Country!

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country Staff



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF GREEN COUNTRY

Our Mission Statement

To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Our Promise to America's Youth

To provide a clean, safe, fun, and positive place for kids to go after school and during the summer. To develop supportive relationships and offer targeted programs for academic success, good character and citizenship and to promote healthy lifestyles that will have a significant impact on their lives.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country is always in search of new opportunities to fulfill our mission. If you have a program, workshop or project idea, feel free to talk to a staff member or the Unit Director.

Your Role as a Volunteer

Club personnel, as trained professionals, have the ultimate authority regarding Club policies and procedures. They officially represent Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country, and are held legally accountable for matters affecting the safety and welfare of Club Members. If you feel that a staff member is acting inappropriately or a policy or procedure is inappropriate or ineffective, feel free to speak to the Unit Director or CPO. However, it is important that all volunteers respect staff decisions regarding member discipline and other Clubhouse procedures at all times.

Volunteers are never responsible for contacting parents, schools, medical professionals, or others on behalf of Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country, unless specifically directed by appropriate Club personnel. If you suspect that an interaction is necessary between Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country and a parent, doctor, educator, etc., you should notify the appropriate Club personnel or the Unit Director of your concerns.

As a volunteer, you are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries with Club Members. Relationships that develop beyond a volunteer capacity within the Clubs are not appropriate. Such relationships can include, but are not limited to sexual relationships, providing housing, providing or accepting money and/or gifts, one-on-one mentoring of youth that isn't regulated by Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country, and other acts that foster dependent relationships.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND OUR CLUB MEMBERS! A Club Member or his/her parents may misinterpret behavior that you perceive as harmless. Every kid needs a hug every now and then. But always be aware of what may or may not be considered appropriate with regards to physical contact with a youth. **Never work alone in a room with a child**, unless the room can be seen from adjacent areas in the Club...e.g. through a window or open door.

Volunteers are never allowed to provide transportation to Club Members in their own vehicles or in Club vehicles, unless they have submitted the proper paperwork and have been approved through the Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country administrative office.

Discrimination and Harassment

Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country is committed to diversity in its volunteer program. We do not discriminate in volunteer opportunities on the basis of veteran status, marital status, physical or mental disability, race, age, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, medical condition, political activity, or ancestry. Harassment by or directed toward volunteers, Club staff or Club Members will not be tolerated. Use of slurs, epithets, threats, derogatory comments or visual depictions, unwelcome jokes and/or teasing should immediately be reported to the Unit Director or CPO.

Mutual Respect and Disclosure

Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country emphasizes a policy of mutual respect between volunteers, staff, and members. Self-respect and respect for others are absolutely necessary when serving young people. If at any time you feel as though there is a lack of respect in the Club environment, please take advantage of the support of program staff and the Unit Director, who can provide support and mediation to resolve issues.

Club Rules

Each Club has a specific set of rules regarding conduct and attire (e.g. no gum chewing, no swearing, no baseball caps worn inside the Club, no electronic devices, etc.). Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these rules. Volunteers, staff and Club Members, alike, are expected to follow these rules at all times.

Smoking, Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Smoking is prohibited inside all Clubs and within two blocks of all Clubs, as well as at Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country events. Volunteers should never engage in any activity with Club Members or take part in Club activities while under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances. Furthermore, volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution or possession of illegal substances on Club time or on Club premises. Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country reserves the right to take all appropriate and lawful actions to enforce this substance abuse policy when there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a volunteer has violated this policy.

Personal Safety and Injury

Please be aware of personal safety while volunteering at Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country. Use reasonable judgments when lifting heavy objects, operating machinery or participating in any activity that may involve physical injury. In the event of an injury, please report it to the appropriate Club personnel.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country is not responsible for personal items that are lost or stolen. Please do not bring valuables to the Club.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medical emergency, dial 911 immediately for medical attention. Volunteers should report any medical emergencies to staff immediately after contacting 911.

Volunteers are never permitted to transport sick or injured members within the Club or to another location unless the threat of further injury or danger exists (e.g. fire).

In the event of an emergency, volunteers are to make their best and reasonable efforts to ensure Club Member safety takes priority in the event. Volunteers should make themselves aware of the location of emergency-related items, such as fire extinguishers and first-aid kits.

Volunteers should take universal precautions when possible. In the event there is a presence of blood or other bodily fluids, use of latex gloves is recommended.

Boundaries for Volunteers

Boundary violations are often a result of good intentions; however, they may foster situations that are not in the best interest of our members. While you may be very confident with some of these, you may not have considered all the possibilities with other situations. Our general guideline involves asking: **Does this action or inaction pose a risk to the youth, the organization, or myself?** While not all of the tips below pose a risk to safety, they are best practices.

Some tips to remember:

1. **Do not loan/give money to youth** - There are often compelling reasons to want to break this boundary, but the Clubs are equipped to handle true situations of need. Youth sometimes look for opportunities or are having limits imposed and are trying to bypass their agreements or responsibilities. If you do become aware of financial or basic needs, please notify Club staff.

2. **Avoid having youth in your lap** - This can be extremely challenging, but it places you at risk. Youth or observers may misinterpret your actions/intent. An option would be to say, “How about if you sit beside me instead?” A helpful rule to remember is the “ten-second rule of touch.” You should refrain from touching any Club Member for more than ten seconds.
3. **Refrain from bringing valuables to the Club** - Unfortunately, phones, iPods, purses and wallets are not safe in the Club. While most of our members act responsibly, it is best not to place a child in a position where their developing ability to make sound moral judgments is tested.
4. **Be cautious about questions that start with “have you ever used...” or “if I tell you something you have to promise not to tell...”** - We don’t always know the context of the statements coming from youth and if you find yourself receiving information from Club members that would possibly jeopardize their safety, we encourage you to ask open ended questions. If you feel comfortable engaging in such a discussion you can ask questions such as, “Is there something you want to tell me about that?” or “How do you feel about that?” We also encourage volunteers not to make any promises that you cannot keep. If the information a Club members discloses is harmful to them or someone else, then you are required to inform staff.
5. **Do not feel that you must answer all questions that may come from our Club Members (“How old were you the first time you had sex?”)** - We do not encourage personal disclosure from volunteers and suggest responding by saying, “I don’t care to answer that question,” or, “I don’t feel comfortable with your question,” or, “That is very personal information.” You can refer youth to resources or to staff if you feel comfortable doing so, but we ask that you maintain your relationship boundaries.
6. **Club Members may ask you, “Can you give me a ride home?”** - The answer to this question is *always* “no.” Boys & Girls Clubs of Green Country has strict policies against volunteers transporting youth in personal vehicles. As stated previously, Clubs are equipped to handle situations of need so please advise staff if a Club Member has asked you for a ride and they will tend to them.

Lastly, please remember that Club staff is there for you. You may approach them if you would like advice on boundaries or if you need other support.