



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF CHICAGO**



# 2025-2026 **Summer / Afterschool** Program Family Handbook

**Club Information**  
**Site Information**

*Club Support Center*  
Boys & Girls Club of Chicago  
2102 W. Monroe Street  
Chicago IL, 60612  
(312) 235-8000



## Welcome Parents and Guardians:

We are excited to welcome your child into our Club programs! Please know that the safety of our members is of the utmost importance. We strive to provide meaningful activities for youth ages [ ] to [ ] years old and to support Chicagoland youth in achieving good character and citizenship, academic success, healthy lifestyles, among other accomplishments.

Founded in 1902, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago (BGCC) is a private, non-profit organization serving youth. Serving over 24,000 youth ages five to 24 across nine Club sites, BGCC works to provide members with the emotional, educational, physical, and cultural resources that allow them to enjoy their childhood and thrive in adulthood. At our Clubs, they find caring mentors, avenues of opportunity and the tools they need to prepare for great futures.

This handbook is designed to give members, parents, and guardians helpful insight into BGCC and at the [INSERT CLUB NAME] Club. In this handbook you will find information about program activities, procedures, and policies to support your child in having a safe, positive and rewarding experience in our programs. Please read this handbook carefully. If you have any questions, please contact your Club staff.

Name:  
Phone:  
Email:  
Office Hours:

## Our Mission Statement:

Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago’s mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

## Core Beliefs:

Boys & Girls Clubs provide children and youth with:

- Safe, positive and inclusive environments in which to learn and grow
- Opportunities to develop positive, meaningful, healthy connections with others
- High-quality programs and activities that build upon young people’s strengths, allow them to explore new experiences, and help them develop skills for good decision-making
- Experiences that foster hope, a sense of belonging, and a purpose
- Opportunities for youth to lead, share ideas, and be heard and recognized

## Programs Offerings:

- Power Hour to support homework help (*Offered During School Year Only*)
- STEM and STEAM activities
- Triple Play activities to provide healthy lifestyles, sports, and fitness
- Social Emotional Learning
- Summer Brain Gain
- Leadership and service activities like Torch and Keystone programs
- And many other fun and meaningful opportunities!

## Surveys:

Throughout the year, members are asked for feedback by participating in surveys and questionnaires regarding their Club experience, behavior, skills, attitudes, wants and needs. Surveys are used to let us know how we are doing, how we can improve services, and for grant reporting purposes. All information gathered from these measures is reported confidentially and collectively. Please make sure to submit all documents if you do not want your child to participate in surveys.

[INSERT SITE NAME] Club Staff:

NAME	CONTACT INFO AND/OR ROLE

## Membership:

It is the policy of Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago (BGCC) to actively support the inclusion of all youth – ages 5-18 generally and up to age **24 for specialized programming** – regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability status, national origin, socioeconomic status, language or cultural affinity, political beliefs, religious affiliation, family structure, documentation status, or any other legally protected characteristics. Discrimination, violence, disrespectful treatment, offensive language, stereotyping, and/or the use of any disrespectful or discriminatory materials by staff members or among youth is prohibited. It is a core goal of BGCC to foster diversity and inclusion, and to work toward equity through our programming and our Club environments. The **[INSERT CLUB NAME]** Club serves youth ages **[INSERT AGE RANGE]**.

All efforts will be made to include children and youth with special needs or disability statuses in Club programming. Club staff will ensure that when such a need is identified through that individual's membership form, that a Special Care Plan Form is provided to the legal guardian(s) and health care provider to be completed and submitted to Club staff.

All youth who attend the Club must become a registered member. Children and teens must have a completed registration form, signed by a parent/legal guardian every year. This application includes demographic and important medical information as well as parent/legal guardian contact information. All memberships are renewed on an annual basis. We welcome all youth with all abilities. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Parents/Guardians are asked to inform Club staff if contact information or phone numbers change throughout the year.

## Health Protocols:

Upon completing membership registration, parents must notify the Club Director if their child has any health conditions or needs to take medication during the Club hours. **BGCC staff will not administer medication.** If the child has a chronic illness, such as asthma, please ensure that the child has their inhaler at all times. The member will be encouraged to participate in all BGCC activities, unless noted on the Special Care Plan and membership form.

**Please note** it is imperative to share all health concerns/issues with club staff, so make sure to complete the assigned portion of the membership form and Special Care Form, if needed.

BGCC follows recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, the Illinois Department of Public Health, and Chicago Department of Public Health. Masks are optional. BGCC reserves the right to reinstate health protocols, including mask requirements, temperature checks, symptom screenings, etc. – if public health factors become a concern. We ask families to keep youth at home if they are exhibiting signs of illness. Staff will contact parents/guardians if concerns arise.

## Member and Parent Expectations:

Within 30 days of enrollment a parent/guardian must complete an orientation at the Club. All members and youth attending or participating in BGCC programs and activities must be able to comply with the BGCC member code of conduct, as well as Club rules and expectations. Each member's ability to comply with these guidelines helps to ensure that all participants receive a positive Club experience.

BGCC strives to maintain a Club environment that is built on respect for all. As such, there is a zero-tolerance policy for behaviors or actions that jeopardize the health, safety, and well-being of any individual(s) being served by or employed by the organization. This includes but is not limited to members, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, contractors, and partners of the organization. BGCC reserves the right to terminate any membership based on the behavior of the child or parent/guardian. Negative behavior of a parent/guardian will be viewed as a violation of organizational policies and will be addressed immediately with actions up to and including suspension or termination of membership. In such instances, refunds are not issued for membership or camp dues.

## Code of Conduct:

1. Promote a positive, safe, and healthy environment for all
2. Be courteous and respect the rights, beliefs, and property of others and the Club
3. Speak, dress, and behave in a responsible way
4. Seek positive solutions for conflicts that support the learning and growth of all

## Youth Development Strategy / Behavior Expectations:

BGCC strives to provide a safe space for members to learn, grow, and be successful. We incorporate the Five Key Elements of Positive Youth Development to support safe spaces for members: provide (1) safe, positive environment, (2) access to fun and a sense of belonging, (3) supportive relationships, (4) meaningful opportunities and expectations, and (5) formal and informal recognition. We also support social emotional skill development.

Staff will address conflicts consistently, fairly, and in a way that reinforces the Code of Conduct and culture/values of the Club

and BGCC. Examples of negative behavior are:

- Hurting other youth or staff (i.e. hitting, pushing, play fighting)
- Damaging equipment or property
- Child placing themselves or others in dangerous situations
- Disrespecting fellow Club member or Club staff
- Bullying (repeated negative behaviors that target a specific person with the intention to intimidate)

In the event that BGCC staff have concerns about your child's behavior, staff will document incidents and may take steps including, but not limited to, the following:

- Additional coaching or redirection
- Talking to the member about the consequences of negative behaviors
- Contacting child's parent or guardian via call or sending a note is sent home
- Scheduling a meeting with parent or guardian
- Developing a behavior contract
- Suspending or dismissing the member from the program.

If a parent/guardian has a question/concern, please contact the Club Director, \_\_\_\_\_ at XXX-XXX-XXXX. If this does not resolve the concern, contact the Club Support Center, at 312-235-8000.

### **Relations and Mandated Reporting:**

BGCC staff members are youth development professionals that are trained to provide guidance and mentorship to Club members, as well as supervise Club programs in a safe and effective manner.

BGCC advocates child safety through prevention, intervention, and treatment of child abuse and neglect. All BGCC staff are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect as defined by the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. BGCC staff are obligated to report if they suspect a child is being abused or neglected to DCFS, and in some instances the Chicago Police Department.

With any concerns or questions, please contact our Human Resources Department at 312.235.8000.

### **Parent Communication:**

BGCC communicates by email/text. To receive updated communication from BGCC, please include a legible email address/cell phone number on the Membership Form. Please ensure you update your information, should it change during the program.

### **Limited Access:**

For safety reasons, the only individuals allowed to enter the Club program areas are members enrolled in the program, staff, approved professionals providing services to children, and persons with legal authority to enter, including law enforcement officers and Department of Children and Family Services staff.

Note: Parents/guardians are not allowed to enter the Club beyond the front desk unless special circumstances require it and it has been approved by the Club Leadership staff.

### **Daily Arrival and Dismissal:**

Members must follow procedures for signing in and out of programs every day. If a parent/guardian requests specific departure plans for their child, staff will make reasonable efforts to support plans that are written, signed, and documented, where appropriate. If a member attempts to depart against the understood wishes of the parent/guardian, staff will make reasonable efforts to keep a child within the facility. Because we are a drop-in program, not a licensed daycare facility, we will not physically restrain members who insist on leaving without parent/guardian permission. Members 12 and under who leave without permission may face suspension or dismissal, at the discretion of BGCC.

Members who walk home cannot sign themselves out for early dismissal. If your child is a "walker", they must be picked up by an adult if they leave early.

### **Late Pickup:**

Parents/Guardians need to pick up their children at the designated time of their dismissal. If not picked up on time, the following will apply: 1<sup>st</sup> – warning, 2<sup>nd</sup> – last warning, 3<sup>rd</sup> – suspension. If not picked up after 45 minutes without communication, the Chicago Police Department will be notified. Additional consequences may include a late pick-up fee or additional limitations on access to programs, field trips, and activities.

### **Severe Weather and Emergency Closings:**

BGCC may close for dangerous weather, potentially but not limited to snow, and/or extreme temperatures. When severe weather is predicted, parents/guardians should check the Club Leadership and/or online communications about Club closings or delays. Please make sure your child's emergency contact information is up-to-date to ensure that these messages will be received.

**Prior to member(s) attending program, parents/guardians are required to:**

- Read and agree to the terms of the Parent/Guardian Agreement
- Participate in the Parent/Guardian Orientation
- Submit all enrollment documents and payment

**Club Member/Parent Agreement; Personal Use of Cell Phones at the Club**

Purpose: To maintain a safe and respectful environment for all members, while allowing essential communication with parents or guardians.

**1. General Policy Guidelines**

- Cell phones may be used only during approved Club times, for Club purposes, and in designated locations.
- Members may use their devices to contact parents or guardians when necessary.
- Calls should be made only in designated areas, such as the front desk or a specified quiet zone.
- During programming, cell phones must remain out of sight and in silent mode.

**2. Restrictions:**

- Taking pictures, recording videos, and streaming live video within the Club premises is strictly prohibited to protect the privacy and safety of all members.
- The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited in restrooms, locker rooms, and other areas where privacy is expected. Before entering a restroom or locker room, members must give their cell phones to an assigned staff. Devices will be stored in a locked area until the member returns to programming.

**3. Responsibility and Security:**

- Members are solely responsible for their devices.
- Lending devices to other Club members or staff is not allowed.
- The Club is not liable for the security, loss, damage, or theft of personally owned devices.

**4. Privacy and Consent:**

- Members are prohibited from recording, transmitting, or posting pictures, videos, or other information about individuals at the Club without express permission from Club staff.
- Any images, videos, or other content recorded at the Club must not be transmitted or posted online without prior approval.

**5. Inspection and Security Measures:**

- The Club reserves the right to inspect a member's personal device if there is suspicion of misuse or inappropriate content. Parents/guardians will be notified if such an inspection occurs.
- If inappropriate material is found, the device will be securely stored by Club management until a parent or guardian retrieves it.

**6. Compliance and Consequences:**

- Members must comply with staff requests to shut down or turn off their devices when asked. Failure to do so may result in the loss of the privilege to bring personal devices to the Club.
- Violations of Club policies, code of conduct, administrative procedures, or Club rules related to device usage may result in disciplinary actions, which may include confiscation of the device, suspension from the Club, termination of membership, or referral to local law enforcement if applicable.

## 2025 Aquatics Handbook BE COOL, BY THE POOL

Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago is committed to making swimming part of the list of basic life skills and reducing water-related injuries, particularly in communities where children are most at risk. Our Aquatics programs have begun to fill this gap to address children's aquatics support needs. By offering a variety of programming such as open swim, learn-to-swim and so much more, the aquatics program strives to help all ages stay safe around water and learn the skills needed to make swimming a lifelong pursuit for healthy living! Aquatic rules must be followed in Club pools, as well as on aquatic field trips to the extent possible pending trip-specific rules and regulations.

### Pool Rules

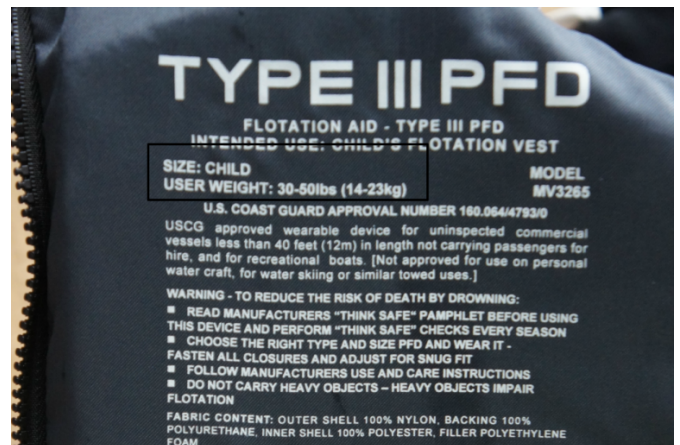
- Obey the lifeguards and follow pool rules. They are there for your safety.
- All persons are required to shower before entering the pool area.
- Food and drink are not permitted in the pool area except in designated spectator areas.
- No Horseplay
- Clean swimwear is required.
- No running allowed on pool deck.
- Except during specific programming no swim gear allowed at any time (snorkels, scuba gear, kayaks, tubes, etc.)
- Goggles, towels, and other items should not be shared.
- No flotation devices may be used in the pool unless U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Persons with open wounds, excessive sunburn, abrasions that have not healed, or bandages of any kind cannot be allowed in the water.
- All participants must be able to change into their swimsuits independently – assistance will not be provided.

### Lifejackets

At BGCC, all members have access to lifejackets on-site upon request. Members are permitted to bring their own flotation devices as long as they are U.S. Coast Guard approved.

### Important Reminders

- Make sure your life jacket is U.S. Coast Guard approved.
- Double check that your life jacket is appropriate for the water activities that you and your loved ones will be participating in. Read the label!
- Take the time to ensure a proper fit: right size and right weight rating.
- Check your life jacket – make sure it is in good serviceable condition, with no tears or holes.
- Life jackets are not swim lesson aids. However, exposure to life jackets during swimming lessons teaches a child how it should fit, and how it feels and performs in the water.
- The main thing to remember is that a life jacket is just one of the layers of drowning prevention. Children who have learned to swim or are comfortable in the water or in a life jacket still need other layers of drowning protection, including close supervision, fencing barriers, and lifeguards or water watchers.



### Other General Policies

- Each aquatic facility is staffed with lifeguards at a 1:25 ratio
- Two lifeguards are on-duty during open swim at all times.
- All lifeguards are American Red Cross Certified
- Swimmers are given 15 minutes to change in and out of the locker room.
- Swimmers are expected to be on deck, ready to swim by their swim time.

### Swim Competency Test

To be eligible to participate in certain activities or swim in certain areas participating youth must demonstrate the minimal level of swimming ability required. For example, to be eligible to swim in deep water members should have at least a minimum level of water competency.

1. Step or jump into water over your head
2. Return to the surface and float or tread water for 1 minute
3. Turn around in a full circle and find an exit
4. Swim 25yds to the exit
5. Exit from the water without using the stairs or a ladder.

## What to Bring?

1. Swimsuit (NO two piece swim suits or cotton shorts/shirts).
  - Please be aware that undergarments are not appropriate swimwear.
  - Only polyester shorts or tops will be allowed.
  - Two-piece suits are NOT allowed
  - Basketball shorts are NOT allowed
2. Swim caps (if your hair is longer than your ears)
3. Goggles
4. Towel
5. Sandals

## Programs:

### Learn-To-Swim

This program is based on a logical six-level progression that helps swimmers six years of age and up develop their water safety, survival, and swimming skills. It is designed to give participants a positive learning experience. The American Red Cross offers this comprehensive, developmentally appropriate swimming and water safety program that teaches youth how to swim skillfully and safely and think and act safely in, on, and around the water.

- **Level 1: Introduction to Water Skills:** Helps participants feel comfortable in the water.
- **Level 2: Fundamental Aquatic Skills:** Gives participants success with fundamental skills.
- **Level 3: Stroke Development:** Builds on the skills in Level 2 through additional guided practice in deeper waters.
- **Level 4: Stroke Improvement:** Develops confidence in the skills learned and improves other aquatic skills.
- **Level 5: Stroke Refinement:** Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes.
- **Level 6: Swimming and Skill Proficiency:** Refined the strokes so participants swim with ease, efficiency, power, and smoothness over greater distances.

Learn-To-Swim lessons are conducted at: True Value, Pedersen-McCormick, Valentine, and King. Please contact the Aquatics dept for more information on future registrations or visit [www.bgcc.org/learn-to-swim/](http://www.bgcc.org/learn-to-swim/)

- Aquatics Coordinator will contact you via email to confirm your registration with a starting date and time of your lesson.
- All lessons are 45minutes.
- All participants must be able to change on their own – in and out of their swim suit without any further assistance – under 15 minutes.

### Open Swim

An exciting fun way to spend time with friends while staying active and getting comfortable in the water. For many of our members, their first in a pool is with us. We take this as an opportunity to introduce something new and fun to our youth while being safe and helping them feel comfortable in the water at all times. During Open Swim members may practice their swim skills with 1:1 instruction, race with friends, and so much more!

*During Open Swim, swimmers must pass a swim competency test with a BGCC lifeguard before being allowed to swim in the deep end.*

## Locker Room Transitions

- Locker rooms are double-checked by all staff prior to opening.
- All items must be removed from lockers before leaving the facility.
- The use of cameras and other picture-taking equipment, including cell phones, is prohibited in the locker rooms.
- The Club is not liable for the security, loss, damage, or theft of personally owned devices.
- All participants must be able to change into their swimsuits independently – assistance will not be provided.

For more information please visit [www.bgcc.org/aquatics](http://www.bgcc.org/aquatics)

For questions or any other items please contact, Cynthia Bedolla, Director of Aquatic Operations  
[cbedolla@bgcc.org](mailto:cbedolla@bgcc.org), 312-763-3868 x 8051

# Additional Documents

*(To be used on a Club by Club basis)*



**Family Handbook Agreement**

I/We have read the family handbook for Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago and understand all the information, policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. We have also received a copy of these policies and procedures for our own records and reference.

By signing this agreement, we consent to all the handbook policies and procedures and agree to them, including attendance and late pick-up expectations. By signing this agreement, we acknowledge that the information supplied in the membership form regarding our child(ren) and the information supplied is true and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

By signing this agreement, we also consent for photographs/video, in which my son/daughter may appear, to be used in any way BGCC may care to use and to be shared on our social media pages. By signing you also give consent for your child to participate in periodic surveys and questionnaires regarding their Club experience, behavior, skills, attitude, and beliefs. Surveys are used to let us know how we are doing, how we can improve our services, and for grant reporting purposes. All information gathered from these measures is reported confidentially and collectively. If you wish for your child to opt out of the surveys, please contact the Club Director.

By signing this agreement, we understand and agree to follow cell phone usage restrictions and guidelines.

**PLEASE KEEP THE ABOVE FOR YOUR RECORDS**  
**PLEASE TEAR AT THE LINE AND RETURN BOTTOM PORTION TO CLUB STAFF**

**Family Handbook Agreement  
2025-26 Program**

I/We \_\_\_\_\_, have read the family handbook for Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago and understand all the information, policies and procedures outlined in the handbook. We have also received a copy of these policies and procedures for our own records and reference.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member Name

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Age

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