



Mission Statement

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

PARENT HANDBOOK

**Reviewed and Revised
August 2016**

Enrollment / Registration

*Before and After School Care and Summer Camp Program registration can be completed **online** at <https://portal.begreatacademy.com>*

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PARENT HANDBOOK

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Greetings Parents and Guardians!

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands welcomes you to our program. We are excited about helping your child grow socially, educationally, and physically while participating in recreational activities and educational opportunities offered in a Club atmosphere.

We have a lineup of tested, nationally recognized programs that address today's most pressing youth issues, teaching young people the skills they need to succeed in life. We offer programs with a purpose in an affordable, safe, fun environment.

Our programs revolve around 5 core areas of focus:

- **Character & Leadership** - Programs in Character & Leadership Development empower youth to support and influence their Club and community, sustain meaningful relationships with others, develop a positive self-image, participate in the democratic process and respect their own and others' cultural identities.
- **Health & Life Skills** - Programs in Health & Life Skills develop young people's capacity to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals and live successfully as self-sufficient adults.
- **Sports, Fitness, & Recreation** - Programs in Sports, Fitness & Recreation develop fitness, positive use of leisure time, skills for stress management, appreciation for the environment and social skills.
- **Education & Career Development** - Programs in Education & Career Development enable youth to become proficient in basic educational disciplines, apply learning to everyday situations, and embrace technology to achieve success in a career.
- **The Arts** - Programs in The Arts enable youth to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through knowledge and appreciation of the visual arts, crafts, performing arts and creative writing.

More than 25 national programs are available in the areas of education, the environment, health, the arts, careers, prevention of risk behavior, leadership development and athletics. We provide programs for youth after school and during the summer months that are designed to meet identified needs and interests of the participants.

Our challenge is to teach our members things they need to know using things that they like to do. Our mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us the most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

Parents or guardians are welcome to visit any of our Club locations at any time. If you are interested in sharing your talents or hobbies with Club members please contact the Service Center to obtain the necessary applications to become a Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands volunteer.

Your Rights

Your Rights as a Child in the Program

As a child in our program you have the right to be treated in a non-discriminatory manner and have the freedom to express and practice religious and spiritual beliefs. We encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program to the Campus Director.

Your Rights as a Parent

As a parent concerned with your child's well-being and education, we encourage you to bring your questions and concerns about our program to the Campus Director whenever they occur. If any issue is still unresolved, you may request a meeting with the Area Director. You also have the right to visit the program at anytime, though a staff will need to be available accompany you around the location. We want to build a partnership with you and therefore encourage you to be in close and frequent communication with us.

Philosophy

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands (BGCM) believes the services rendered are of vital importance to the growth and development of our youth. The program at BGCM is committed to providing a quality learning environment that promotes development through all possible resources.

Because we believe each child to be an individual with many talents and gifts, we strive to assist them in reaching their potential. Children will learn to appreciate and respect people of all walks of life. It is our sincere effort to involve family members to participate in the various aspects of our program and exchange information with staff ensuring the safety and welfare of each child.

Staff Qualifications

Our staff is selected based upon their character and desire to improve the lives of children as well as their education and experience in the youth development field. Once hired, every staff member receives extensive training through out the year in the areas of youth development and effective program implementation. Training is ongoing and designed to ensure staff members are current in program policies and procedures as well as acceptable youth development practices. All program staff are required to have state and federal background checks and must have current CPR and First Aid Certifications.

Staff members are trained and experienced in the youth development strategy and will work closely with youth in our five (5) Core Program Areas to promote a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence in the lives of our youth.

Services Offered

We offer a few ways to participate in Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands programs: **Before and After School Care, Vacation Camps, and Community Membership.** Please see below for specifics and eligibility to determine which service is right for you and your child. Not every Club offers every program.

Before and After School Care & Summer/Vacation Camp Participants

- Are signed in and out of program by a designated adult.
- May participate in all Club programs that are offered and available.
- May choose from numerous additional programs based upon their interests *at no additional charge.*
- Have first priority to sign up for early dismissal days, school holidays, and summer camp.

Transportation to the program is provided from targeted schools to targeted locations (please visit our website or contact the service center for a list of schools and Clubs).

Community Membership (offered only at the Norman Arnold Campus and Jackson Teen Center)

- May come to the program when they want, stay as long as they want, and may leave when they want.
- DO NOT REQUIRE AN ADULT TO SIGN THEM IN OR OUT OF THE PROGRAM.
- May participate in all programs and activities at the Club (based upon eligibility) as long as they are a member in good standing, but does not have to participate in any particular program.

Requirements to participate:

- Must live within walking distance of participating location (walking distance is defined as 3 miles or less).
- Parents must sign the following waiver:

*I do hereby give my son/daughter permission to attend and participate in activities sponsored by BGCM. I hereby release the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands, its employees, associates, and contributors from liability from any injury, loss or theft incurred by my son/daughter while participating. Furthermore, I hereby authorize medical examination and emergency treatment for my son/daughter by a qualified licensed physician in the event of an accident. **I further understand that BGCM has an “Open Door” policy for drop in participants, meaning my son/daughter may come and go at will.** (This disclaimer is also on the membership application).*

Days of Operation

Campuses are open Monday through Friday. School/BGCM Holiday Closure dates may affect days open – see below:

Club Closure Dates

The BGCM Service Center and Clubs may be closed on the following days (actual closing dates may vary by location):

Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day and the day after
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
New Year's Eve and New Year's Day
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Good Friday
Memorial Day
Independence Day

Programs located on school property are also subject to close at the school's discretion.

If you have any questions about these dates, please see your Campus Director for clarification.

Hours of Operation

Early and Before School Care

Early Bird Care (drop off at 5 a.m.) and **Before Care** (drop off at 7 a.m.) services are offered at some Campuses. Please check the BGCN website (www.begreatacademy.com), the BGCN Service Center, or your Account Representative for the most current list of participating Campuses.

After School Care

Dismissal - 6:30 p.m. - Regular School Days

Dismissal - 6:30 p.m. - Early Release Days

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY – Please note that Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands will follow the District Policy for the district in which your child’s school is located for school closures, cancellations and delays.

Summer Camp & School In-service/Work Days

7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Norman Arnold Campus and Jackson Teen Center

Hours may vary. Please see the Campus Director for hours.

Membership Fees & Charges

Rates are determined by the number of days open throughout the year. Payments are spread out evenly throughout the year for consistency. Weekly prices will be fixed (remain the same) through the year, and include all partial weeks. Parents will receive a payment schedule upon completion of enrollment.

Please see website for current pricing.

Scholarship & Discount Programs:

- Scholarship is available for qualifying families. If you qualify, simply send the required documents to our Service Center and we will adjust your rates.
- Military Rates are also available for qualifying families. Please complete the discount price forms to see if you are eligible.
- Corporate discounts are available for our corporate partners – contact an Account Representative for details.
- ABC Vouchers accepted.

Please visit our website (www.begreatacademy.com), call our Service Center, or contact an Account Representative for more information or to see if you qualify for a reduced rate.

Only one discount per participant may be applied.

Payment Policy & Options

Payment reserves your spot in our program. Parents select the type of service they need and make an initial payment to reserve the spot. If payment is not made during the enrollment process, a place is not held. Charges

are incurred whether the service is used or not. This policy allows us to plan for staff and program supplies needed to provide quality service to all members. The only exception is the Drop-in service. Drop-in charges are incurred when the service is used. Drop-in is a separate service that is selected at enrollment.

There are no credits/refunds for closings due to inclement weather, vacations, or sick days.

A late payment fee of \$5 is added to the account each week if there is any balance due on Tuesday evening.

Auto Payment Customers – Payments are automatically charged to the credit/debit card on file on Mondays. Payments are due throughout the school year, including holidays and Spring Break, because the total due for the time enrolled is spread evenly over the time period selected.

Non-Auto Pay Customers – Payments are due in full on Mondays. We accept payments by check, money order, credit card, and cash. Checks and money orders can be mailed to: 500 Gracern Road, Columbia, SC 29210 or deposited at any First Citizens Bank branch. Cash is only accepted at any First Citizens Bank branch or at our main office at 500 Gracern Road. Credit card payments can be made on the home page of our website (www.begreatacademy.com). **For the safety of our staff and members, no payments will be accepted at our campus sites.** **Please be aware that accounts are not credited as of the date a payment is mailed, they are credited on the date payment is received.

Returned Check Policy

- All checks returned to Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands because of insufficient funds are automatically turned over to Chexchange (collection agency) for collection.
- Parents must make a cash payment to Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands for their service fees. This amount does not replace the returned check; they still need to pay the check amount to Chexchange.
- Once Chexchange has collected on the returned check, the payment will be credited to the member's account.
- Parents who have bounced a check may no longer make payments by check. Auto draft will be suggested as a form of payment or two weeks of prepayment may be required.
- A returned check fee of \$15 will be placed on the member's account and must be paid immediately to avoid disenrollment.

Declined Auto Payment Policy

- An administrative fee of \$5 may be charged if there are more than two changes in a school year to an auto draft card on file. This policy does not apply to cards that simply need an updated expiration date.
- Auto draft payments that are declined due to insufficient funds will be treated the same as checks with insufficient funds, and BGCM will charge \$15 insufficient funds fees to the membership account.
- Parents with 5 consecutive declined payments will be removed from auto draft and switched to a weekly manual pay schedule.

Late Pick Up Policy and Fees

1. All members must be picked up by designated closing hours.
2. Late fees of \$1 per minute beyond closing time will be charged to the parent for late pickup for the first 5 occurrences. Beginning with the 6th late pickup, late fees of \$5 per minute beyond closing time will be charged to the parent.
3. If an authorized adult is later than the designated pick up time the following steps must be taken:
 - a. Make every attempt to contact any and all authorized contacts for 1 hour beyond closing.
 - b. The Campus School Principal and Area Director will be contacted and non-emergency police will be called.
 - c. BGCM staff will remain with the child until appropriate transfer of custody can take place.
 - d. Staff will transfer custody of child to police.
4. The incident will be documented on BGCM Incident Report.
5. The parent(s) will need to make their payment online, at the Service Center, or any First Citizens Bank.
6. Late fees must be paid before a member can return to the BGCM program.
7. Excessive lateness may result in removal from BGCM program.

Enrollment / Registration

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Codes of Conduct

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands strives to provide a positive place for all members to learn and grow. It is important for the staff to maintain structure and order in our facilities to ensure the safety and well-being of all members. We expect **all members and staff** to respect themselves, members, staff, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands by following our rules. Below are basic codes of conduct:

- Play fairly and be honest
- Be respectful to the Boys & Girls Club staff
- Resolve disagreements in a positive way
- Be respectful of other members and their property
- Take care of the Boys & Girls Club equipment
- No inappropriate language
- Exhibit good sportsmanship
- Only run in the gymnasium or outdoors
- Stay in your assigned groups at all times
- Dress appropriately at all times (including appropriate shoes for physical activities)
- Do not have tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or weapons in your possession
- Follow school rules if program is located in public school
- Parent or guardian must sign Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands' Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices form prior to Middle School/Teen Center Club Members bringing or using any personal ECD at Boys & Girls Clubs. Members must follow rules outlined in the BGCM Policy for Usage of Personal Electronic Devices found in this manual.
- Be respectful of others' race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands strives to provide a positive place for all members to learn and grow. The safety of our members is our primary concern, and therefore we have no tolerance for fighting, bullying, harassment, or damage to property. If a child acts out in an aggressive manner with the intent of harming another child or causing damage to property he/she will be suspended for no less than one day. We understand each altercation is different and some incidents are more severe than others and as a result our discipline may vary depending on each individual incident.

Parent/guardian of any child that is suspended or dismissed from the program for inappropriate behavior are responsible for transportation or arrangements of transportation from the program within one hour of being notified that their child is being suspended or dismissed from the program.

Discipline & Guidance

It is the goal of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands to improve the moral and character development of its members. Our programs are designed to help youth develop the skills to make necessary and responsible decisions and to accept the consequences of their actions. However, the Boys & Girls Club must operate in a safe manner to ensure the well being of all participants. The following are discipline procedures implemented by the BGCM in the event of a violation of our codes of conduct. These procedures may not be applicable to severe infractions. In the case of a severe infraction, BGCM reserves the right to discipline appropriately; this may mean immediate suspension without going through the warning procedures.

Issues of Disrespect

Offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Name calling;
- Cursing;
- Walking away from staff;
- Non-compliance to staff requests;
- Disruptive behavior;
- Non-compliance to program area rules.

1st Offense – Verbal warning – A staff member will explain to the child the rule that has been broken and the importance of following the rules. A discipline report will be completed and the parent will be notified.

2nd Offense – Age appropriate time out – Should a child commit the same infraction after receiving a verbal & written warning he/she will be required to sit Time Out. The length of time is determined by the age of the child and will not exceed 15 minutes. A discipline report will be completed and the parent will be notified.

3rd Offense – Age appropriate time out extended – Should a child commit the same infraction for a third time, the child will be required to sit in Time Out for an extended period of time. The length of time is determined by the child's age and will not exceed 20 minutes. A discipline report will be completed and the parent will be notified.

4th Offense – Parent Conference – If the child commits the same infraction for a fourth time, the parent and child will be required to meet with the Campus Director to discuss appropriate consequences. Continued misconduct may result in suspension. A discipline report will be completed.

5th Offense – Suspension – If the child commits the same infraction for a fifth time, the child may be suspended up to five days (or longer) depending on the severity of the infraction. A parent may be contacted and asked to pick the child up immediately.

Ongoing/regular issues of disrespect will result in parent conference and potential expulsion from the Boys & Girls Clubs.

Incidents involving issues of safety (i.e. running away from a program area) can result in immediate suspension or removal from the program.

If a member has an Individual Education Plan on file, reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the behavior modification steps outlined in the Plan, with regard to issues of disrespect. No accommodations can be made for behavior infractions falling within the Zero Tolerance Policy.

ALL suspensions must be documented and a copy forwarded to parent, Service Center, and school representative if housed in a school. Only an Area Director can authorize suspensions or dismissal from program. Dismissal from BGCM program may be applied for serious or ongoing documented behavioral problems.

All BGCM staff will not use corporal punishments as a method of dealing with behavior modification.

Programs located on school property are also subject to rules and laws enforced by the school.

Payment is still due for days a child is suspended from the program.

Other Club Operating Policies & Procedures

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure

Parents will be expected to wait with their child until the Campus opens. Children must not be left alone. **Each child must be signed in and out by his/her parent, guardian, or other adult, as authorized by the parent.**

Parents must designate authorized pick-up information when enrolling a member and must communicate changes to BGCM staff as soon as possible. It is the parent's responsibility to change or update this information in the Portal as needed in their child's account. It is important that the information remains current in the event of an emergency.

Parents must come into the building to drop-off and pick-up their child(ren). All authorized pick-up persons should be prepared to show photo ID upon request from BGCM staff.

Food

A nutritious, USDA approved snack is provided for each child during the After School Care program. Breakfast, lunch (some locations), and an afternoon snack are provided to Summer Camp participants. In

accordance with USDA rules, food must be eaten on the premises during the regulated times (the only exception is pre-approved field trips).

Allergies and Medical Conditions

It is **imperative** that you indicate any allergies to food or medications, or any medical conditions which may affect your child's well-being during enrollment. The staff will be made aware of these allergies and conditions. You will also be asked to complete a Medical Information Form and, if applicable, a Medication Form.

Medication Policy

Staff may administer medication only if the following conditions are met:

- Medication to be given at Boys & Girls Club must be accompanied by the Medication Form, complete with parent or guardian signature and be provided to the Campus Director in the original labeled container provided by the pharmacist who filled the prescription.
- "Sample" medications must be provided in a container that appropriately identifies the medication and must be accompanied by a note signed and dated by the prescribing health care provider that includes the child's name, directions for proper administration and the name, address, and phone number of the prescribing health provider.
- Over the counter medications must also be accompanied by official documentation from the health care provider.

Sick or Injured Children

Sick children will be sent home from the Club due to any illness that keeps them from fully participating in the program. After notification, parents must pick up the ill child within one (1) hour.

Emergency Procedures

The following procedures will be taken when children develop health problems or become severely injured while in the program:

1. Parent will be contacted with the condition of the child.
2. The Campus Director will recommend whether a child is to be picked up.
3. Following an injury, an accident report will be written and kept on file. Parents will be provided with a copy.
4. In extreme emergency situations, an ambulance will be dispatched. Parents will be notified.

ADA Policy

BGCM will provide services to children with disabilities or other special needs to the extent it is reasonably able to do so in the same manner as services are provided for other children of comparable age.

Parents have the obligation to disclose significant medical, physical, or behavioral issues at the time of the member's enrollment and on an ongoing basis. Due to the large group format of BGCM's program, it is not possible to provide one-on-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis, such as injuries, immediate disciplinary issues, and certain personal care needs customarily provided to other children.

Families who have children with significant medical, physical, or behavioral issues must communicate with the Area Director for the Campus the member will attend, who will review the complete Policies and Procedures.

Smoking

To create a safe and healthy environment for the children, smoking is not allowed inside the building or on any BGCM premises. School campus “no smoking” policies are also in affect in accordance with school district policy.

Field Trips

Field trips are one of the most exciting parts of our summer program. They are opportunities for vivid and memorable learning experiences. Children are eligible for field trips based upon behavior and participation. There are no additional fees for field trips. All field trips require signed parental permission slips by the date of the event. When deemed necessary, BGCM may alter scheduled field trips to ensure the safety of members.

Lost & Found

Any articles found should be turned in at the front desk. The Campus Director will make every effort to distribute the articles daily. All unclaimed articles will be given to the school lost and found or donated to Goodwill or other similar organization. BGCM is not responsible for lost or donated items.

Grievance Policy

Parents and members have the right to file a grievance without interference or retaliation.

Parents or members who have a grievance against BGCM that they are not comfortable discussing with the Campus Director (the direct supervisor at the Campus) or the Campus Director’s Supervisor (Area Director) can submit their grievance to the Customer Service Department at BGCM by calling the Service Center at (803) 231-3300. The grievance will be routed to and handled by the appropriate BGCM Management Staff.

Timely notification of the resolution and an explanation of any further appeal, rights, or recourse may be provided in person, via telephone, or via email. Parents have the right at any point to request a written summary of the resolution.

Member Files

All member information and files are confidential. However, during the course of normal business operation, it may be necessary for BGCM to share member information with oversight bodies or reviewers.

Mandated Reporters

As child care providers in the state of South Carolina, all BGCM employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, BGCM will notify the proper authorities without seeking parental consent.

Responsible Computer Use Guidelines

The purpose of these Responsible Use Guidelines is to foster the appropriate use of the Internet. The following Guidelines apply to all users whenever they access the internet during BGCM programs.

Educational Purpose

Internet access has been established for educational purposes limited to classroom activities, career development, and independent scholastic research on appropriate subjects.

Internet access has not been established as a public access service or a public forum. The Club has the right to place reasonable restrictions on the material a member may access. Members are also expected to follow the BGCM's Personal Electronic Communication Device Policy when accessing the network.

Illegal Activities

Members will not make deliberate attempts to disrupt the computer system or destroy data by spreading computer viruses.

Members will not use the internet to engage in any illegal act, including but not limited to arranging for the purchase or sale of drugs or alcohol, engaging in criminal activity, or threatening the safety of another person.

System Security

Members are responsible for their accounts and devices and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account. Under no conditions should a member provide their password to another person.

Members will immediately notify the Campus Director or any other Club staff member if they have identified or witnessed a possible security problem.

Inappropriate Language

Restrictions against inappropriate language apply to public messages, private messages, and material posted on Web pages.

Members will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful forms of communication. This applies to verbal and written language, diagrams, photographs, representations, videos or any other form of communication.

Members will not post information that could cause damage or a danger of disruption.

Members will not engage in personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks.

Members will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a member is told by a person to stop sending him or her messages, the member must stop.

Members will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or organization.

Respect for Privacy

Members will not re-post a message that was sent to you privately without permission of the person who sent the message.

Members will not post private information about another person.

Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement

Members will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking ideas or writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours.

Members will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when one reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright without authorization. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, a member should follow the expressed requirements.

Inappropriate Access to Material

Members will not use the internet to access material that is profane or obscene (pornographic), that advocates illegal acts, or that advocates violence or discrimination toward other people (hate literature).

If a member mistakenly accesses inappropriate information, they should immediately tell the Campus Director or any Club Staff member. This will protect the member against a claim that they have intentionally violated this policy.

Disciplinary Actions

Members who violate the Responsible Use Guidelines may be denied future Internet privileges for a defined period of time, or be subject to other disciplinary measures as set forth by the Area Director and/or Boys & Girls Club staff.

By enrolling your child in any BGCM program, you agree to the following:

As a parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Boys & Girls Club of Midland's Responsible Use Guidelines. I understand that access to the Internet during program time is designed for educational purposes and the Boys & Girls Club has taken available precautions to educate members on appropriate educational materials. In the case where the Boys & Girls Clubs is using the computer resources of a partner agency (school, church, government agency), I understand that the partner agency's policies also apply.

However, it is understood that no matter how much supervision and monitoring that the Club can offer, there will always be the possibility of my child coming into contact with inappropriate material, and I will not hold the Boys & Girls Club of the Midlands or their partner agency responsible for materials acquired on the network.

BGCM Policy for Middle School/Teen Center Usage of Personal Electronic Devices

Middle School/Teen Center Club Members may bring their personal Electronic Communication Devices (ECDs) from home including, but not limited to, Nooks, Kindles, cell / smart phones, laptops or other eReaders for use during Boys & Girls Clubs activities.

Parent or guardian must sign Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands' Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices form prior to Club Members bringing or using any personal ECD at Boys & Girls Clubs.

The use of Club Member's personal ECD is always optional. If a Club Member chooses to bring an ECD to any Boys & Girls Clubs activity, the Club Member is solely responsible for its safekeeping. Boys & Girls administrators, staff, volunteers, nor other members are liable or responsible for damage, loss, theft, or any cost incurred in using the device.

Club members may only visit appropriate websites and may not send any inappropriate images or messages to anyone else. Progressive disciplinary actions will be taken if an ECD is used for inappropriate purposes. These progressive disciplinary actions may consist of a conference with the parent or guardian, suspension or possible termination from the Club.