



## PARENT HANDBOOK

### Introduction

Welcome to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties! We are excited to have your child as a member of our Clubs. This handbook is intended to be a helpful, general information guide for parents and members. Inside you will find information on membership, policies, procedures, and guidelines. It is not the intention to cover every policy, procedure, program, activity, or event in this handbook. Contact your local Club for additional information. We look forward to working with you and your child - knowing that together we will make our community a better place. GREAT FUTURES START HERE!

### Mission

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

#### **Gene Matthews Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Travis McDowell
- Program Director: Jillian DiBlasi
- Address: 6851 S. Biscayne Dr., North Port, FL 34287
- Phone: 941-423-4405
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Newtown Estates Park Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Barbara Bane
- Program Director: Vanita Moses
- Address: 2800 Newtown Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34234
- Phone: 941-358-2878
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Lee Wetherington Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Venesha Graham
- Program Director: Randy Klinger
- Teen Director: Libby Exline
- Address: 3100 Fruitville Rd., Sarasota, FL 34237
- Phone: 941-366-7940
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Robert and Joan Lee Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Michael Stevens
- Program Director: Brittany Richmond
- Address: 920 Gulf Coast Boulevard, Venice, FL 34285
- Phone: 941-485-7050
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Louis and Gloria Flanzer Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Sofia Gilot
- Program Director: Pathrience Shaw
- Address: 18 School Ave., Arcadia, FL 34266
- Phone: 863-884-9927
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Roy McBean Boys & Girls Club**

- Club Director: Nate Brown
- Program Director: TBD
- Teen Director: Geoffry Gilot
- Address: 1790 21st St., Sarasota, FL 34234
- Phone: 941-953-9549
- Summer Program: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., M-F
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F
- When the Club is open for full days during the school year, the hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

#### **Gocio Elementary Site Boys & Girls Clubs**

- Club Coordinator: Matt Graham
- Address: 3450 Gocio Rd., Sarasota, FL 34235
- Phone: 941-500-3415
- School-Year Program: After School to 6 p.m., M-F

## **Staffing**

BGCSDC staff are selected based on their experience, education, and qualifications. Most importantly, all of our team members are dedicated to providing your child with positive and memorable experiences and are committed to the Youth Development Strategies and mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties. All personnel working at our Clubs are screened to ensure no conviction of, admission to, or evidence of, acts of child abuse, molestation, or neglect and no drug or alcohol abuse. We run local, state, and national background screenings, as well as, check the national sex offender website for all staff that are employed with us. We are a drug-free workplace.

## **Club Calendars**

Please see the school year and summer calendars for days the Club is open or closed.

**REMINDER** - Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties run two distinct programs: school year and summer. Members must register separately for both.

## **Emergency Club Closures**

It may be necessary to close the Club on short notice due to circumstances that compromise the safety of our members and employees (e.g., severe weather conditions). The rule of thumb during the school year is if the schools are closed, BGCSDC is closed. During the summer we will notify parents through our one-call system and post an announcement on social media.

## **One Call Now Communications Service**

One Call Now is an automated parent notification service that allows BGCSDC to contact parents within minutes via text. We have implemented One Call Now to improve ongoing communications with you.

## **Late Policy**

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to pick their child up on time. Please notify the Club if you anticipate you are going to be late. Late fees apply with or without notification from the parent/guardian. Late fees are as follows:

- There will be a \$5 fee per child for the first 15 minutes parents/guardians are late and a \$1 fee for every minute late thereafter.
- Law enforcement will be called if you are over 30 minutes late, we have not received a call from the parent/guardian, and we are unable to reach any emergency contacts for pick-up.
- Chronic late pick-up and/or unpaid late fees will be grounds for suspension and/or termination of membership.
- It is important to keep the Club updated with current phone numbers and contact information. Staff members are NOT permitted to transport members home.

The Club opens and closes promptly as listed above. **Parents must ensure their child does not arrive early or leave late.** Members left on campus unsupervised before the Club opens can also lose their membership privileges.

## **Anti-Bias Statement and Non-Discrimination Statement**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination and harassment. We will not tolerate discrimination and harassment based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation, religion, or any other legally protected characteristics. All Club staff, youth members, and volunteers are expected and required to abide by this policy. We strive to engage youth in programs that support the development of cultural competency. Our programs help youth understand and respect their own culture and the cultures of others, where they can contribute to a multicultural society and demonstrate acceptance of differences among people.

### **Reasonable Accommodations For Youth With Disabilities**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties seek to serve all youth. It is our intention to include youth of all abilities in our programs in the most integrated setting wherever it is reasonably possible to do so. Despite our best efforts, in certain circumstances, it may not be possible for Boys & Girls Clubs to accommodate the disability or special needs of a particular child.

By enrolling your child in the Club, you acknowledge that your child can abide by the rules and stated behavior expectations of the Club, can use the restroom facilities without assistance and can eat meals and snacks unassisted. Please note that we are not able to provide one-on-one supervision of your child. All children are expected to abide by the rules and stated behavior expectations.

### **Child & Club Safety**

Your child's safety is our top priority. If you see an unsafe or problematic situation in our Clubs, please speak to a Club Director about your concerns. Please also encourage your child to share their safety concerns with Club staff. Additionally, you may report any behavioral or safety concerns to our safety hotline: 1.866.607.SAFE. Calls to this number are free and confidential.

All BGCSDC staff and volunteers undergo a Level 2 background check every 5 years and a criminal background check every 12 months. The Club is also a drug-free workplace. All prospective staff are pre-screened and subject to random drug testing throughout the year.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties' staff and volunteers are all mandatory reporters. We are required to report any critical incidents/safety concerns to the abuse hotline.

BGCSDC conducts a safety assessment each year to ensure we continually make improvements to safety at our Clubs. BGCA and/or our local Safety Task Force may conduct these safety assessments. Our dedicated local Safety Task Force provides input and guidance for our safety strategies, policies, and procedures.

### **Safe Passage**

Members are not permitted to come and go from the Club as they wish. Once youth leave for the day, they may not return until the next day. Please review this policy with your child.

- Members may sign themselves out and leave the Club unescorted with a signed Safe Passage Consent form. This form must be on file or the member will not be released; phone calls and emails asking to allow a member to leave will not be allowed.
- No member will be allowed to return to the Club once they leave the premises for the day. Exceptions may be made in the case of doctor appointments where a parent or guardian picks up and returns a member to the Club.
- Members who leave unescorted without a signed Safe Passage Consent form will face disciplinary actions up to and including suspension and termination of membership.

### **Illness**

Ill and/or contagious children are prohibited from participating in daily programs (on- or off-site). A member must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to the Club. If a member becomes ill while at the Club, parents/guardians must arrange to have the ill member picked up immediately upon notification. If a member is exposed to a contagious illness, Club staff must be notified. If a member did not attend or was sent home early from school, due to illness, they may not attend the Club.

## Life-Saving Medicine

Policy prohibits Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties' staff from administering prescription or over-the-counter medications of any kind. This includes skin cream, sunscreen, and insect repellent. If your child requires emergency medication, such as an inhaler or Epi-pen, you are required to provide the medicine in its original packaging and to submit a BGCSDC medical form that has been completed by you and your child's doctor. All emergency medications are placed in a secure location at your child's Club. Please note, a medication that is out-of-date or not in its clearly-labeled, original container will not be permitted. If your child needs emergency medication, Club staff will allow them access to their emergency medication and allow them to administer the medication themselves. Club staff will not administer medication to a child unless your child is unable to physically administer the medication (i.e., a severe asthma attack or anaphylactic shock). Parents will be notified immediately when a child needs access to their emergency medication.

## Lice

If a child is found to have head lice or nits while at Boys & Girls Clubs, the family will be contacted and asked to pick up their youth immediately. Because lice are considered to be contagious, we must look after the best interests of all youth attending our program. Youth will not be allowed to return to the program until they are lice and nit-free.

## General Rules

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SARASOTA AND DESOTO COUNTIES

**IN YOUR CLUB**

1. You are safe.
2. You are respectful to others, all staff and your Club.
3. You follow directions the first time.
4. You stay with your group.
5. You make good choices.
6. You have FUN!

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SARASOTA AND DESOTO COUNTIES

**OUTSIDE RULES**

**BE SAFE**

- Leave mulch, sticks, rocks and other objects on the ground.
- Use equipment correctly and take care of it.
- Stay in your area.

**BE RESPECTFUL**

- Follow staff's instruction.
- Use kind words and actions.
- Play fairly.
- Include others and share.

**BE RESPONSIBLE**

- Clean up after yourself.
- Take turns.
- Have FUN!

## Discipline

Members are expected to maintain reasonable behavior while at the Club as a condition of membership. Discipline is designed to promote the development of self-direction, self-control, and socially accepted behavior. This is accomplished through consistency, firmness, fairness, and follow-through. Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties believe that youth need clear and consistent guidelines to maintain safety and respect for themselves and others.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties is committed to providing a safe environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, or bullying. "Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" means any deliberate act, whether written (including electronic messages or images), verbal, or physical, that is motivated by factors such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, mental or physical disability, or other distinguishing characteristics, that:

- Physically harms a member or damages a member's property;
- Creates an intimidating or threatening environment; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of BGCSDC programs and activities.

### **Suspension/ Expulsions**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties reserve the right to suspend or expel any Club members at any given time. This policy is at the discretion of the Club. The parent/guardian will be notified if their child is suspended/expelled from the Club. When a member is suspended/expelled from their home Club they are suspended/expelled from ALL Clubs within the Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties.

### **Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties is committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment for your child. To ensure your child's development is met in a positive way, we ask that you, as the parent/guardian, agree to the following:

- To make every effort to follow all policies and procedures as expressed in this handbook. You understand that it is your responsibility to read and comprehend the policies set forth and to follow them to the best of your ability.
- To strive to support the Club in the way you communicate with the children, the staff, and other parents. You will not be discourteous to, threaten, or use inappropriate language or actions towards any child (yours or others), staff, or other parents/guardians at or near Boys & Girls Clubs, at any Boys & Girls Clubs' functions, or on the phone.
- To not approach any child other than your own to obtain confirmation, clarification, or "their view" on Boys & Girls Clubs issues, disputes, or disagreements between children. Such matters must be brought to the attention of Boys & Girls Clubs staff.
- To not approach any staff member requesting confidential information in regards to any child but your own.

Parent/guardian behavior that is deemed inappropriate, derogatory, disrespectful, and/or creates an unsafe environment can result in the immediate termination of membership.

### **Staff and Member Interaction**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties is committed to providing safe and respectful environments for our members, families, volunteers, and staff. Staff supports members through positive interactions such as verbal recognition, high-fives, and fist-bumps. Members must display respect towards the staff through their words and actions. Members are expected to refrain from physically contacting staff members aggressively or inappropriately. To create appropriate boundaries staff and volunteers shall not have contact with a member outside of the Club or a Club-sponsored event, this includes tutoring, babysitting, house sitting, or having any in-person meetings. One-on-one contact between members, volunteers, or staff is prohibited. BGCSDC employees and volunteers never have permission to transport member(s) in a personal vehicle.

Virtual communications such as emails, texts, and video chats used by The Club's **Teen Programs** will be used exclusively to communicate Club-related information about leadership, service, and scholarship opportunities, Club programs, board service, special events, and programmatic/class work with Club teens. All emails will be sent from an official Club email server and text correspondence will be conducted as "group" chats with at least two Club staff members included in each chain (please note, a separate waiver must be signed granting Club teens text consent). Club staff members are strictly prohibited from being friends with members on any social media platform.

### **Personal Property**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties is not responsible for the loss or damage to members' personal property. We do not recommend that members bring personal possessions of value to the Club, including but not limited to game systems, Mp3 players, toys, jewelry, cell phones, portable electronics, large amounts of money, etc. If you wish for your child to have a cell phone on them, please explain to them that they must follow the BGCSDC personal device policy.

### **Personal Devices**

Personally, owned devices, such as smartphones or tablets, are permitted for use at the Club during approved times, as determined by the Club Director/Program Director, and in approved locations only. The Club expressly prohibits the use of personally owned devices in restrooms and other areas where there is an expectation of privacy.

- Members will take full responsibility for their devices and keep them with them at all times. Members may not lend their devices to any other Club member or staff. The Club is not responsible for the security of the device or the loss/damage/theft of a personally owned device.
- Members should only use their devices to access services, networks, or files relevant to Club-sanctioned programs. Members should only use the features of their device, including, but not limited to, taking or transmitting pictures, videos, location information, or others in accordance with program offerings.
- Members may not use the device to record, transmit or post pictures, videos, or other information of or about a person or persons at the Club. Nor can any images, videos, or other information recorded at the Club be transmitted or posted at any time without the express permission of Club staff.
- The Club reserves the right to inspect a member's personal device.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified should any such inspection take place. If suspect material is found on the member's personal device, said device will be stored securely by Club management until the parent/guardian comes to the Club to retrieve it.
- Members must comply with staff requests to shut down or turn off the device when asked. Failure to do so may result in the member being barred from bringing personal devices in the future.
- Violations of any Club policies, administrative procedures, or Club rules may result in the loss of use of the device at the Club or disciplinary action.

## Member Dress Code

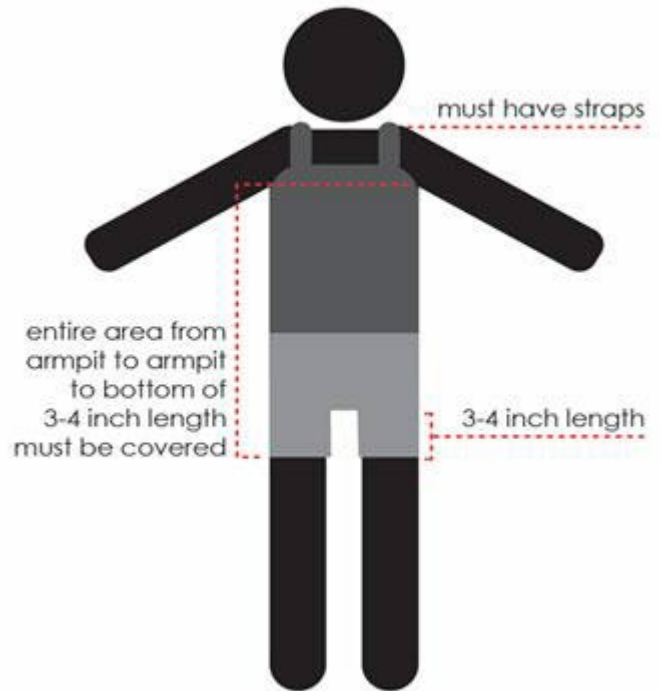
Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties respects members' rights to express themselves in the way they dress. All members who attend the Club are also expected to respect the Club community by dressing appropriately for a Boys & Girls Club environment. This dress code will be enforced in all areas of the Clubs at all times. The only exception would be in the swimming pool area. This policy is intended to provide guidance for members, staff, and parents.

### Minimum Requirements:

1. Clothing must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately 3 to 4 inches in length on the upper thighs (see image). Tops must have shoulder straps. Rips or tears in clothing should be lower than 3 to 4 inches in length.
2. Closed-toe shoes must be worn at all times and should be safe for the Club environment (pajamas, bedroom shoes or slippers shall not be worn, except for Club activities approved by the Director).
3. See-through or mesh garments must not be worn without appropriate coverage underneath that meets the minimum requirements of the dress code.

### Additional Requirements:

4. Clothing may not depict, imply, advertise, or advocate illegal, violent, or lewd conduct, weapons, or the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, or other controlled substances.
5. Clothing may not depict or imply pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.
6. Clothing may not display or imply vulgar, discriminatory, or obscene language or images.
7. Clothing may not state, imply, or depict hate speech/imagery targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected classification.
8. Clothing and accessories that endanger student or staff safety may not be worn.
9. Apparel, jewelry, accessories, tattoos, or manner of grooming that, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark, or any other attribute, denotes membership in a gang that advocates illegal or disruptive behavior is prohibited.



Members who do not adhere to these guidelines will not be allowed to attend the Club. Parents will be called if appropriate clothing is not available or the member refuses dress-code-appropriate clothing.

### Dress Code for the Swimming Pool

- **Swimwear Must Cover Private Parts** – Both males and females must wear swimwear that covers their private parts completely.
- **Wear Proper Swimwear Material** – Proper swimwear material is defined as any material that's specifically designed for the purposes of swimming. This includes spandex, polyester, nylon, and any similar material that's non-absorbent.
- **Street Clothes Cannot Be Worn in the Pool** – Street clothes—particularly ones made from cotton—can gradually make pool water unsafe for swimming. Examples of street clothes that are not allowed include T-shirts, jeans, shorts, skirts, and leggings.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. A Club member's behavior plays an important role in determining whether or not they will be invited to attend a field trip. Before any Club member participates in a field trip, they must have a signed permission slip that gives parent/guardian consent. In order to leave on a field trip, all Club members must wear their Club field trip bracelet. While on the field trip, all Club members must behave positively both on the bus and at the trip destination. Should your child display negative behavior while on the trip, they may be restricted from attending trips in the future.

### **Surveys and Questionnaires**

Pre- and post-tests, surveys, and questionnaires allow BGCSDC to gather information about members' knowledge and attitude around certain skills and behaviors and allow us to evaluate the impact of our programs and services. Members are asked to give feedback as a part of the continuous quality improvement process. BGCSDC takes measures to ensure member confidentiality when administering tests, surveys, and questionnaires. Personal identifying information is not released to third parties. BGCSDC also welcomes suggestions and asks for feedback from parents/guardians.

### **Technology Guidelines**

Club members are responsible for appropriate behavior on the Club's computer network. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General Club rules for behavior and communications apply. It is expected that users will comply with Club standards and the specific guidelines set forth below. Club members are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or Club staff to see.

- Do not use a computer to harm other people or their work.
- Do not damage the computer or network in any way.
- Do not interfere with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, shareware, or freeware.
- Do not violate copyright laws.
- Do not view, send, or display offensive messages or pictures.
- Do not share your password with another person.
- Do not insert any flash drives, jump drives, compact discs, or other media devices without prior staff review and approval.
- Notify a staff or volunteer immediately if, by accident, you encounter materials that violate appropriate use.
- BE PREPARED to be held accountable for your actions and for the loss of privileges if appropriate use rules are violated.

### **Cyberbullying**

Members may not utilize any technology to harass, threaten, demean, humiliate, intimidate, embarrass, or annoy their peers or others in their community. Members may not attempt to gain unauthorized access to the Club's network, or to any other computer system through the Club's network. This includes attempting to log in through another person's account or accessing another person's files. Members may not use the Club's network to engage in any illegal activity.

### **Digital citizenship**

Club members shall conduct themselves online in a manner that is aligned with the BGCSDC rules. Should a member behave online in a manner that violates the BGCSDC rules, that member shall face the same discipline policy and actions they would if their behavior had happened within the physical Club environment.



## **Bus/Van Rules**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties contracts with the Sarasota County School District to provide transportation for our members. Members and parents are expected to know and follow all bus rules. Any member who does not abide by the following guidelines will be suspended from the bus and risks being expelled from the bus if that behavior continues.

Members have a RESPONSIBILITY to:

- Obey the driver's instructions.
- Arrive at the assigned stop five minutes before pickup time, stand away from the road, board the bus when it has stopped and the doors have opened. The bus will not wait for tardy students.
- Cross the roadway in the proper manner.
- Ride the assigned bus and not board or depart the bus at any stop other than the assigned stop, unless authorized by the principal and the Transportation department. Sit in the assigned seat; standing or trying to change seats while the bus is in motion is dangerous.
- Remain seated and facing forward at all times when the bus is moving. Keep all portions of the body inside the bus.
- Refrain from spraying and/or applying scented perfumes/sprays/lotions while on the bus or just before boarding the bus.
- Remain absolutely quiet at railroad crossings, for the safety of all on board.
- Abide by school bus policies while on the bus.
- Refrain from throwing any items from the windows of the bus.
- Realize that parents/guardians and students may be held responsible for any unacceptable behavior by a student on the bus.
- Know that littering or throwing objects inside or at the bus is not allowed and may be subject to criminal charges.
- Be aware that parents/guardians and students will be held responsible for all vandalism to the bus by students, and that restitution will be required.
- Refrain from obscene language or gestures on the bus.
- Refrain from bringing animals or anything in a glass container on the bus, or any articles disruptive to the safe operation of the school bus. This includes science specimens and experiments. Bulky or objectionable articles, including scooters, skateboards, or large musical instruments that cannot be held in the student's lap will not be permitted on the bus.
- Refrain from blocking the aisles or emergency exits with objects.
- Refrain from displaying posters or signs from the bus windows.