

Boys & Girls Clubs of McAllen  
Parent/Member Handbook  
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Thank you for taking the time to learn what the Boys & Girls Club (a.k.a., the Club) is all about. We believe that all members and their parents/guardians can benefit from the information in this handbook. If there is anything else we can help you with, please let us know.

### **Mission Statement**

To inspire and enable all young people especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.

### **Core Beliefs**

Boys & Girls Clubs provide youth with...

- A safe place to learn & grow
- Ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals
- Life-enhancing programs
- Character development experiences
- Hope & opportunity

### **Membership**

Membership is open to all youth between the ages of 6 and 18. A membership form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian each calendar year (even if you are simply renewing your membership) and a birth certificate must be presented at time of registration, no exceptions. Our membership fee is \$5 per calendar year and will not be pro-rated for partial year memberships. Additional fees may be charged for our summer program and/or certain field trips. However, our goal is to always keep costs associated with Boys & Girls Club membership as low as possible so as to not exclude anyone based on economic circumstances.

The information you provide us on the membership application is critical. We ask that every effort be made to present contact information that is both current as well as accurate. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify us of any changes to your telephone number (home, work, emergency contacts, etc.) and/or address information as soon as such changes occur.

Orientations are offered to all new members and their parents. Please take advantage of the opportunity to see and hear what your Boys & Girls Club is all about and how you can give back to the Club to make it a better place for all of our kids.

Membership in the Boys & Girls Club is a privilege, not a right. The Boys & Girls Club reserves the right to refuse membership to any child at any time, with or without cause.

### **Club Hours**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of McAllen are normally open for after-school programming from 3 pm to 9 pm, with "teen only" hours for youth ages 13 to 18 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at traditional sites.

The Club will be open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on days when school is not in session (i.e., school holidays, Spring Break, summer vacation, etc). The exceptions to this are Club-recognized holidays on which the Boys & Girls Club will be closed and include New Years Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

The Club reserves the right to change its hours and days of operation based on need and/or economic circumstances. If such changes occur, parents/guardians will be notified in advance.

Additionally, there may be days when it is necessary to close the Club due to unforeseen circumstances such as emergency repairs, inclement weather, etc. Again, when such instances arise, we will do our best to post this information so as to mitigate any inconvenience this may cause.

Please be sure to pick-up your child by the posted closing times. Late fees of \$5 per 15 minutes will be charged for members left after closing. Late fees must be paid before the member(s) will be allowed to return. The Boys & Girls Club reserves the right to contact the appropriate authorities for assistance when members are not picked-up by a reasonable time AND after all emergency contact alternatives have been exhausted.

### **Open Door Policy**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of McAllen have an **OPEN DOOR POLICY**. This policy allows members to come and go at any time during the Club's operating hours. Members are NOT required to sign out; and staff members, under normal circumstances, are not allowed to prohibit a member from leaving the facility per the regulations of the Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services governing facilities/programs exempt from licensure as child cares. Thus, it is the responsibility of the child AND the parent/guardian to determine, understand and enforce whatever arrival and departure methods they see fit. Please note that youth are not allowed on the Club's grounds during operating hours unless they are signed in and participating in Club activities. Members should NOT be dropped off prior to the opening of any facility, as the Club cannot be held responsible for the supervision of such youth.

**It is important to remember that the Boys & Girls Club is NOT A DAYCARE and is not governed by licensure as a childcare facility.**

### **Transportation**

Transportation from schools is provided in a limited capacity at certain Clubs and from certain schools. Please check with your individual unit director for information on availability. Members are also encouraged to check with their schools as well as the Housing Authority for possible transportation alternatives.

### **Membership Cards**

ONE membership card will be provided to each new member and renewal member when all application requirements have been met. Members should bring their card to the Club EVERY DAY. Members should also learn to memorize their Club membership number (located on the card). Club members are required to sign in (but not out) each day upon entering the Club and must do so by either marking their assigned membership number on the designated sign-in sheet or by scanning their card. Remember that membership in the Club is a privilege, not a right. If members do NOT have their cards, certain privileges to program offerings may be denied. If a Club card is lost, a replacement fee of \$5.00 will usually be charged (see staff for details).

***Membership cards cannot be carried over into the next calendar year. Each year, on January 1<sup>st</sup>, the Club card will be a different to indicate new and expired cards.***

### **Supervision**

Our staff are trained Youth Development Professionals. Trained volunteers often support our staff. A staff member and/or trained volunteer will oversee each of our designated program areas. Please take the time to remind your child of the need to follow Club rules and directions AT ALL TIMES whether said directions are given by a staff member or a volunteer.

### **Code of Conduct**

One of the Club's core beliefs is to provide a safe place to learn and grow. Positive attitudes keep the Club fun. Below are some simple guidelines members are expected to follow...

Respect yourself.  
Play fairly and be honest.  
Applaud the efforts of others.  
Avoid inappropriate language.  
Dress appropriately at all times.  
Running is reserved for athletics.  
Say only good things about others.  
Bring your membership card everyday.  
Be respectful of Boys & Girls Club staff.  
Resolve disagreements in a positive way.  
Listen during appropriate times and assemblies.  
Be respectful of other members and their property.  
Tobacco, drugs, alcohol and weapons are prohibited.  
Participate only in program areas open to your assigned group.  
Take care of your Boys & Girls Club facility, grounds, and equipment.

### **Dress Code**

Youth should dress comfortably and wear clothes that allow them to participate in typical Boys & Girls Club activities and programs. We will expect the following...

**Footwear:** Shoes and socks must be worn at all times. Flip-flops, sandals and cleats are discouraged, as are any other open-toed shoes for safety reasons. Club members may not be allowed to participate in certain activities if open-toed shoes are worn. The best advice is to wear tennis/walking shoes every day.

**Clothing:** Inappropriate clothing of any kind is NOT allowed in the Club. Members wearing clothes that are too short, too tight or too revealing in any way or clothes with questionable or distasteful advertising will be asked to change or leave immediately. This judgment will be left solely to the discretion of the Club staff.

### **Field Trips**

The Boys & Girls Club provides a variety of opportunities for our members to participate in activities off Club property that support our core beliefs and programs. Each excursion requires a signed permission slip and any necessary fees prior to departing. Most sign-ups are taken on a first-come, first-served basis (meaning eligible members who return the required permission slip). Members and parents are reminded that all of our Club rules extend to field trips. Members who fail to

follow our rules and general Club expectations for appropriate behavior will prompt an immediate call to a parent or guardian to remove that member from the field trip at their own cost. *A parent or guardian MUST be available by telephone at all times during any Club sponsored field trip in the event that the staff needs to contact you.*

### **Discipline Policy**

The Boys & Girls Club strives to keep the consequences for unacceptable behavior clear, appropriate and timely. The safety of all members is of utmost importance to us. Our standards, along with the expectation that all members use good common sense, exist to ensure that your child and every other child at the Club can safely enjoy the Club's activities. Any member who disrupts programs or creates a dangerous situation will be disciplined appropriately. Members who do not follow rules can expect to lose privileges and face consequences. First-time offenses are never excused as such and will be handled based on their severity. Parents will be called to remove any member who has failed to curb his or her disruptive behavior and/or is behaving in an aggressive or violent manner that creates a dangerous situation for themselves, fellow members, staff or visitors.

When a member is suspended, it is his/her responsibility to let you (the parent/guardian) know. A phone call may be made to you if time allows. Please understand that it is very difficult for the staff to interrupt programming to call you and speak at great length about behavior that has already occurred and led to your child's suspension. We will, however, complete a written suspension report that we will give to the member or to you, should you pick up your child in person. In some cases, a suspension report will be mailed to you if the situation dictates such a need.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Verbal Counseling
- Time-out
- Suspension from Program Area
- Loss of Club Privileges
- Suspension (one day to two weeks)
- Indefinite suspension (until the situation can be resolved or the parent/guardian is consulted)
- Expulsion (i.e., permanent suspension)
- Contacting the proper authorities

*\* Please note that any time a law is broken in or around the Boys & Girls Club or it is suspected that a Club member or guest has broken the law and fled to the Club to avoid the authorities, the police will be notified immediately. The Boys & Girls Club is NOT a haven or refuge for those committing illegal acts or fleeing the authorities.*

Members are expected to respond to discipline without incident. Failure to do so will almost always increase any action taken in time or severity. Staff members are trained and fully expected, by policy, to maintain full control of any situation that occurs in their program area and will NOT tolerate anything that threatens that control, in appearance and/or manner. Also, please understand that sometimes the story that gets home is not always complete or accurate. Children sometimes tend to explain an incident in a manner that will not implicate them or cast blame their way. In addition, staff members, though well trained and experienced, are human, so please call the Club if you have any questions at all concerning disciplinary measures or any other Club activity. Your support and involvement as the parent/guardian is vital to our success as youth development professionals.

### **Phone Calls**

Our phones are for Club business only. Members should use phones or receive calls in emergencies only. Our lines need to remain open in the event of an emergency. Please make any necessary arrangements before your child comes to the Club so that you do not have to call the Club and your child does not have to call you.

### **Personal Belongings**

All personal belongings brought into the Club by a youth are the responsibility of that youth. The Boys & Girls Club is NOT responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. Please discourage your child from bringing anything to the Club that is not completely necessary, especially money. Necessary items, such as backpacks and jackets should be clearly marked with the member's name. Items that are not collected from our lost-and-found in a timely fashion will be donated to a local charity.

### **Medication**

The Boys & Girls Club is NOT allowed, by policy, to dispense, store and/or oversee medication of any kind, including all non-prescription medications.

### **Accidents**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of McAllen strive to maintain a safe and secure environment. There is an assumed risk in many of our core programs, including, but not limited to sports. Please feel safe in knowing that our trained staffs are attentive to providing the safest environment possible. The completed membership application authorizes the Club staff to seek medical treatment for a member, if necessary, and that any associated costs for such care are the responsibility of the parent or guardian. ***The Boys & Girls Club does NOT provide medical insurance for members.*** In the event of a serious injury the staff will call 911 immediately and then call the parents/guardians or alternative emergency contacts. This is one more reason why updated contact information is your responsibility and crucial to your child's well being.

### **Infestation or Contagious Conditions**

Any and all suspected transferable infestations or transmittable contagious conditions will be addressed fully in the following manner and without exception...

1. Parents will be contacted for immediate removal of the member from Club facilities.
2. Proof of treatment from a health care facility AND written approval from the Unit Director is required before the child will be allowed back into the Club.

### **Food**

The Boys & Girls Club understands and appreciates the need for a healthy diet among all of our members. It is our goal to encourage healthy eating habits that promote the well being of our youth. A lunch program is usually provided during the summer (see staff for details). Each Club has a different policy regarding the provision of snacks. Additionally, each Club has a designated area for eating. Please keep food and drinks out of the areas where such items are prohibited (library, computer lab, gym, etc.). Members are encouraged to bring their own healthy snacks and drinks (please note that refrigerators & microwaves are NOT available). Water-fountains are available at all Clubs. Water bottles are strongly recommended during the summer months, when temperatures can exceed 100 degrees.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are an integral part of the Boys & Girls Club experience. We welcome volunteers who wish to share their time and/or talents. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer at one of our Clubs, please stop by a Club site to pick-up a volunteer application. Background checks are required of all volunteers prior to being able to work with our youth members.

### **Programming**

The Boys & Girls Club of McAllen expects to be the best youth development organization in McAllen. Our staffs are trained youth development professionals who are hired for their engaging, energetic and enthusiastic skills. We want our members to come to the Club each day, attracted by the programs and the staff that lead them.

Programs at the Boys & Girls Club fall under Five Core areas – Character & Leadership Development, Education & Career Development, Health & Life Skills, The Arts, and Sports, Fitness & Recreation

### **Scholarship Program**

The Scholarship Program is available for children who cannot afford the sports or membership fee. If your child lives and attends school in McAllen and you are applying for a scholarship, please bring the latest 1040 form for both parents (if applicable). If you are on a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Program (TANF) or on Food Stamps, please bring a copy of the eligibility print out form.

### **Contacting Us**

Please do not hesitate to speak to a staff member or Unit Director whenever you have a question or a concern. We hope you will always start by contacting the staff or Unit Director when issues arise; after all, they are the ones who know your children the best. If the need arises, however, and you feel that an issue or complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at the unit-level, please know that parents/guardians may always contact the executive director of the organization at our administrative offices. The telephone number for our administrative offices is (956) 630-5323.

Thanks for joining the Boys & Girls Clubs of McAllen – **The Positive Place for Kids.**