



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ST. JOSEPH COUNTY



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Volunteer Hours & Contacts

Welcome! The Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County is thrilled for our 2023-2024 School Year Program, and are so excited to have your help!

Our Mission

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

Program Days & Hours

Monday - Friday

Volunteers help at the sites between 2:30 and 6 depending on the site (Wilson and Harrison Elementary also could use volunteers starting at 1pm on Thursdays)

Fridays are "Fun Fridays" without our STRIVE academic programming, and so volunteers are most needed Monday through Thursday.

Main Office

502 E. Sample St.
South Bend, IN 46601
574-232-2048

Contact Information

Jacqueline Kronk
Chief Executive Officer
jkronk@bgcsjc.org

Duane Wilson
Chief Operating Officer
dwilson@bgcsjc.org

Lindah Chase
Director of Development
lchase@bgcsjc.org

Susie Brennan
Director of Strategic Partnerships
sbrennan@bgcsjc.org

Lety Stanton-Verduzco
Director of Mission Integration
lverduzco@bgcsjc.org

Main point of contact for volunteers

Madison Ward
Community Engagement Coordinator
574-208-5011
mward@bgcsjc.org



Making the Most of Your Volunteer Experience

Thank you, again, for your generosity of time and energy! We look forward to working together with you to provide a high-quality program which reflects the five BGCA Pillars:

- Character & Leadership
- Education & Career
- Health & Wellness
- the Arts
- Sports & Recreation

We are committed to providing a welcoming and supportive space for our BGCSJC Members to grow and explore while maintaining a safe and healthy environment.



Please bring your energy!

Actively engage with Members. Your focus should always be on them and on nothing else. Cell phones need to be kept either in your car or pocket (on silent or vibrate). They are only to be used in case of an emergency. Be attentive to the Member in front of you. Let them know that you value your time with them.

Be inclusive!

Club demographics are very diverse with Members of all races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and personal circumstances. Club Members should be treated fairly and with respect to foster their personal, emotional, social, and academic growth. Appreciate diversity.

Be adaptable!

Some days a Club will hold holiday parties, events, have a speaker come in, some days kids may require more attention and conflicts may occur, and some days staff might be down—whatever the situation, volunteers' flexibility is a huge help as every day looks different at the site depending on the needs.

Arriving at the Club Site

Volunteers should check in with the Club Director upon arriving at the site. On your first day you will receive a volunteer lanyard that will help our Members and staff identify you.

Dress Code

While you are serving, you can wear jeans, khakis, khaki shorts, t-shirts, gym shorts, tennis shoes, closed-toe/heel sandals, or any clothes that are conducive to the activities you will be doing while at Club. Appropriate, athletic or activewear is generally best. Please avoid open-toed sandals, untidy clothes, sleeveless t-shirts or shirts with spaghetti straps, clothing with derogatory statements, and hats worn indoors. Please wear your lanyard at all times.

Calling in Sick/Arriving Late

In the event that you cannot volunteer during your scheduled time due to illness or other conflicts, please let us know as soon as possible so that your Club Director has time to plan accordingly. Please let your Club Director or BGC Community Engagement Coordinator, Madison Ward - mward@bgcsjc.org, if and when you will be out.



Policies & Procedures

Harassment

Harassment in any form will not be tolerated. Any form of harassment including, but not limited to, sexual harassment or harassment based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or any other protected class, should be reported to your Unit Director or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Profanity

Boys & Girls Clubs are tobacco-, drug-, and alcohol-free environments. Reporting to your volunteer assignment under the influence or in the possession of alcohol or drugs is grounds for immediate termination. The Club fosters positivity and inclusivity. Profanity and racial slurs or jokes are not tolerated.

Disagreements with Other Employees/Volunteers

If, for any reason, a disagreement or argument occurs with a staff member or another volunteer, it should never take place in front of our Members, parents, or school staff members. If you need assistance resolving the problem, please contact your Club Director.

Safety During Activities and Club Time

We strive to provide a positive and safe environment for our Members. Volunteers are never to be left alone with Club Members or left with other volunteers but without BGC staff present.

Physical Safety: If you see a potential safety risk, address it with a staff member immediately. Member safety is our top priority; please do not begin your activity until you feel it is safe to do so. You are encouraged to play sports with Club Members, but if you have underlying health problems, please use your discretion.

Emotional Safety: We serve a diverse group of children and emotional safety is paramount. Please help us ensure that children are welcomed, encouraged, and supported. If you see a potential situation that compromises the emotional safety of a Club Member, BGC staff member, or otherwise please address it with a club staff member or administrative staff immediately.

Signs of Illness

If a Member exhibits signs of illness or experiences any symptoms, please report it to staff immediately. The Member's temperature will be checked and appropriate First Aid will be administered. The child will then be separated from the group and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

Injuries

If a Member is hurt, inform the most senior staff member (team lead or Club Director) on duty so that the child can be evaluated in a timely manner. In some cases, first aid will need to be administered at the location. If so, this should be done by a staff member.

Accident or Incident Reports

If an accident or incident occurs, please inform a staff member so that they can address it. The reports listed below are only to be filled out by a staff member. However, if you witness an incident that warrants making any type of report, you may be asked to give information regarding the incident.

- **Accident Reports**

Fill these out when the aid given is at more than a Band-Aid. All head injuries (no matter how minor) require an accident report. Staff will notify an emergency contact on record.

- **Incident Report**

This report is for all non-injury related issues that may harm/affect our Members.

- **Behavioral Report**

For all non-injury.





Mandatory Reporting: Suspected Child Abuse

Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County is a Mandatory Reporting Agency. This means that under the guidance of appropriate laws, any staff person or volunteer having reasonable cause to believe that any child is experiencing abuse, exploitation or neglect shall immediately, verbally report the information to the Club Director (or Team Lead), and in conjunction with that staff member, report the incident through the Child Abuse Hotline or a local law enforcement agency. The BGC Chief Operating Officer will also be notified immediately.

Criteria for Identifying Possible Abuse

Please note that while these indicators represent common signs that abuse or neglect may be occurring, an individual's sense that something may be awry is often as or more accurate. Caution is best.

The following are warning signs to identify possible abuse:

- Frequent or unexplained bruises or injuries
- Nervousness around adults
- Aggression toward adults or other children
- Inability to stay awake or concentrate for extended periods
- Sudden, dramatic change in activities or personality
- Acting out sexually or showing interest in sex that is inappropriate for age level
- Low self-esteem
- Poor hygiene

Bathroom Procedures

Please only use designated adult bathrooms. Volunteers are not permitted to accompany children to the bathroom. Staff members will escort children according to BGCSJC Policy, prohibiting one-to-one contact.

Boundaries

Please be mindful of boundaries at all times. Never put yourself in a position that could be deemed inappropriate or unprofessional. For the safety and protection of Members and volunteers alike, you should never be alone with a Member.

Volunteers should avoid:

- Inappropriate physical contact; including but not limited to kissing, tickling, long embracing hugs, backrubs, holding hands, sitting on laps, picking up children. Engaging in any sexual or intimate relationship with a child.
- Buying or giving any child special treats or gifts unless specifically authorized by the Club Director.
- Allowing a child to call you by a nickname or pet name.
- Disclosing personal information about yourself, staff, volunteers, or other children to a member/child.
- Exchanging cell phone numbers with a child.
- Allowing a child to use or handle your personal or business cell phone.
- Giving a child a secretive note of a personal nature or engaging in exchanging secrets with a child.
- Spending time with a child outside of the Club.





Social Media

You will undoubtedly form special bonds with the Members. This is understandable and encouraged! However, you are not permitted to engage with Members on social media. We prefer all volunteers to change their social media settings to private if possible. Accepting Members as friends on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, etc. is not allowed. As staff members and volunteers, we are here to serve as mentors to our Members, not to be their friends.

Confidentiality

Members' names and personal situations are confidential and cannot be discussed with people outside of the Club. Pictures can only be taken by BGCSJC staff members. In turn, pictures of Club Members cannot be posted to any social media sites or any other websites that are not affiliated with Boys & Girls Clubs. Personal and professional information of staff members and other volunteers is also considered confidential information.

Guidance and Redirection

Sometimes when working with the children, conflicts will occur. To encourage and reinforce positive behavior, it may be necessary to redirect inappropriate behavior. This may include taking action by doing one or more of the following:

- Calmly ask the child to move to a quiet area so you/staff member may talk to them.
- Ask the child to come to you because you are unable to hear or understand them.
- Gather information by asking the child to describe the problem. Restate and acknowledge the problem to show that you understand.
- Acknowledge the child's feelings. Hearing a label for what they are feeling may help them understand that they are not acting how they normally would.
- Ask for solutions and choose one together. "What can we do to solve this problem?"
- Stay nearby and follow up in case the problem continues.
- Let a staff member know so that they may also address the issue if necessary.

We provide a safe, positive, and formative experience for Club Members. Please treat Club Members with kindness and compassion at all times.

In the event that redirection is not successful, and a behavior escalates, a staff member (Team Lead or Club Director) will enforce our behavior policy. We are here to support you as a volunteer and to provide a consistent, loving environment for you and our Members. If a Member is engaging in inappropriate behavior, please let a staff member know so that they may address the issue.

**Thank you so much for all your
time, effort, and care for our Club!**

Please let us know if we can better support you in any way.

**Volunteer
Point of
Contact**

Madison Ward
Community Engagement Coordinator
574-208-5011
mward@bgcsjc.org



VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

I have read the Volunteer Handbook and agree to abide by the guidelines set forth by the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Joseph County.

PRINTED NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



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