

Child Abuse Prevention Policy



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The priority of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Haverhill is the physical and emotional safety of its members, staff, and volunteers. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Haverhill maintains a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Haverhill implements policies and procedures for members, employees, volunteers, visitors or any victims of sexual abuse or misconduct to report any suspicion or allegation of abuse.

DEFINITIONS

One-on-Contact Prohibition: Boys & Girls Club of Greater Haverhill prohibits isolated one-on-one interaction between Club participants and staff or volunteers, including board members. This includes prohibiting one-on-one contact at any time at the Club, in vehicles or by phone, text, social media or any other means.

Exceptions may only be made when delivering approved medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional according to professional guidelines. All staff and volunteers, including minor staff (under age 18), are strictly prohibited from meeting Club participants outside of any Club-sponsored activities. The only exception to this rule is if the Club participant is a child or sibling of a staff member or volunteer.

Child abuse is when an adult or another child, whether through action or by failing to act, causes serious emotional or physical harm to a child. Sexual abuse or misconduct may include but is not limited to:

- Any sexual activity, involvement or attempt of sexual contact with a person who is a minor (under 18 years old).
- Sexual activity with another who is legally incompetent.
- Physical assault or sexual violence, such as rape, statutory rape, abuse, molestation, or any attempt to commit such acts.
- Unwanted and intentional physical conduct that is sexual in nature, such as touching, pinching, patting, brushing, massaging someone's neck or shoulders and/or pulling against another's body or clothes.
- Inappropriate activities, advances, comments, bullying, gestures, electronic communications, or messages (e.g., by email, text, or social media).

Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or trafficking. Grooming behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Targeting specific youth for special attention, activities, or gifts.
- Isolating youth from family members and friends physically or emotionally. This can include one-on-one interactions such as sleepovers, camping trips and day activities.
- Gradually crossing physical boundaries, full-frontal hugs that last too long, lap sitting or other "accidental" touches.

MANDATED REPORTING

Every staff member or volunteer of Boys & Girls Club of Greater Haverhill who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect must immediately report to Club leadership. Club leadership is responsible for reporting the incident immediately to the appropriate authorities according to statewide mandated reporting laws, as well as to Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) within 24 hours via the critical incident system.

REQUIRED TRAINING

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Haverhill conducts and reports through a BGCA-approved process the following training for all staff members and volunteers with direct repetitive contact with young people (at the intervals noted for each).

Before providing services to young people, and annually thereafter:

1. BGCA-approved child abuse prevention
2. BGCA-approved mandated reporting
3. BGCA-approved grooming prevention



4. or BGCA-approved Foundations: Preventing abuse in Youth Serving Organizations (this training meets BGCA requirements for grooming, prevention, and mandated reporting)

Annually:

- All the policies, including all safety policies, for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Haverhill.

PHYSICAL INTERACTIONS

Every staff member and volunteer of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Haverhill is required to maintain appropriate physical contact with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side hugs • Handshakes • High-fives and hand slapping • Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-frontal hugs or kisses • Showing affection in isolated area • Lap sitting • Wrestling or piggyback/shoulder rides • Tickling • Allowing youth to cling to an adult's leg

VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Every staff member and volunteer of Boys & Girls Club of Greater Haverhill is required to maintain appropriate verbal interactions with minors. Appropriate and inappropriate interactions include but are not limited to the following:

Appropriate	Inappropriate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reinforcement • Child-appropriate jokes (no adult content) • Encouragement • Praise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Inappropriate jokes (adult-only content) • Discussing sexual encounters or personal issues • Secrets • Profanity or derogatory remarks • Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate youth

ABUSE AND SAFETY RESOURCES

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Haverhill prominently displays BGCA-approved collateral that shares ethics hotline, crisis text line and safety helpline information with members, staff, volunteers, and families. We also share all safety policies with parents and guardians upon receiving a youth membership application.

