



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ST. HELENA AND CALISTOGA

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Boys & Girls Clubs of America Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Helena and Calistoga

Ensuring the safety of children is fundamental to the mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). For more than 100 years, child protection and safety have been the bedrock principles of BGCA's work. The many actions BGCA has taken over the years include advocating for the passage of the U.S. PROTECT Act, which improved background screening systems and access. BGCA has also partnered with the FBI, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Centers for Disease Control to contribute to the development of safety practices that benefit all youth serving organizations.

In today's world, young people are faced with enormous challenges—from poverty, to the high school drop-out crisis, to an obesity epidemic-- that threaten their chances to have great futures. And, unfortunately, headlines remind us every day that we live in a dangerous world that puts too many young people- America's most precious resource- at serious risk.

Given these realities, we must be ever vigilant in ensuring that our Clubs are safe havens for our youth, and staffed by caring adult mentors who have the best interests of kids at heart. While child safety has been priority #1 for Boys & Girls Clubs throughout our history, our work in this area is never done.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and the Boys & Girls Clubs of St. Helena and Calistoga (BGCSHC—a chartered affiliate of BGCA) are committed to helping our Clubs provide a safe and secure experience for youth. Throughout BGCA's Child and Club Safety Department, a six step plan has been implemented that follows best practices available today, using the latest advances in technology and expertise:

1. **Criminal background checks are required** for every staff member and volunteer who have direct contact with children. BGCA partners with LexisNexis, the world's largest data company to provide the most comprehensive screenings available today.
2. Through BGCA's partnership with Praesidium, one of the nation's leading safety experts, BGCA provides a **24 hour toll free Child Safety Hotline** to allow local Club managers, staff members, volunteers and Club members to confidentially report suspicions or concerns. 1-866-607-SAFE (7233)
3. Ongoing training and supervision of staff is critical. Local Clubs participate in a wide variety of **child safety trainings** conducted through seminars, conferences and webinars.
4. **Safety policies and procedures** must adhere to the highest standards. Clubs are required to report any suspected child abuse to local authorities. No adult should ever be left alone with a child—all activities inside and outside the Club must have appropriate ratios of staff and members.
5. **All facilities and vehicles** are required to comply with federal, state and local safety laws. BGCA works with leading experts in the area of security technology to develop state-of-the-art solutions for more than 4,000 sites.
6. BGCA works hard to create a **culture of safety** which includes the following initiatives:
 - National Child Safety Task Force, made up of leading experts
 - National Peer Review Program, to share best practices
 - National Safety Awards Program, to recognize leadership and innovation
 - National Child Safety and Protection Symposium, a forum to enable all youth organizations to share their best practice ideas and solutions for protecting kids

These are just some of the steps we take to ensure the safety of children. We constantly look for ways to improve practices and training for our local Clubs and staff, and will continually introduce additional resources as they become available.

Our message to communities and parents is clear: We work every day to create a safe and fun environment where kids can pursue academic success, good character and citizenship, and a healthy lifestyle—all under the guidance of trained, trustworthy adult leaders.

And, our message to anyone who would potentially compromise our Clubs and our mission is equally clear: We have ZERO tolerance for inappropriate behavior of any kids, and we put resources behind that stance. America's young people deserve nothing less than our constant focus on their safety, and our firm commitment to protect every child who is entrusted in our care.

Jim Clark, President, Boys & Girls Clubs of America
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