



**At the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester, keeping our members SAFE IS OUR #1 PRIORITY!**

Ensuring child safety is fundamental to the mission of Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester. The safety and wellbeing of young people is our number one priority. We work every day to create a safe, inclusive and fun environment so kids can have every opportunity to be successful in life. We have no tolerance for inappropriate behavior of any kind, including child sexual abuse or misconduct, and we put resources behind this commitment.

**Culture of Safety:** Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester continually updates robust safety policies, programs, training and supervisory practices for our staff and volunteers that are designed to promote child safety and protect young people from threats that are present in our society. We implement multiple layers of protection to keep our kids safe including:

- BGCNW complies with all NYS Office and Children and Family Service guidelines as a licensed childcare center.
- Adheres to all NYS Department of Health guidelines and have implemented and updates COVID 19 Health and Wellness plan including but not limited to mandatory healthcare screening of all members, staff and visits entering our building.
- Minimally one counselor in each group is CPR, First Aid/ RTE trained.

**Safety Policies:** Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester comprehensive safety policies in place that protect youth including, but not limited to, supervision, transportation, communication and prohibiting private one-on-one contact.

**24-hour Toll-free Child Safety Hotline:** Through our national partnership with [Praesidium](#), one of the nation's leading safety Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester families, members and staff have access to a confidential 24-hour toll-free Child Safety Hotline, [866-607-SAFE \(7233\)](tel:866-607-SAFE) or email, [SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com](mailto:SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com).

**Mandatory Background Checks:** Mandatory criminal background checks for all staff are required upon hire, and at least annually thereafter at Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester. In addition, criminal background checks are required for any volunteer who has direct contact with children. All potential employees and volunteers are also run through the National Sex Offenders Registry and OCFS Statewide Fingerprint and Database Background Check in addition to passing annual drug testing .

**Required Immediate Reporting:** Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester staff and volunteers are all mandated reporters, and are required to report any critical incident/safety concern to local authorities immediately. We are also required to report any critical incident to Boys & Girls Clubs of America within 24 hours.

**Mandatory Annual Safety Assessments:** We complete a safety assessment each year to ensure we continually make improvements to safety at our Club.

**Safety Trainings:** Ongoing training and supervision of staff and volunteers is critical. Both staff and volunteers participate in a wide variety of child safety training on a continuous basis, such as seminars conferences and webinars. We also engage leading third-party safety experts to provide guidance for our policies and approaches, including Praesidium, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, and the National Children's Advocacy Center.

**Safety Committee:** has a dedicated safety committee to provide oversight, input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies. Priorities and initiatives include:

- COVID-19 Safety Protocols
- Ongoing review and update to building, property and safety policies to meet new requirements.
- Ongoing review liability insurance, background check process, and other safety related items to ensure compliance with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and all local and state.

**Mandatory Employee Reference:** Any employee interested in moving to another Boys & Girls Club is required to have a reference from the previous Club, even if the Clubs are within the same community.

**State and Local Laws:** We comply with federal, state, and local safety laws, including those impacting facilities and vehicles.

**Safety Partnerships:** Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America works with leading experts in the areas of safety, security and technology to develop state-of-the-art solutions for Clubs. Partners include:

- National Child Safety Advisory Task Force, made up of leading experts and organizations
- Blue Ribbon Taskforce, comprised of local Club leaders charged with providing input on the safety direction and key safety initiatives
- Mental Health First Aid, a national program that teaches skills to recognize and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse
- Crisis Text Line, a confidential text message service for youth in times of crisis

Locally, boys and Girls Club of northern Westchester, partners with:

- Westchester County Department of Health
- Westchester County office of children and Family Services
- Northwell- Northern Westchester Hospital

**Continued Commitment:** In July, 2020, all local Boys & Girls Clubs voted to adopt additional safety measures to further improve safety within our Clubs. Many of these practices were already in place, however, Boys & Girls Clubs determined these practices should be mandatory for all Clubs. These measures include more stringent reference and background checks, enhanced Club Safety Committee requirements for all Clubs, greater communication of key safety resources and information available for staff and members, and more.

Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America has advocated the passage of the **U.S. PROTECT Act**, which improved background screening systems and access. The national organization has also partnered with the **FBI**, the **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children** and the **Centers for Disease Control** to contribute to the development of safety practices that benefit ALL youth-serving organizations.

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 to our care at Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester To **learn more** about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Child Safety page, [here](#).