

Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo

Parent Handbook

Mission Statement: To inspire youth, especially those who need us most, to achieve their full potential in a safe, positive and engaging environment that promotes education, health, and character development.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo would like to thank you for allowing your child to attend. This handbook was designed to inform parents of the policies and procedures of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo. To ensure a safe, healthy, and fun environment for all our members, we ask that you familiarize yourself and your child(ren) with the rules and guidelines. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please call and speak to a Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo representative.

Hector J. Noyola, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo-956-242-4975
Kevin Lopez, Assistant Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo-956-242-4912
Jose "JR" Garza, Director of Athletics, Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo-956-722-7549
Isa Ramos, Benavides Branch Director-956-205-1896
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David Saldivar, Lamar Bruni Vergara Branch Director-956-242-4889
Pablo Martinez, Programs Director-956-723-1051

Membership

Club membership is required for participation. Club members must be 6-12 years old. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of sex, religion, race, color, national origin or disability.

Staffing for Success

BGC Laredo has been providing programs for youth in our area for more than 75 years. The most critical component of our program success is founded on providing educated, well-trained staff dedicated to our mission. It is our expectation that staff members represent the BGC Laredo in a positive professional manner at all times. All staff members participate in in-service training and are certified in CPR and First Aid. The average adult-child ratio at BGC Laredo is one to 30; however, members may occasionally participate in large group activities where the ratio is increased.

Member & Parent Grievance Procedures

If your child(ren) have a problem while at the Club, please encourage him/her to talk with a staff member or any of our available directors. In the same regard, we encourage parents to communicate with the Branch Director to discuss any concerns that you might have at any time. Problems can be resolved only through communication and cooperation with one another. We want to provide an atmosphere where your child feels safe and has fun while learning. If in the event the Branch Director is not available or further assistance is required Kevin Lopez, Assistant Executive Director, may be reached at (956-242-4912). Please note that any inappropriate language or conduct by a parent/guardian may result in the refusal of services.

Attendance & Participation

Attendance at BGC Laredo is not mandatory, but is highly encouraged! Members may attend and participate at their own leisure. In order for our club members to fully gain the benefits of club programming it is recommended that all youth attend at least three times a week. If a child refuses to participate in an activity, he/she must remain with his/her age group and receptive to general direction.

Club Member Attendance

Club members are asked to attend the club at least three times per week. Staff members are encouraged to place phone calls home to club members who are not attending at least three times a week. Club privileges are contingent upon participation and conduct. Our goal is to have club members attend as frequently as possible. However, if a club member is kept home from school due to illness, s/he is not permitted to attend the club that day. If a club member is suspended from school for the day, that club member will also be suspended from the club. Also, if a club member has been suspended and/or expelled by one club, that suspension/expulsion applies to all other BGC Laredo sites.

Pick-Up Procedure

In order to ensure the safety of our club members, we ask our club members and parents to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Club Members must check-in at the front desk and parents must sign-out club members from the front desk each day.
- When a club member leaves the club, they may not return until the following day.
- Club members may obtain written permission from a parent/guardian to sign themselves out and walk home. Parents/guardians wishing this arrangement must meet with club management and complete a Club Member Walker Release Form. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo is not responsible for youth when they sign-out. If written authorization is on file and a child(ren) are walking home from the club, they must leave the premises before 5:30pm to ensure a safe arrival at home prior to sundown.
- The club/site will not physically restrain or take responsibility for a club member who insists on leaving club/site premises without a parent/guardian's permission. Club members that leave unescorted without written permission will face disciplinary actions of a two week suspension and/or termination of membership.
- A responsible parent/guardian (18 years & up) must sign-out club members prior to pick-up time. Identification may be requested to verify proper pick-up authorization. Parents/Guardians must be free from impairment and arrive on time. Please see impaired Parent/Guardian & Late Pick-Up Policy for additional information.

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Parent Valid Phone/Text/Email Updates

During your child(ren)'s initial club membership registration you will be asked for your most recent contact information. This information is protected but necessary in case of an emergency we need to contact you with the relevant information you have provided. If at any time you change your address, phone number or email please notify BGC Laredo immediately.

Impaired Parent/Guardian Policy

A responsible parent/guardian (18 years & up) must sign-out club members prior to pick-up time. If the parent/guardian who is picking up the club member is suspected to be or appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol, staff will contact another adult on the Pick-Up Authorization Form. The club member may not be released to a parent/guardian under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The club member will remain in staff's care until the arrival of an authorized adult who is capable of taking responsibility for the club member's release. Proper authorities will be called after 30 minutes, if a responsible parent/guardian is unavailable to pick-up the club member(s).

Late Pick-Up Policy

A late pick-up creates added cost to our program and a distraction from end of the day duties for our staff. If a club member is picked up late parents will be reminded of the policy with a written warning. Upon the second late pick-up a \$30 fee will be charged for the first minute and a \$1.00 per minute, per child. If 30 minutes after closing your child(ren) are not picked up, and no contact has been made with a responsible party, the Laredo Police Department and/or Child Protective Services will be notified. All fees must be paid prior to your child(ren) returning to the Club. All late fees and payment plans must be paid prior to renewing club membership to any BGC Laredo Program. Club members with unpaid late fee balances will be not eligible for any paid field trips.

Refund Policy

Any funds collected for field trips and/or special events are non-refundable. If a club member is suspended from any field trip and/or special event due to behavior, a refund will not be granted. If a club member is absent from any field trip and/or special event due to an illness, a transferred credit to another field trip and/or special event may be granted. Funds collected for club memberships may be refunded if a member did not utilize club services for one day or more. Used club memberships are non-refundable. No refunds will be given after 30 days of receiving payment.

Club Surveys & Report Cards

In order to maintain a low cost membership fee, funders require that BGC Laredo report on club member attendance and academic progress. Throughout the year, clubs are required to obtain a copy of your child(ren)'s report card and/or standardized testing results. Upon registration, clubs may require a copy of your child(ren)'s latest report card with their membership application. At times club members will be asked to complete satisfaction surveys and/or pre & post surveys measuring knowledge gained from participation in club programs.

Parent Involvement & Visitation

We encourage parents to get involved in all aspects of their child(ren)'s lives. Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time to observe programming. If you wish to interact with your child during programming hours, you will be asked to complete a Volunteer Application including a criminal background check. All adults who interact with program members during program hours must observe this policy.

Personal Belongings

Personal belongings are not allowed in the club (ex. iPad, iPod, MP3 Players, Cell Phones, etc). The Club is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Cell phones are brought at the discretion of each member and are to be used for safety purposes only. If a member has to contact their parent for any reason, BGC Laredo staff must be made aware of this occurrence. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about safety measures and about leaving all valuables at home including toys, purses, electronics and cell phones. Personal belongings such as electronics may be confiscated if they become a distraction to the program and may result in disciplinary action. Confiscated items will be returned to parents upon pick-up.

Open Door Policy

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo encourages members to remain at the Club until a parent or responsible adult picks them up. However, we cannot legally require a member to stay at the Club. An understanding on leaving the Club must exist between the parent and the child. We suggest that parents have a conversation with your child(ren) about your decision on when and how your child(ren) can leave the Club site. If the child has parental permission to leave at a certain time, it is required that the parent complete and turn in a Club Member Walker Release Form. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo are "drop off" facilities. We do not have a check out system to identify when a member leaves the Club. The Boys & Girls Club of Laredo is not responsible if a member leaves the Club and/or facilities or grounds, although we do our best to keep this from happening. Staff will attempt to notify parents if a youth leaves the Club prior to pick-up or without parental permission. Parents must understand that the Club is NOT regulated as a licensed daycare by the State of Texas and that an open campus policy is in effect at all times. Furthermore, the Club is NOT responsible for the time or manner in which a child (or ward) may arrive at or leave the facility.

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Health & Safety

If your child(ren) have a known medical condition or disability (asthma, diabetes, ADHD, ADD, Autism, etc) please be sure this information is recorded on the Membership Application Form. Parents will be asked to fill out the Medical Emergency section on the Boys & Girls Club of Laredo Membership Application, which will be kept on file. It is suggested that parents takes precautionary measures for situations that may arise during club hours.

BGC Laredo will treat minor injuries. In serious cases, the child(ren) may be taken to the local hospital by an emergency vehicle. Parents will be contacted immediately of any emergency situation. By signing a Membership Application you give the club authority to have emergency services transport your child(ren).

Parents will be notified to pick-up their child(ren) immediately if they have any one of the following conditions: fever over 100 degrees, rash, open sore, runny eyes, vomiting, head lice, diarrhea and/or an accident requiring medical attention. If child(ren) is not picked up within the hour a \$30 late fee will apply with \$1 per minute per child. If a child(ren) stays home from school for being sick, he/she may not come to the club that same day. Club members who develop symptoms of a contagious illness while at the club must be picked-up immediately and are not eligible to return to the club until 24 hours after the initial intake of medication or doctor visit.

Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect -Mandatory Reporting

BGC Laredo is committed to protecting the safety of its club members. As professionals working with club members, BGC Laredo staff is mandated by Texas Law to report any incidences of suspected child abuse and neglect, within the required time frame in an appropriate and thorough manner. BGC Laredo supports this mandate and requires all full and part-time staff to follow applicable procedures when warranted. The law requires the source of complaints be confidential.

Dress Code Policy

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo, will abide by the dress code policy of the area school district. The dress and grooming standards are intended to encourage good grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards and teach respect for yourself. Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo Staff has the responsibility to determine appropriateness or attire expectations for the club setting, and to enforce the dress code standards established for all members.

1. Tops must be appropriately sized in the shoulders, sleeves and length.
2. Spaghetti strap tops, backless and see through clothing is prohibited.
3. Vulgar language and/or alcohol/drug advertisements on clothing is prohibited.
4. Pants must fit at the waist and be properly hemmed or cuffed at or below the ankle, not dragging on the ground.
5. Walking shorts, skirts and skorts must be appropriate length for physical activities.
6. Open toed shoes and flip flops are prohibited.

Club Member Medication Policy

Parents must submit a written request if their child(ren) must take medicine while at the club. Such written permission is required for both prescription and non-prescription medication, regardless of the length of time the medication is to be taken. Medicine must be presented in its original properly labeled container to club management. Sample medicine or medicine obtained from outside the U.S. will not be administered at the club. Youth are not permitted to carry any prescription or over-the-counter medicines at the club or at any club related activities, with the exception of prescription asthma medicine or medicine for anaphylaxis. The prescription label must show that the medicine has been prescribed for that child. Youth must self-administer and be in compliance with the prescription or written instruction from the child's physician or other licensed health care provider. The child's parent must provide club management with a written statement from the physician or other licensed health care provider indicating that the student is capable of self-administration, and with respect to the medication, state the name, purpose, dosage, administration times or circumstances, and the period for which it is prescribed.

Field Trips

All field trips away from the Club require a completed and signed Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo Travel Permission Slip. Members will:

1. Follow instructions given by any staff, volunteer, or non-BGC Laredo personnel while on a field trip and BGC Laredo location.
2. Respect the property of fellow passengers and that of the field trip site.
3. Club Member must be in club shirt.
4. Represent the themselves, their community, and their family positively and as best as they can.
5. Arrive on time prior to departure time.
6. Not forge Travel Permission Slips or give false information of approval.
7. Abide by all the rules field trip sites impose to all their guests.
8. Maintain behavior and be positive representatives of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo.
9. Field trips are a privilege. If a club member chooses to not follow club rules they will not be allowed to attend field trips.

Love & Logic

BGC Laredo follows the Love & Logic method for classroom management and discipline. Love & Logic is based on approaching youth with sincere compassion and empathy while allowing youth to make their own decisions and affordable mistakes and experience the natural or logical consequences. This method helps youth develop personal responsibility, self-control and good decision making skills.

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Code of Conduct

All members are expected to always adhere to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo Code of Conduct.

1. Play fairly and be honest.
2. Be respectful of Boys & Girls Clubs staff, other members and their property, facility and equipment.
3. Say only positive things about others.
4. Resolve disagreements in a positive way, ask staff for help.
5. Avoid use of improper language.
6. Participate only in program areas open to your age groups and stay in designated supervised areas.
7. Dress appropriately at all times.
8. Keep hands and feet to yourself.
9. Smoking, drugs, alcohol and weapons are prohibited.
10. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary Actions Guideline	
Offense	Consequence
Misuse of Cell Phone, iPods, MP3, electronics	Club not responsible for lost and/or damaged items; held by staff & returned to parent
Rude or Disrespectful	Verbal reprimand to expulsion
Refusal to follow instructions	Verbal reprimand to expulsion
Class/Group Disturbance	Verbal warning to conference with parent
Damage or destruction of property	Suspension and/or restitution from parent
Tobacco or gambling	Conference with parent to suspension
Profanity, vulgar gestures and or racial slurs	Conference with parent to suspension
Horse playing and/or careless behavior	Conference with parent to suspension
Indecent exposure/Obscene material	Conference with parent to expulsion
Inappropriate bodily contact both male & female	Conference with parent to expulsion
Threats to a fellow club member or staff	Suspension to expulsion
Loitering and/or trespassing	Suspension to expulsion
False Information	Suspension to expulsion
Failure to accept disciplinary actions	Suspension to expulsion
Repeated violations (misbehavior)	Suspension to expulsion
Violence (fighting)	Suspension to expulsion
Weapons and/or drugs	Suspension to Expulsion, police will be contacted

Discipline Policy

Discipline is a must if we are to have a safe and valuable program for members. Please discuss with your child the behavior that is expected of him/her. Parents are asked to take the time to sit down and discuss the Code of Conduct with each member to ensure he/she clearly understands them.

Disciplinary Procedures

Members are expected to adhere to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo Code of Conduct. There are consequences for unwarranted behavior. Incidents will follow this general outline:

- 1st Write Up: Warning/counsel by staff. Supervisor will be notified.
- 2nd Write Up: Counsel by staff and supervisor. Parent conference may be required.
- 3rd Write Up: Parent conference & suspension up to three days.

Suspension Policy

- Only the Program Manger and/or Branch Director will decide to suspend a member.
- Only the Director of Operations has the authority to expel a member.
- No member will be suspended from the Club without notification to the parent(s).

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- Depending on the severity of the incident, club members suspended from the program must be picked up from the Club immediately.

Please Note: There will be incidents that are severe enough that suspension or expulsion will be the only choice without a first or second offense. Parent(s) may be required to complete a Parent-Branch Director conference before returning to the Club following a suspension.

Bullying

The Boys & Girls Club of Laredo is committed to providing all club members with a safe and civil environment, and will not tolerate any form of bullying at any club activity on or off club property. Bullying shall mean any written, electronic, verbal or physical act that willfully harms another. Aggravated bullying shall mean willful harm motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental disability, physical disability, appearance or socioeconomic status. To be considered bullying, actions must exploit an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the victim and if it interferes with a student's wellbeing or substantially disrupts the operation of the club. To be considered bullying, actions must:

- Result in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property.
- Be persistent and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment.

If a club member believes that he/she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another member, it is important for the member or parent to notify a club staff, as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. Club management will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. Any retaliation against a club member who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Rules with Monetary Consequences

Any damage caused by members will automatically result in parents being notified of their obligation to pay for repairs or replacement of damaged items. The member will not be allowed to return to the Club until the obligation is taken care of by the parent. The replaced item must be of the same make/model of the damaged item.

Emergency Management Procedures

To ensure club member safety, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo is enforcing strict Emergency Management Procedures which include Fire, Lock Out and Lock Down Drills. Your cooperation is needed in the event of a drill or a real emergency. Please take note of the following Lock Out and Lock Down procedures:

- In the event of a Lock Out, all external doors will be locked. Any youth and staff that are outside will be instructed to come inside the facility immediately and all exit doors will be locked and secured. Club activities will resume inside the facility as usual. An electronic notice will be sent out to all parents/guardians of the Lock Out situation and to avoid coming to the premises until further notice. Once an electronic message is sent out, phone calls will not be answered until the Lock Out has been lifted. Parents/Guardians arriving after the initial Lock Out will not be let into the facility. Any club vehicles with youth in route will be rerouted to the nearest safe club approved location. An example of this type of Lock Out is when there is a report or suspicion of an unsafe situation in the nearby community.

- In the event of a Lock Down there all external and internal doors will be locked and secured. Youth should be instructed to stay away from any doors and windows and will remain calm and quiet until further instructions are given. An electronic notice will be sent out to all parents/guardians of the Lock Down situation and to avoid coming to the premises until further notice. Once an electronic message is sent out, phone calls will not be answered until Lock Down has been lifted. Parents/Guardians arriving after the initial Lock Down will not be let into the facility. Any club vehicles with youth in route will be rerouted to the nearest safe club approved location.

To continue to register your child at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Laredo you agree to the above hand book and this will be your digital signature.

