



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF BURLINGTON**

**Oak Street Site
After School Program**

**Parent & Member
Handbook**

**THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF BURLINGTON
62 OAK STREET
BURLINGTON, VT 05401
864-5263**

CLUB'S MISSION: To inspire and enable all youth, regardless of circumstances, to realize their full potential as responsible, productive, and caring citizens.

REGISTRATION

The Oak Street site is a licensed childcare facility open to youth in grades 4-8. There are 2 options of registration; a drop-in option and a licensed option. **The drop-in option allows your child to come and go as they please.** The licensed option means that your child will be registered to attend specific days of the week and will not be allowed to leave unless you have given us permission. In the event that they do not arrive on a day that they are scheduled, we will make every effort to immediately notify you by phone that they have not arrived.

CLUB'S PHILOSOPHY: The Boys & Girls Club of Burlington strives to meet the many needs of the youth in our community by incorporating four basic "senses" which, when possessed by young people, help them build self-esteem and develop into responsible citizens and leaders. These senses are: **a sense of belonging** - an environment where young people know they are welcome, where they fit in and are accepted; **a sense of usefulness** - the opportunity to do something of value; **a sense of competence** - feeling of pride when young people know they can do something and do it well; **a sense of power and influence** - a chance to be heard and influence decisions.

The Boys and Girls Club addresses all these elements in five core program areas: Character & Leadership Development, Education & Career Development, Health & Life Skills, The Arts, and Sports, Fitness & Recreation.

CLUB'S PROGRAM GOALS ARE:

1. To be the best youth program that we can be.
2. To help children to develop to their fullest potential physically, intellectually and socially.
3. To deliver the program in a safe, fun, supportive, caring and positive environment.
4. To support and strengthen families.

PROGRAM STAFF: Each staff member is a qualified and experienced individual. Many have worked as program staff in other youth programs or have teaching backgrounds. We hope you make an effort to talk with your child's program staff. The more our staff knows about your child, the better they are able to meet any individual needs your child may have.

CALENDAR: The optimal After School program is one that offers after school care as well as half-day and vacation programs. The After School program will run on most full day and 1/2 day closings. An academic calendar of open and close dates is available. **The program will not run on unscheduled 1/2 or full day weather/emergency closings. If you hear that your child's school is closing due to weather, you are responsible for your child at the time of school closing.** Our 1/2 day vacation program is open from 11:30pm to 6:00pm. Our full day vacation program is open from 9:30am to 5:30pm. Our vacation camp programs are offered for part of November, December break, April break, and the last week of February. Additional information about the vacation camp program will be given out with the vacation camp registration forms.

PAYMENT: Membership is \$5.00 for the year and is due upon registration. Membership will expire 1 year from the registration date. A membership card will be issued to the member upon payment of fee. No scholarships are available due to our extremely low membership fee. Payment plans may be negotiated. **Please note you must complete the application to CCR for subsidized funding as part of this Licensed Child Care Program.** If you do not qualify for Child Care Resource subsidy your child can still attend the program.

ACCEPTANCE ENROLLMENT POLICY: The Club's After School program is offered to children who are in grades 4 - 8. The normal staff to child ratio is 1:13. Modifications of the program to accommodate the needs of qualified handicapped persons, including assignment of additional staff, may be made where such modifications are reasonable and necessary, do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program, and do not result in an undue burden on the Club. Requests for modification or auxiliary aids should be made as far in advance of commencement of the program as possible. The Club strives to make the program one which provides for the safety, well-being, development and success of each member. For this reason, the Club has set forth the following policies which must be adhered to and supported.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION: In accordance with the laws and regulations cited below, the Boys and Girls Club of Burlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, handicap, age, or sex, in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities.

The person whose name appears below has been designated to coordinate our efforts to comply with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service regulations implementing these regulations and our grievance procedure for the resolution of discrimination complaints.

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-Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.); 45 C.F.R. Part 80.

-Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, as amended, (29 U.S.C.794); 45 C.F.R. Part 84.

-Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.); 45 C.F.R. Part 91.

-Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681) 45 C.F.R. Part 86.

DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY AND PROCEDURES: The two basic premises of discipline are **1)** behaviors are bad, not children, and **2)** discipline should be a learning experience, not a humiliating one.

We are in the business of trying to effectively change behavior to a positive productive outcome. We are dealing with a very diverse population, it is our goal to have all children learn and practice resolution skills, work together to resolve their differences and develop positive alternatives. The Club's philosophy and procedures are based on professional youth development theories. Given there is a wide spectrum of approaches and - philosophy to child development, the Club recognizes that our practices and philosophy may be different than parents' or guardians'. While children are in

the care of the Club, we expect parents or guardians to support our efforts. Should disagreements arise, the Club will make every effort to work with members and families to resolve these differences; however, should these differences prove irreconcilable, it may be the Club's recommendation that other services be sought that better fit their child's needs or are more aligned with the family's beliefs.

Many discipline problems can be avoided if preventative discipline is incorporated into the program. Preventative discipline involves rules, informing children of the consequences of their choices, follow through, consistency, humor, and redirection.

The Club encompasses safety and respect: safety of oneself and those around him/her, and respect of other people and their property as well as materials and equipment. Whenever possible, children will discuss and help develop rules. Rules will be few in number and written in a positive manner. Rules will be posted in an appropriate area so that new children can be consistent with them.

Club staff will implement our progressive discipline policy when behavior expectations are not met. Listed below are the steps that will be followed:

1. Identify the negative behavior and address it - use the foundation of our relationship with the youth, enlist the support of other youth. **Ask what happened?**
2. Attempt to get the youth to identify why the behavior was a poor choice - how it effected them, others and the environment. Ask why it happened and **what would they do differently next time?** Inform them of future steps should incidents occur.
3. If behavior continues, have the child take a break from the activity but stay in the area where the activity is taking place. This so they will understand what they are missing.
4. The behavior is connected with how it is helping or hurting the Club as a positive place for kids – Kids are reminded that they made a vow to follow the rules and help make the Club a safe and positive place.
5. Have the youth list other ways of handling the situation which would help the Club be a more positive place for kids - provide options for the youth if they can't do it on their own - enlist help from other youth when appropriate. It should be related to the behavior.
6. If the behavior continues the member is brought to speak with the Site Director.
7. If a youth is not willing to process/problem solve, then things need to come to a stand still for them. This may mean sitting quietly somewhere until they can process or leaving until they can process with staff another day.

If the child is in any way harming themselves physical and aggressive, or very disruptive to the group, the Site Director is notified.

8. Our next step is to get a commitment from the youth as to what they will do next time - in the case of repeated behaviors / incidents; a written plan is useful and will involve the parents. This written plan will be developed with the Program Director, Behavior Coordinator, parent, and child.

A behavior plan should include (use contract forms):

- *What behaviors were displayed and why
- *What they will do next time
- *What support we can provide
- *How are they going to make it right to those involved? (This can be very specific, require time and energy, and satisfy those affected)
- *What will happen if they don't follow the plan (follow up is extremely important)
- *Expectations of the parent's role

- **Steps 3-8 may be omitted and an immediate suspension will be given if we deem that behavior was serious enough and / or that child was aware of consequences of such behavior.**

- * Behavioral contracts will be incorporated into any suspension from the Club. They will be used as a tool to help identify positive behaviors as well as try to eliminate negative behaviors.

It is our belief that children are never to be embarrassed in front of others. When discipline is required, it is done in private between child and staff. It is our goal to not bring attention to negative behavior.

When children get involved in conflicts with each other, they will be encouraged and given a chance to work out problems on their own, unless it looks like someone is going to get hurt. Often youth will be able to solve the conflict themselves. When staff intervention is necessary, staff will act as mediators, not as the problem solvers. Each child will be given the opportunity to talk about what happened and the staff will try to get the children to come up with their own solution. We encourage cooperation.

When a child has been hurt during a conflict, we will always comfort the injured child first, and then mediate. We try not to reward aggressive behavior by attending to it first. Children will never be asked or forced to apologize. Children learn that apologizing makes everything better, which it does not. When a child refuses to apologize, the injured child additionally gets his/her feelings hurt and the apology becomes the issue instead of the altercation. A no-win power play occurs between staff and child and the original dilemma remains unsolved.

With all this preventative discipline and mediating happening we hope there will be little need for time out. Time out is not a form of discipline. It is a time for cool-down and gathering one's thoughts before addressing the problem. When time out is used, it will be controlled. It will be of short duration (under 5 minutes) and followed by a discussion of appropriate behaviors.

For repeated and serious offenses, they should be handled with serious thought and not simply a reaction. It may mean a suspension or meeting with the parents, it may not. Again, all factors need to be seriously considered. We need to make sure of the facts and if at all possible, verify them. Suspensions will be a joint decision with the Program Director (or charge designee), Behavior Coordinator, and employee involved with the incident.

Serious offenses include violence to themselves or others, property damage, theft, drugs or alcohol issues, sexual harassment / activity and blatant disrespect.

RESPECT: The Club will do all we can to ensure that the environment at the Club is one in which staff and children feel safe and respected. Any child, or staffs, who continuously show a lack of respect for others through their words or actions, may be asked to leave the program. We ask parents to work with us in ensuring that each child understands the importance of mutual respect and that this policy is for their benefit as well as others.

Suspension and Expulsion Guidelines

Horseplay, running or general disruptive behavior:
 Candy/ Soda/ Food out of designated areas/ Gum
 Refusing to follow directions/Swearing

1st offense warning,
2nd offense removal from activity.
3rd offense writes a behavior Contract. Continued offenses 1-5 days
 Off and meet with parents.

Extreme Disrespect to others: Sexual/Racial harassment

1st offense - 1-5 days
 Depending on the Severity of incident,
2nd offense -indefinite
 And meet w/ parents.

Property Abuse / Theft

1st offense - 1-5 days
 depending on severity,
 replace or pay for
 Damages, meet w/ parents
2nd offense - indefinite,
 Replace or pay for
 Damages, meet w/ parents

Fighting

1st offense - 1 week and meet with parents,
2nd offense - indefinite
1st offense - 1-5 days
 depending on severity of incident
2nd offense - indefinite meet w/parents

Aggression, either verbal or physical
 (Includes pushing, shoving, kicking, taunting, Teasing, bullying, and excessive name calling)

As mentioned above: **The Club may take immediate steps to suspend a member or terminate a membership if we deem that behavior was serious enough and / or that child was aware of consequences of such behavior.**

PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION: Good communication between parents and their child's caregivers is essential to provide the best possible care for each child. The format of communication may be formal or informal. **It is vital that you inform us of changes in your child's life that may affect behavior.** Changes at home include moving, hospitalization of a sibling or parent, alterations in the parents' relationship or a death in the family. Home issues influence the way in which your child relates to others. Staff members can better provide for a child's needs if they are aware of the situation.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: The Club believes that parental involvement is necessary to the success of any childcare program. As parents, you are welcome to visit the Club anytime you wish without prior notice. Your cooperation with all policies and procedures is basic. Take every opportunity to talk with staff about your child. Ask your child about the program every day and take time to read the posted curriculums and the information that goes home. We also encourage you to volunteer any time or talents you may have to the program. As community members you can assist staff by educating them about resources/opportunities available in the area.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES: This policy relates to administrative decisions effecting a child's enrollment, programmatic policies and administrative procedures.

All procedures regarding children are noted. If a child, parent or staff member has a grievance with administrative decisions, the following process must be followed.

All issues must be brought to the attention of the Program Director responsible for the corresponding program. If after communication with the Program Director, the issue is still not resolved, they must be brought to the Executive Director and discussed with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for documenting the meeting and the outcome of the meeting. All parties must read and sign the documentation and a copy of the documentation must be given to all parties.

Based on the outcome of the meeting, the aggrieved party must submit, in writing, a request to be heard by the Executive Committee of the Board. This request must be submitted within 5 days of the meeting with the Executive Director. If the Board President does not feel that the grievance is subject to Executive Committee review, the Board President will inform the party in writing within 5 days. If the Board President decides that the grievance should be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Board, he/she will convene the Executive Committee within 10 days of the receipt of the request. All parties involved will have the right to be heard by the Executive Committee and each other. The Executive Committee will investigate and provide a written response within 20 days of the committee's decision.

While the issue is under review by the Board President, the decision of the Executive Director will stand. If at the time the Board President decides it needs committee review, a mutually agreeable decision will be made for the interim review period.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: There are 4 character development characteristics that we strive to incorporate into our programs: *respect, responsibility, caring and honesty*. It is our goal to emphasize these characteristics in all we do. We are role models for youth in many ways, from dress to language, and from attitude to manners. It is through these character development traits that we can help youth reach their potential. It's our responsibility to ensure that the environment at the Club is one in which staff and children feel safe and respected, that we care and that we will be honest and responsible for our actions. Any child, staff, or parent who continuously

shows a lack of respect or caring for others through their words or actions, or refuses to be honest or responsible, may be asked to leave the program. We ask parents to work with us in ensuring that each child understands the importance of these characteristics, and that this policy will benefit the kids in the long run. Although it is not the position of the Club to hold children accountable for parental behavior, parents must understand that their individual behavior is a consideration in the care that the Club is able to provide for their child.

ATTENDANCE: We ask that your child's attendance be consistent with the structure of the program. In order to develop strong group cohesion and reduce disruptions in programs, it is beneficial that your child (ren) attend on a regular basis. **The licensed option is not drop-in.** If your child (ren) will not be attending for part or all of the day, please communicate this to us.

PICK-UP: The Oak Street Site after School Program ends at 6:00 p.m.; if children are walking home we allow them to leave at 6:00pm. Please note the following tardiness policy:

1. All children must be picked-up no later than 6:00 p.m. We will monitor late pick-ups.
If chronic lateness occurs, this may result in dismissal from the program.
2. If, for any reason, a parent is not able to pick up his/her child by 6:00 p.m., the parent should call the Club to inform us.
3. If a child is not picked up by 6:15 p.m. the director will call the parent. If the child is still here at 6:30 the emergency contact person will be called.
4. Children will only be released to those persons authorized to pick-up. Any other person coming to pick-up must have a note signed by the parent.
5. If you give your child permission to walk home, it must be in writing.

A TYPICAL DAY:

2:30 – 4:00	Check in, open activities, homework, and snack
4:00– 5:00	First activity choice
5:00 – 6:00	Second activity choice
6:00	Programs end

Your child will be assigned to one of two groups' 4th and 5th graders or 6th-8th graders. During grade specific activities all of the 4th and 5th graders will be able to participate in activities together if they choose. 6th-8th graders will also have activity time that is limited to youth in only 6th-8th.

H.O. Wheeler Enrichment:

This year we are strengthening our partnership with the H.O. Wheeler Burlington after School Program (BAS). This year all H.O. Wheeler BAS Programs for 4th and 5th graders will take place at the Oak Street Boys & Girls Club. As in years past the H.O. Wheeler Enrichment signup forms will be passed out at school and there will be a wide variety of activities to choose from. This will allow us to serve more students and give them access to other Club programs once their enrichment program has ended. The change will benefit all students who participate at the Boys & Girls Club after school; even if they do not attend H.O. Wheeler School.

FIELD TRIPS: The majority of our field trips are local events - within walking distance. We have a passenger van for small group trips. All trips outside of the greater Burlington area will be planned in advance to give parents adequate notice. On occasion, we will take spontaneous local trips without parent notification. We will request a parent permission slip for trips where we travel any significant distance. We attempt to keep additional fees for field trips at a minimum as not all parents are in a position to afford them and it can create a feeling of inequity. If you are in a position to assist us financially, a donation to the Club would be appreciated.

SNACK: Snack will be provided to every child on a daily basis. Parents may choose to send snack with their child. We do not permit gum, candy or excessive unhealthy snack brought by members. If parents are interested in providing a healthy snack for the day, we certainly encourage them to do so. We will post menus as they are developed.

GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES: Scheduled activities will provide a balance between large group, small group and individual activities. Large group activities are well-planned, timed and managed as to not overwhelm the younger children. Small groups of children separated by activity and space are easy for children and staff to manage. Individuality is encouraged within any given activity.

OUTSIDE PLAY: The children will go outside, weather permitting. Whenever a group leaves the area, a form will be completed stating where the group is and what time they will return and a contact number.

ART: The majority of art projects will be open-ended and creative. Even when a specific product is desired, (i.e., a boat), children should be encouraged to be creative and add individual touches of their own.

PHONE: In case of emergency, a staff member will call home. Phone calls to Club members will be accepted from parents/guardians only. We will not permit phone calls unless it is an emergency. We ask that parents limit their calls and make as many arrangements as possible prior to the day.

WHAT TO BRING: Children should wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to do a variety of activities. We ask that they are dressed appropriately to go outside. **We ask that you provide your child with non-marking soled sneakers to help protect the gym floor.**

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES FOR INJURIES: If a child is injured, the Site Coordinator or Program Director will take whatever steps necessary to obtain emergency medical care. These steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attempts to contact a parent or guardian.
2. Attempts to contact a parent through the emergency contacts.

If we cannot contact the parent/guardian or the situation warrants, we will do one of the following:

1. Call an ambulance or paramedic.
2. Have the child taken to an emergency hospital in the company of the staff.

ADMINISTERING MEDICATION: Medication which needs to be administered should:

1. Be brought directly to staff.
2. Contain written instructions as to quantity, time for administration, name and phone number of the doctor, and any other directions. Additionally, written clearance must be given to the Club to administer the medication. Medicine release forms are part of this parent handbook.

ILLNESS: Children may not attend the program if they have a contagious illness, a high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or a bad cold. Parents will be called to come and get their child if s/he exhibits any of these symptoms. Children who have runny noses, but otherwise are fine may attend the program. If a child did not attend school during the day or was sent home due to illness, s/he will not be permitted to attend the after school program

If your child is suspended from school for disciplinary reasons please notify us as soon as possible. Their suspension may or may not prevent them from attending the Club in the afternoon.

HEAD LICE: The Club makes every effort to reduce the risk and exposure of its members to head lice. Steps that we take to prevent exposure are:

- To provide each child with a space in which to store their personal belongings.
- To provide each child with a plastic bag to put their things in if they do not have a back pack or other bag to use.
- To thoroughly clean the facility each day.
- To minimize physical contact between children.
- Do periodic head checks.
- if a child is discovered to have lice or nits, the family will be asked to come get the child and treat the child's head, personal belongings and home environment - literature on proper procedures is available at the Club. **The child's head will need to be checked before returning to program. If the child still has nits we are not permitted to let them return to the Club due to State of VT regulations.**

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE: Attendance is taken at the beginning of the program day.
If a licensed child who is scheduled to be here is not in staff will take the following action:

1. Ask children if they know of their whereabouts.
2. Check for messages to see if a message was left by the parent with regards to the child being out.

If the above steps are taken and the child's whereabouts have not been determined, we will:

1. Immediately call the parents to ascertain the whereabouts of the child. If parents cannot be reached, all other emergency contact names will be called.
2. If we are unable to reach anyone, the police will be notified immediately.

PLEASE BE SURE TO LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE CLUB IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE ATTENDING ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: As professional childcare providers, we are mandated by the State of Vermont to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Staff is directed to report all suspicion immediately to their Supervisor prior to calling the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (SRS) to file the report. Parents will be notified of any such calls made by the Club staff unless we have reason to believe that the parent is responsible for the abuse or neglect.

If you should have any concerns regarding the treatment of your child by a staff member, you should notify the Director of the Club immediately. If the suspected behavior warrants that a report should be made to SRS, the employee will be dismissed with pay until s/he is cleared of any suspicions or until guilt has been proven, in which case the employee will not return to work.

THE ABOVE IS POLICY FOR THE CLUB'S PROGRAMS. IF YOU FEEL YOU CANNOT ABIDE BY THESE POLICIES, PLEASE CONTACT US PRIOR TO YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

Thank you very much for your time.

We look forward to a long and positive relationship with your family.

I have read the policies and procedures in the Boys & Girls Club's Parent Handbook. I have reviewed all of the information with my child/children. I understand that as a parent I am obligated to abide by these policies and procedures; and to encourage my child/children to do the same. I also understand that failure to abide by them may be grounds for my child/children to be dismissed from the Program.

Name of member/s

Name of parent

Signature of Parent

Date

Thank you.