

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



## **Youth Worker Policy**

**Authorization Date: November 14, 2023**

### **Policy Statement**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for youth workers. As part of that commitment, the organization implements policies, procedures and training for the protection of youth workers.

### **Guidelines and Preventative Measures**

“Youth worker” is used as an umbrella term to describe all minors, defined as youth under the age of 18, who work in Club units as official staff/employees, non-member youth volunteers or work-based learning participants. The language below describes how youth workers will be permitted to work at Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo.

### **Minor Employees, Roles & Responsibilities**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo may hire minor employees who are no less than 14 to 17 years of age. Currently, the Club does not have a work-based learning program. The organization defines the roles and responsibilities of minor employees as:

- Assist in the supervision and management of a Club member age group, which includes building positive relationships, supporting high-yield activities, and upholding member behavior expectations.

### **Child Labor**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers. To further ensure youth worker safety, the organization follows and adheres to all child labor laws when working with all youth workers.

The federal child labor provisions authorized by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938, also known as child labor laws, were enacted to ensure that when young people work, the work is safe and does not jeopardize their health, well-being or educational opportunities. When it comes to the legal aspects of managing youth workers, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo always follows the stricter law or regulation if more than one applies (e.g., state, federal, Tribal, local or international).

- Minor employees ages 14-16 work from 3:00 – 8:00 pm based on when Clubs are open, which is less than what the state allows minors to work.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



- Minors are legally allowed to perform all of the duties that can be done at the Club except clean with products that have a warning label.

## **Actions & Implementation**

To make sure we enforce this policy, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to:

- Educating our staff on youth work laws and showing them how to report child labor violations if they see or suspect any.
- Requiring hiring managers and HR to avoid hiring minors under the legal age for working. We also expect them to know and follow this policy and laws on wages and hours for older children.
- Keeping and validating documentation verifying our employees' ages after they're hired. If we discover that we've hired a minor, we'll review applicable laws and adjust working hours accordingly.

## **Partnering with Other Organizations**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to and encourages partnerships with local organizations to provide seasonal paid work experiences for youth. All youth who are working at the Club and those supervising them will also complete mandatory training prior to beginning their work assignment at the Club.

Youth who are placed to work at the Club are hired as official Club staff and comply with all local employment-related policies and BGCA membership requirements, as well as state and federal laws affecting youth employment.

## **Background Checks on Minors**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo conducts criminal background checks of all employees, including minors; board volunteers and others who serve on a standing committee; and all other volunteers, including partners and minors, who have direct, repetitive contact with members per the Background Check policy. This applies to all minor employees as well as non-Club member teen volunteers. Participants of work-based learning programs are not staff, but rather Club or Youth

- Center members participating in a Club-sanctioned program; therefore, they do not need to complete background checks before beginning their work-based learning experience.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



- Because the minor does not have legal authority to enter into an agreement or give consent in their own capacity, it is necessary to acquire parent or legal guardian consent to authorize the background check.

## **Training for Supervisors & Coordinators**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo ensures that all supervisors and coordinators of youth workers understand their rights and responsibilities. All Club staff who supervise or coordinate the youth worker program – which includes minor employees, work-based learning participants and non-member teen volunteers – shall complete Boys & Girls Clubs of America-developed training annually, after which they will:

- Understand and communicate the roles and responsibilities of minor employees, volunteers and work-based learning participants.
- Provide leadership, supervision, training and coaching to staff as relates to organizational role, responsibilities, policies and procedures for youth workers.
- Maintain current knowledge about, communicate and follow child labor laws.
- Assess the individual and collective strengths of youth workers against the knowledge, skills and information needed to fulfill their roles safely.
- Identify and implement training for youth workers to ensure they understand and can implement their role.
- Prepare and supervise youth workers for their roles in the Club.
- Ensure systems, practices and procedures for the documentation and notification of suspected child abuse, neglect and physical, verbal and sexual harassment in accordance with state laws and organizational policies when youth workers report incidents are in place.

## **Training & Onboarding for Youth Workers**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to ensuring that youth workers understand the safety implications of working in the Club. All youth workers, including minor employees and work-based learning participants, will participate in the required number of hours of safety training each year before they work with any Club members. These trainings will be incorporated into the onboarding of youth workers. After participating in these trainings, youth workers at a minimum will:

- Know their rights and responsibilities as a youth worker at the Club.
- Understand their role as a youth worker and expectations around safety.
- Understand how to report concerns about issues perceived to affect emotional and physical safety.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



- Know and implement organization-wide rules and policies that pertain to safety.
- Understand their role in supervising other youth.

## **Prohibition of Private One-on-One Interaction**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo has put systems in place to prevent one-on-one interactions between youth members and all Club staff and volunteers. All youth workers (including minor employees, work-based learning participants and non-member teen volunteers) shall abide by the organization's policy to prohibit one-on-one contact at any time at the Club, in vehicles, by social media or any other means and, as much as possible, by phone or text.

- The Teen Employment Coordinator has a Club issued phone to communicate with youth workers. If able, the phone will have a safety monitoring app installed (i.e. parental app).
- Proper protocol dictates that all communication between staff and Club members must include at least one additional staff member. Staff should never use personal devices to communicate directly with a single Club member. If there is no other option than to use a personal device, a privacy app like GroupMe or Google Voice must be used.
- During onboarding, youth workers understand that communicating with the Teen Employment Coordinator is restricted to Club hours. The Club phone has a screen time passcode restricting the phone from being used outside of Club hours.
- A plan will be developed with youth workers on what to do in the event of a personal emergency that happens outside of Club hours when the Teen Employment Coordinator is not available.

## **Adult-to-Youth Interactions**

All staff, whether they supervise youth workers or not, will understand and adhere to the organization's policy governing one-on-one interactions. Staff will remember to treat youth workers as youth in and outside the Club environment. This includes making sure that adult staff will not:

- Carpool with youth workers for any reason.
- Invite youth workers to after-work non-Club-sponsored events.
- Text, use social media or participate in online gaming with teens.
- Interact with youth workers one-on-one or outside of the Club.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



When Clubs host events for workers, organization leadership will incorporate the needs of the youth workers into planning the activities to ensure those needs are met, both as youth and as employees.

- Locations allowed for offsite events with youth workers present include Club field trips, college tours, and industry talent tours. Staff are able to use Club transport, van, and bus.

## **Supervision of Youth Workers**

Supervisors and coordinators should remain cognizant of the fact that youth workers, despite being under the age of 18, must not violate the prohibition of one-on-one contact with Club members.

All meetings and communications will utilize either a team or group supervision approach.

- *Team supervision* involves two or more adults working together as a team to supervise and communicate with youth workers. This is specifically advised when a direct supervisor needs to talk confidentially with a youth worker.
- *Group supervision* is led by a facilitator in a group setting so youth workers can reflect on their work.

Supervisors must ensure that assigned tasks adhere to this policy and do not inadvertently create a situation where minors are alone with another staff member.

Additional policies around supervising youth workers include a yearly Minor Employee Training at All Staff Meetings.

## **Peer-to-Peer Interactions**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. Youth who are working and/or volunteering in the Club may already have relationships and interactions with other youth in the program. Accordingly, the organization realizes the importance of making clear distinctions whenever peer-to-peer interactions are involved.

- Minor employees will not be assigned to directly supervise youth; they will be paired with a YDP to indirectly support supervising youth.
- Minor employees will be clearly identified by wearing the Jr. Staff shirt which is a different color than what adult employees wear to emphasize the difference in roles and responsibilities.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



- When minor employees are on duty, they are required to wear the Jr. Staff shirt. When they are not on duty and are participating as a Club member, they cannot wear their Jr. Staff shirt.

## **Distinction of Youth Workers on Duty**

Clear distinctions will be maintained between youth workers on duty and not on duty. These distinctions will leave no gray lines between the times when youth workers are working and when they are not. Youth workers must:

- Clock in and out of Paylocity when working as Jr. Staff.
- Sign in and out of MyClubHub when participating as a Club member to record their presence.
- Wear a Club shirt specific to the role of youth worker.
- Check in with their supervisor.

## **Assignment of Youth Workers**

Minor employees, work-based learning participants and non-Club member teen volunteers (12 to 18 years old) will be assigned to work with youth outside their age group. Younger teens (13 to 14 years old) will be assigned to work with other youth.

## **Mandated Reporting**

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. Every staff member, volunteer and youth worker who becomes aware of or has suspicion of child abuse or neglect shall immediately report to organization leadership. In such cases, youth workers **must** report the incident to their supervisor or another designated Club employee, who will then report to the appropriate authorities.

All adult staff and volunteers will be educated on the protocols and procedures for reporting before youth workers become involved. The organization will provide support mechanisms for youth workers to access once their report has been submitted, to help limit any traumatic effects. Youth workers will receive such support on a timely basis.

- Youth workers will never make the call to CPS to file a report, only adult staff and supervisors.
- Youth workers will receive mandated reporter training, training on abuse and neglect, and will understand the process to tell a supervisor upon suspicion of, being told about, or witnessing abuse.

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF GREATER KALAMAZOO

## **Internal Reporting Policies & Procedures for Youth Workers**

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Kalamazoo is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff and volunteers, including youth workers. As part of this commitment, any minor employee, work-based learning participant or non-Club member teen volunteer who becomes aware of an incident, as defined in this policy, shall immediately report and submit the incident to Club leadership. Club leadership will assist youth workers in completing an incident report.

The following information shall be included on an Incident Report:

- Date and location
- Incident details (if applicable)
- Witnesses and contact information
- Names of all involved (including youth and staff, if applicable)
- All notifications made (first responders, parents, leadership, etc.)