



# Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin

## Parent & Member Handbook

January 2011

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin  
Parent/Member Handbook  
Page 1 of 6

Thank you for taking the time to learn what the Boys & Girls Club is all about. We believe that all members and their parents/guardians can benefit from the information in this handbook. If there is anything else we can help you with, please let us know.

### **Our Mission**

The Boys & Girls Club seeks to “inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.”

### **Core Beliefs**

Boys & Girls Clubs provide youth with...

- A safe place to learn & grow
- Ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals
- Life-enhancing programs
- Character development experiences
- Hope & opportunity

### **Membership**

Membership is open to all school youth, grades K-Senior. Kindergarten age children must be participating in the current school year at time of membership. A membership form must be **completed** (mandatory alternate emergency contact) and **signed** by a parent or guardian each membership year (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>-Aug. 31st). Our membership fee is **\$10** per year, and will not be pro-rated for partial year memberships. Additional fees may be charged for our summer program and/or certain field trips. Our goal is to always keep costs associated with Boys & Girls Club membership as low as possible so as to not exclude anyone based on economic circumstances. Children who continue to come to the Club without a membership risk suspension. Keep in mind; if there was an emergency or crisis situation, without your contact information, you could not be informed or reached, forcing involvement of the Police or other outside organizations. We have found that most of the young members do not know family members phone numbers or place of employment!

The information you provide us on the membership application is critical. We ask that every effort be made to present contact information that is both current as well as accurate. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify us of any changes to your telephone number (home, work, emergency contacts, etc.) and/or address information as soon as such changes occur. All information is confidential.

### **Club Locations & Contact Information**

**Administrative Center...** 410 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., (509) 764-9694, Executive Director: Brant Mayo  
**Downtown Branch...** 410 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., (509) 764-9694, Branch Director: Kayleen Simpson  
**Larson Branch...** 4306 Arnold St., (509) 762-5832, Branch Director: Michele Dano-Rodriguez

### **Club Hours**

During the school year, both clubs are open for after-school programming from 2:30 pm to 6:30 pm, Monday – Friday. The Clubs will be open from 1:00 to 5:30 pm on days when school is not in session (i.e., school holidays, spring break, summer vacation, etc). On early release days, the Larson Branch hours are 1:00-5:30, and the Downtown Branch will be open from the time school is released until 5:30. Club-recognized holidays on which the Boys & Girls Club will be closed include New Years Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day following Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, the day following Christmas and annual shut down weeks in June and August due to staff training and yearly building maintenance.

The Club reserves the right to change its hours and days of operation based on need and/or economic circumstances. If such changes occur, parents/guardians will be notified in advance. *Contact your local club house to confirm the summer hours and schedule.*

Additionally, there may be days when it is necessary to close the Club due to unforeseen circumstances such as emergency repairs, inclement weather, etc. Again, when such instances arise, we will do our best to post this information so as to mitigate any inconvenience this may cause.

Please be sure to pick-up your child by the posted closing times. The Boys & Girls Club reserves the right to contact the appropriate authorities for assistance when members are not picked-up by a *reasonable time* and after all emergency contact alternatives have been exhausted. Continual disregard for timely pick-up of your child/children could result in club suspension, please respect our staff and their time.

### **Open Door Policy**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin have an **OPEN DOOR POLICY**. This policy allows members to come and go at any time during the Club's drop-in hours. Members are required to sign in and out each day; and staff members, under normal circumstances, are not allowed to prohibit a member from leaving the facility. (\*exception-Early Bird program is a fee based, enrolled program that is different than the regular drop-in program) Thus, it is the responsibility of the child AND the parent/guardian to determine, understand and enforce whatever arrival and departure methods they see fit. The staffs are alert and do their best to be aware of members leaving the building; as to age of the member and whether they are a 'walker' or 'parent pick up.' Please remember with an average daily attendance of 185+ kids this is a task requiring parent and member communication and cooperation too! Please note that youth are not allowed on the Club's grounds during operating hours unless they are signed in and participating in Club activities. Members should NOT be dropped off prior to the opening of any facility, as the Club cannot be held responsible for the supervision of such youth.

It is important to remember that the Boys & Girls Club is NOT A DAYCARE and is not governed by licensure as a childcare facility.

### **Transportation**

Transportation from schools is provided in a limited capacity to the Downtown Clubhouse from certain schools. (No transportation home is available for either club) Please check with the unit director for bus arrival times. You must contact the school to make arrangements for your child to ride the bus. Currently, there is no fee for this service.

The only transportation of members by club staff is for program related field trips. Parents will always be aware of these trips as they require a parent permission form and/or phone call. Outside of that, club staffs are *not* allowed to transport club members due to liability and insurance issues.

## **Supervision**

Our staff are trained Youth Development Professionals. Trained volunteers often support our staff. A staff member and/or trained volunteer will oversee each of our designated program areas. Volunteers and staff are required to pass a background before employment. Please take the time to remind your child of the need to follow Club rules and directions AT ALL TIMES whether said directions are given by a staff member or a volunteer.

## **Code of Conduct**

One of the Club's core beliefs is to provide a safe place to learn and grow. Positive attitudes keep the Club fun. Staff members set rules and guidelines, and we follow four simple rules at the Club. Those rules are:

1. **Respect Club Staff**
2. **Respect Club Members**
3. **Respect Club Equipment**
4. **Respect Yourself**

## **Dress Code**

Youth should dress comfortably and wear clothes that allow them to participate in typical Boys & Girls Club activities and programs. We will expect the following...

**Footwear:** Shoes must be worn at all times. Flip-flops, sandals and cleats are discouraged, as are any other open-toed shoes for safety reasons. Club members may not be allowed to participate in certain activities if open-toed shoes are worn. The best advice is to wear tennis/walking shoes every day. **No** skate shoes of any kind, please.

**Clothing:** Inappropriate clothing of any kind is **NOT** allowed in the Club. Members wearing clothes that are too short, too tight or revealing or clothes with questionable or distasteful advertising will be asked to change or leave immediately. Gang related clothing or 'wearing of colors' in the gang styling is not allowed. This judgment of the clothing will be left solely to the discretion of the Club staff.

## **Field Trips**

The Boys & Girls Club provides a variety of opportunities for our members to participate in activities off Club property that support our core beliefs and programs. Each excursion *requires a signed permission slip and any necessary fees prior to departing*. Most sign-ups are taken on a first-come, first-served basis (meaning eligible members who return the required permission slip). Members and parents are reminded that all of our Club rules extend to field trips. Members who fail to follow our rules and general Club expectations for appropriate behavior will prompt an immediate call to a parent or guardian to remove that member from the field trip at their own cost. *A parent or guardian MUST be available by telephone at all times during any Club sponsored field trip in the event that the staff needs to contact you.*

## **Discipline Policy**

The Boys & Girls Club strives to keep the consequences for unacceptable behavior clear, appropriate and timely. The safety of all members is of utmost importance to us. Our standards, along with the expectation that all members use good common sense, exist to ensure that your child and every other child at the Club can safely enjoy the Club's activities. Any member who disrupts programs or creates a dangerous situation will be disciplined appropriately. Members who do not follow rules can expect to lose privileges and face consequences. First-time offenses are never excused as such and will be handled based on their severity. When a situation calls for discipline beyond a short 'time out', a referral form will be written up for that child. Write ups for minor problem behaviors such as property misuse, inappropriate language, etc., will be filed at member's club-site. Three minor reports will be equal to a major and if received over a short period of time, may dictate calling the parents in to address the behavior and club suspension.

Parents will be called to remove any member who has failed to curb his or her disruptive behavior and/or is behaving in an aggressive or violent manor that creates a dangerous situation for themselves, fellow members, staff or visitors. The result of these types of behavior will be a club suspension or expulsion. When a member is suspended or expelled from the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin, this applies to both Club sites.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Verbal Counseling
- Time-out
- Suspension from Program Area
- Loss of Club Privileges
- Suspension
- Indefinite suspension (until the situation can be resolved or the parent/guardian is consulted)
- Expulsion (i.e., permanent suspension)
- Contacting the proper authorities

***\* Please note that any time a law is broken in or around the Boys & Girls Club or it is suspected that a Club member or guest has broken the law and fled to the Club to avoid the authorities, the police will be notified immediately. The Boys & Girls Club is NOT a haven or refuge for those committing illegal acts or fleeing the authorities.***

Members are expected to respond to discipline without incident. Failure to do so will almost always increase any action taken in time or severity. Staff members are trained and fully expected, by policy, to maintain full control of any situation that occurs in their program area and will NOT tolerate anything that threatens that control, in appearance and/or manner. Also, please understand that sometimes the story that gets home is not always complete or accurate. Children sometimes will explain an incident in a manner that will not implicate them or cast blame their way. In addition, staff members, though well trained and experienced, are human, so please call the Club if you have any questions at all concerning disciplinary measures or any other Club activity. Your support and involvement as the parent/guardian is vital to our success as youth development professionals.

*Children suspended from school are also suspended from club until they return to school.* Membership in the Boys & Girls Club is a privilege, not a right. Disciplinary actions are another important reason for making sure your child/children have current, updated membership forms.

## **Phone Calls & Personal Cell Phones**

Club phones are for Club business, as we do not have a dedicated line for the members. Members should use phones or receive calls in emergencies only. Our lines need to remain open in the event of an emergency. (Please make any necessary arrangements with your child, before your child comes to the Club.) With the increase of members bringing personal cell phones to the Club, there have been issues regarding inappropriate texting and text

bullying. At the Club, members may have cell phones in their pocket or back packs and may use them only for the purpose of parental communication. The staff reserves the right to hold the phone (and return to parent or member) until the end of the day, should there be continued abuse of cell phone usage.

### **Personal Belongings**

All personal belongings brought into the Club by a youth are the responsibility of that youth. The Boys & Girls Club **is NOT** responsible for lost, damaged or stolen items. Please discourage your child from bringing anything to the Club that is not completely necessary, especially money, electronic games, iPods, iPhones, MP3 players, etc. Necessary items, such as backpacks and jackets should be clearly marked with the member's name. We recommend making items on the inside with a permanent marker on an area that cannot be removed or may not be easily seen. Items that are not collected from our lost-and-found in a timely fashion will be donated to a local charity. Signage will be posted alerting parents of an upcoming donation date.

### **Medication**

The Boys & Girls Club **is NOT** allowed, by policy, to dispense, store and/or oversee medication of any kind, including all non-prescription medications.

### **Accidents**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin strive to maintain a safe and secure environment. There is an assumed risk in many of our core programs, including, but not limited to sports. Please feel safe in knowing that our trained staffs are attentive to providing the safest environment possible. The completed membership application authorizes the Club staff to seek medical treatment for a member, if necessary, and that any associated costs for such care are the responsibility of the parent or guardian. ***The Boys & Girls Club does NOT provide medical insurance for members.*** In the event of a serious injury the staff will call 911 immediately and then call the parents/guardians or alternative emergency contacts. This is one more reason why updated contact information is your responsibility and crucial to your child's well being.

### **Infestation or Contagious Conditions**

Please note that children whom are too sick to attend school, are too sick to attend club. Please be respectful of others health.

Any and all suspected transferable infestations or transmittable contagious conditions will be addressed fully in the following manner and without exception...

1. Parents will be contacted for immediate removal of the member from Club facilities.
2. Proof of treatment from a health care facility may be required before the child will be allowed back into the Club.
3. Children suspended from school for lice cannot attend the Club until they are able to return to school.

### **Food**

The Boys & Girls Club understands and appreciates the need for a healthy diet among all of our members. It is our goal to encourage healthy eating habits that promote the well being of our youth. The Clubs provide a free healthy snack daily to all members and a free lunch program is provided during the summer. These programs meet the USDA nutritional standards.

Additionally, each Club has a 'snack bar' that sells an ever changing variety of snack items. The Clubs also receive donated snacks from businesses and individuals in the community. For this reason, it is important that your child is aware of any food allergies that he/she may have. Members may bring their own snack or lunch but it must be kept in the designated area where food and drinks are allowed. Water-fountains are available at the Clubs. Water bottles (names marked with permanent marker) are strongly recommended during the summer months, when temperatures can exceed 100 degrees.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are an integral part of the Boys & Girls Club experience. We welcome volunteers who wish to share their time and/or talents. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer at one of our Clubs, please stop by a Club site to pick-up a volunteer application. Background checks are required of all volunteers prior to being able to work with our youth members.

### **Programming**

The Boys & Girls Club of the Columbia Basin expects to be the best youth development organization in Moses Lake and the surrounding communities we serve. Our staffs are trained youth development professionals who are hired for their engaging, energetic and enthusiastic skills. We want our members to come to the Club each day, attracted by the programs and the staff that lead them.

Programs at the Boys & Girls Club fall under Five Core areas – Character & Leadership Development, Education & Career Development, Health & Life Skills, The Arts, and Sports, Fitness & Recreation.

### **Custodial Issues**

Please keep in mind it is not the Boys & Girls Clubs job to interpret the law or make judgments concerning custodial issues. Parents must bring in court documents showing custody/parental right's, restraining/no contact orders, etc. Copies of the document must be on file in the Administrative Office and it is up to the parent to bring in updated documents.

### **Contacting Us**

Please do not hesitate to speak to a staff member or Unit Director whenever you have a question or a concern. We hope you will always start by contacting the staff or Unit Director when issues arise; after all, they are the ones who know your children the best. If the need arises, however, and you feel that an issue or complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved at the unit-level, please know that parents/guardians may always contact the Executive Director of the organization at our administrative offices. The telephone number for our administrative offices is (509) 764-9694.

To keep everyone informed and share with the community the positive things taking place at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Basin, we have a webpage at [www.bngclub.org](http://www.bngclub.org)

***WELCOME TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN***

***The Positive Place For Kids***