



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE HIGHLAND LAKES

At the Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes, Child Safety is Job No. 1

Ensuring child safety is fundamental to the mission of the Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes.

The Safety and Wellbeing of Young People is Our Number One Priority

We work every day to create a safe, fun environment so kids can have every opportunity to be successful in life. We have ZERO tolerance for inappropriate behavior of any kind, including child sexual abuse or misconduct, and we put resources behind that stance.

Culture of Safety: The Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes continually updates robust safety policies, programs and training 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 layers of safety policies and guidelines to keep our kids safe including:

- Comprehensive training in protecting youth annually
- Monthly child safety discussions at senior staff meetings
- Site guidelines to reduce opportunities for abuse

Safety Policies: Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes has comprehensive safety policies in place that protect youth – including, but not limited to, supervision, transportation, communication, prohibiting private one-on-one contact including social media.

24-hour Toll-free Child Safety Hotline: We encourage all staff, members and families to report any incident or situation they feel is unsafe. Through our national partnership with [Praesidium](#), one of the nation's leading safety experts, the Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes 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.

Mandatory Background Checks: Mandatory criminal background checks are required every year for every staff and board member at Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes. 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 First Advantage Screening Service.

Required Immediate Reporting: The Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes staff and volunteers are all mandated reporters. We 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 Clubs.

Safety Trainings: Ongoing training and supervision of staff is critical. We participate in a wide variety of child safety training conducted 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: Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes has a dedicated safety committee to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies. Priorities and initiatives include:

- Operate sites that reduce possibilities for physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- Oversight of training to promote a culture of safety
- Oversight of hiring practices to maximize quality staff

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, the Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes partners with:

- Our three school districts (Marble Falls ISD, Burnet CISD & Llano ISD)
- The Phoenix Center and Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center

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 the Highland Lakes. To learn more about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Child Safety.

If you have any questions about the Boys & Girls Club of the Highland Lakes Safety policies please contact –

Courtney Smith - Program Director
830-798-2582 Ext. 105
progdir@bgc-hl.com