

# At Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County, Child Safety is Job No. 1

***Ensuring child safety is fundamental to our mission.***

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

We work every day to create a safe, inclusive and fun environment so kids can have every opportunity to be successful in life. We have no tolerance for inappropriate behavior of any kind, including child sexual abuse or misconduct, and we put resources behind that stance.

Culture of Safety: Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County continually updates robust safety policies, programs and training for staff and volunteers to promote child safety and protect young people from threats in our society. These resources include but are not limited to:

- Chaffee County EMS, Fire Department, Police Department and Solvista Health as members of the BGCCC Safety Committee.
- BGCCC staff completes annual Safety Training.
- Emergency Operations Kit in place and evacuation drills practiced with Club members.

Safety Policies: Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County maintains comprehensive safety policies that protect youth, including but not limited to policies on supervision, transportation, communication and prohibition of one-on-one contact.

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, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County members and staff have access to a confidential 24-hour toll-free Child Safety Hotline at 866-607-SAFE (7233) or [SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com](mailto:SafeClub@Praesidiuminc.com).

Mandatory Background Checks: Mandatory criminal background checks are required upon hire and annually for every staff and board member at Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County. In addition, criminal background checks are required for any volunteer who has direct, repetitive contact with children. All potential employees and volunteers are run through Intellicorp.

Required Immediate Reporting: Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County staff and volunteers are all mandated reporters and 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 employ a multi-tiered safety assessment

approach to ensure we continually make improvements to safety at our Club(s).

**Safety Trainings:** Ongoing training and supervision of staff are critical. We participate in a wide variety of child safety training through online courses, 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 Clubs of Chaffee County has a dedicated Board-led Safety Committee to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies. Priorities and initiatives include:

- A safe and supportive environment for all members with automatic locking doors, video surveillance, Internet security and routine safety inspections.
- Operations policies include Transportation Safety, safe handling of medications, and supervision within given areas. Posters with safety instructions and hot-line numbers are posted throughout the facility
- Safety Committee reports and Facility safety checks are routinely completed and reported to the Board

**Mandatory Employee Reference:** Any employee interested in moving to another Boys & Girls Club is required to have a reference from their 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, composed of local Club leaders who provide input on 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, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chaffee County partners with:

- Salida and Buena Vista Police and Fire Departments
- Solvista Health for Mental Health Support
- Salida and Buena Vista School Districts

**Continued Commitment:** In July 2020, Boys & Girls Club organizations voted to adopt additional safety measures to further improve safety within our Clubs. Though many of

these practices were already commonplace across our Movement, this vote made them mandatory for all Clubs. These include more stringent reference and background checks, enhanced Safety Committee requirements, stronger communication of key safety resources and information, and more. With unprecedented majority, on July 26, 2021, local Boys & Girls Clubs voted in record number to adopt additional membership requirements that further enhance child safety, implementing recommendations from RAINN that began in 2020 and will continue over the next two years - a demonstration of our continued commitment to keeping kids safe.

Nationally, Boys & Girls Clubs of America has advocated for passage of the [U.S. PROTECT Act](#) to improve 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 support 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 Clubs of Chaffee County. To [learn more](#) about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's [Child Safety page](#).