

One-on-One Interaction Policy:

BGC of Tipton County: adopted April 2022



Boys & Girls Club of Tipton County is committed to providing a safe environment for members, staff, and volunteers. To further ensure their safety, the organization prohibits all one-on-one interactions between members and staff and volunteers (including board members). All staff and volunteers must abide by the following:

- Ensure all meetings and communications between members and staff or volunteers are never private (see definition below).
- Ensure in-person meetings take place in areas where other staff and/or members are present.
- Communicate to a Club Administrator (see definition below) whenever an emergency arises that necessitates an exception to this policy.
- Never initiate private or isolated one-on-one contact with a member.
- Never have a private or isolated meeting or communication with a member. This includes in-person meetings and virtual communications such as texting, video chat, social media, and social networks between only a staff member or volunteer and a single member.
- Never transport one member at a time. This includes transportation in Club or leased vehicles.
- Exceptions may only be made when delivering medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar licensed professional. All exceptions shall be documented and provided to Club Administration in advance.
- If an emergency arises that necessitates an exception to this policy, the emergency exception shall be communicated to Club Administration as soon as practicable, and ideally before engaging in one-on-one interaction.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION POLICY GUIDANCE

The following guidance should be used when implementing related policies and procedures.

Definition of Club Administration

Club Administration is defined as Executive Director, Unit Director, Program Director, and Teen Coordinator.

Definition of One-on-One Interaction

One-on-one interaction is defined as any private contact or communication (including electronic communication) between any member and an adult, including adult staff, minor staff, volunteers, board members and others who might encounter Club members during regular programming and activities.

Definition of Private Contact/Communication

Private contact/communication is any communication, in person or virtual, that is between one youth member and one adult (18 or over) that takes place in a secluded area, is not in plain sight and/or is done without the knowledge of others. Private places can include but are not limited to vehicles, rooms without visibility to others, private homes, and hotel rooms. Examples of private contact include but are not limited to:

- Meeting behind closed doors (in rooms without windows or visible sightlines) or any spaces that are not visible to others.
- One staff member transporting one member in a vehicle.

- Electronic communications (text, video, social media, social network, etc.) between one member and one staff member or volunteer.

Definition of Public Contact/Communication

Public contact/communication is any communication or meeting, in person or virtual, that is between at least three individuals, including two staff and one member, one staff and two members or variations of these combinations. Examples of public contact include but are not limited to:

- Meeting in plain sight of others (e.g., in a quiet corner of an active games room).
- Transporting members via public transportation (bus, taxis, train, air, etc.) or transporting multiple members.
- Electronic communications (text, video, social media, social networking, etc.) between multiple members and adults (e.g., group chats).
- Public places can include but are not limited to buses, airports, shopping malls, restaurants, and schools.

Impact on Mentoring Programs

Mentorship is a key component of Boys & Girls Club programming and has tremendous positive impact on members. Prohibition of one-on-one interaction does not have to negatively affect mentor programs and/or relationship building. Mentors can adjust their practices to include:

- Holding mentor and coaching sessions in areas where other staff and/or members are present or can see you – for example, in large rooms where meetings are visible but not heard.
- Copying parents, staff, or other members (when appropriate) on written and/or electronic communications.
- Scheduling meetings during Club hours and at the Club site.
- Documenting interactions between mentors and youth.

Impact on Partnerships with Local Mentoring or Mental Health Organizations

All local mentors/mental health care providers are required to abide by Club policies, including background check requirements and prohibition of one-on-one interaction.

- External mentors are required to abide by all Club safety policies and procedures.
- A written agreement should be in place to determine how and when the external organization assumes custody and responsibility of the member; these procedures should be clearly communicated to parents or guardians.
- Every interaction between mentor and youth will be documented and maintained.

Impact on Travelling to Off-Site Events and Activities

When travelling to external, off-site events, the one-on-one policy shall continue to be followed.

- Should the Club take responsibility for transporting members to and/or from an event, one staff member should not transport one single member at any time in a vehicle.
- Accommodations shall be made to ensure at least three people (two staff and one member or one staff and two members) are together when traveling.
- As an alternative, public transportation may be used (e.g., taxi, ride-share, public transport).

If this arrangement presents staffing or budget challenges, consider the following:

- Inviting parents/guardians to attend and/or chaperone their member.
- Including additional youth and/or staff in travel plans.
- Coordinating with other Clubhouses or nearby organizations to travel together.
- Travelling with additional staff or members.
- Parents/guardians should also provide written consent in each instance in which a member travels to any off-site event. NOTE: Parents/guardians are never allowed to provide consent for one-on-one interaction for Club related events. (eg: pre-established babysitters transporting member to or from the Club outside of scheduled shift, pre-established coaches signing out member to transport to non-Club-related sporting event)
- Similar practices should be in place when coordinating field trips.

Impact on Transportation to and from the Club

When transporting members to and/or from a Club-sponsored event or activity, single members should not be transported alone with one staff person. Consider the following to accommodate single member:

- Modify bus or van routes so single members are not picked up first or dropped off last.
- Use a bus aide if available.
- Pick up and drop off members in groups.
- Modify staff schedules to ensure multiple staff are present.

Exceptions to Policy

Exceptions to the one-on-one policy can be made under the following circumstances:

- When delivering medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar licensed professional (e.g., counselors, social workers).
- When the emotional or physical safety of a member is at risk, as determined by the before-mentioned licensed professionals, and a private, one-on-one communication is deemed necessary by Club Administration.
- In emergency situations that could create a safety risk, exceptions can be made (e.g., if a member is not picked up by a parent and leaving them alone at the Club could be a safety risk).

Should exceptions need to be made, the Club shall have policies in place to monitor interactions, including but not limited to:

- Disclosing the meeting to Club Administration and regularly checking in with the member and adult during conversations.
- Placing time limits on conversations.
- Meeting in rooms with clear sight lines (e.g., rooms with windows or glass doors).
- Documenting the interaction.
- In an emergency, disclosing the situation to another staff member before engaging in one-on-one interaction.