

Prohibition of Private One-On-One Interaction with Club Members & Other Youth

Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware 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 Club 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 another staff member 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 and social media between only a staff member or volunteer and a single member.
- Never transport one Club 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 professional. All exceptions shall be documented and provided to Club leadership in advance.

If an emergency arises that necessitates an exception to this policy, the emergency exception shall be communicated to Club leadership as soon as possible, and ideally before engaging in one-on-one interaction.

Definition

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

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, etc.) between one member and one staff member or volunteer.
- 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, 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 organizations

- All local mentors 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 traveling to off-site events and activities

- When traveling to external events such as Keystone, Youth of the Year, or other 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 members should not transport one single child or teen 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, Uber, public transport).
- If this arrangement presents staffing or budget challenges, consider the following:
 - Inviting parents or guardians to attend and/or chaperone their child.

- Inviting parents or guardians to attend and/or chaperone their child.
- Including additional youth (e.g. Junior YOY) and/or staff in travel plans.
- Coordinating with other Clubs or nearby organizations to travel together.
- Traveling with additional staff or members.
- Parents and guardians must also provide written consent in each instance in which their child travels to any off-site event or location.

NOTE: Parents or guardians are never allowed to provide consent for one-on-one interaction.

- 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 must not be transported alone with one staff person.
- Consider the following to accommodate single children:
 - Modify bus or van routes so single children and teens aren't picked up first or dropped off last.
 - Use a bus aide if available.
 - Pick up and drop off children and teens in groups.
 - Modify staff schedules to ensure multiple staff are present.

Exceptions to policy can be made under the following circumstances:

- When delivering medical or counseling services by a licensed, trained therapist or similar professional (e.g. counselors, social workers).
- When the emotional or physical safety of a member is at risk and a private, one-on-one communication is deemed necessary by Club leadership.
- In emergency situations that could create a safety risk, exceptions can be made.

Should justifiable exceptions need to be made:

- If at all possible, disclose the situation to another staff member before engaging in one-on-one interaction.
- Club leadership or other staff should regularly check in with the Club member and adult during conversations.
- If available, meet in rooms with clear sight lines (e.g. rooms with windows or glass doors).