

# GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



**WALTHAM  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**

## **The Waltham Boys and Girls Club Guiding Principles for Youth Development**

*Waltham Boys and Girls Club complies with all applicable Commonwealth and Federal law having to do with non-discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, athletic performance, color, creed, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, homelessness, foster care, military, mental or physical disability, national origin, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, prior academic achievement, race, religion, sexual orientation, and special need in its educational programs and activities.*

Here at the Waltham Boys and Girls Club (WBGC), our primary goal is to create a positive learning environment in which all members are provided an opportunity to grow academically, emotionally, and socially. In order to attain this goal, there must be a shared commitment among parent/legal guardians, staff, and Club members to understand and accept a balance between individual choice and responsible behavior.

It is important to remember that the Code of Conduct applies to Club members in all Club settings, including while at the Club, traveling to and from the Club, on Club property, at Club-sponsored events, and on Club field trips. If misconduct occurs during any of these times and/or events, a Club member shall be subject to a disciplinary response from the WBGC.

### **WBGC's CORE COMMITMENT TO RESPECT, KINDNESS & COMMUNITY**

Mutual respect and commitment to kindness and community among all members of our Club community is the cornerstone of every interaction and behavior. The staff here at the WBGC appreciate and honor the dignity and value of every Club member. We strive to celebrate our differences and create a welcoming and supportive community through kindness to others and respectful conduct.

A commitment to respect, kindness, and community will ensure that WBGC is a physically and emotionally safe environment. In order to achieve this goal, all staff and members share several core responsibilities:

1. To act as kind and respectful individuals
2. To refrain from any actions that compromise the health or safety of others

3. To embrace diversity and differences of opinions and beliefs
4. To seek to resolve conflicts in a mutually agreeable manner
5. To value and respect personal and Club property
6. To express opinions and emotions in a positive and constructive manner
7. To always be honest
8. To support other members when trying to maintain a safe, and positive Club

## **WBGC GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

### **1. Discipline is beneficial for young people**

- a. Establishing clear, consistent limits and holding high expectations for Club members helps them to be successful at the Club when interacting with peers in the community.

### **2. The goal of discipline is to teach**

- b. We use discipline moments by having a conversation with a Club member to help develop self-regulation, self-awareness, and self-management life-skills that lead to better behavior today and in the future.

### **3. Behavior is communication**

- c. Behavior is the end result of a Club member's internalized beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. It is often the symptom of a problem, rather than the problem in and of itself (the behavior is a sign of communication). As a staff, our responsibility is to look beyond surface behavior, to find out what is driving it. From there, helpful solutions become clearer.

### **4. Club members will make mistakes**

- d. The WBGC staff's job is to help Club members stop making the same mistakes over and over again. The core message WBGC staff send by applying discipline is that we believe that all of our Club members have worth and value and are lifelong learners who deserve to be taught better ways to behave. Staff at WBGC use discipline to create a safe environment where Club members can learn and grow from their mistakes.

### **5. Effective discipline is respectful, regulating, relational & restorative**

- A. **Respectful:** Discipline should feel safe to everyone involved. Young people need to feel heard and understood.
- B. **Regulating:** The first step in discipline is to pay attention to a Club member's emotional state. We use brain-based discipline strategies that aim to help Club members feel calm and put language to their emotions.
- C. **Relational:** A positive staff-Club member relationship is the key to awakening the growth and personal drive to encourage them to reach their full potential.
- D. **Restorative:** When relational damage has happened in the Club setting, discipline will be focused on restorative practices (further defined below) that heal positive-healthy relationships and help build skills for conflict resolution, problem-solving, and empathy development.

## **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

### **Step 1:**

1. WBGC staff use strategies to prevent and respond to typical unwanted behaviors in the Club. With consistent rules, routines, and expectations, we create a safe community for Club members of all ages.
2. Every WBGC staff member is empowered to make decisions in their programs regarding Club members' discipline that are in line with the Core Commitments and Guiding Principles.

### **Step 2:**

When traditional strategies cannot meet the level of what a Club member may need, staff will:

1. Maintain a positive and encouraging connection with the Club members.
2. Attempt to respectfully connect with the Club member in a private manner with the goals of regulating their emotions and helping them express the thoughts and feelings that led to the unwanted behavior.
3. Attempt to determine the triggers to the unwanted behavior:
  - a. What happened directly before the behavior occurred?
  - b. Is this a pattern that can be interrupted or changed for the future?
4. Allow the Club member an appropriate amount of time to regulate and re-focus.

### **Step 3:**

When a Club member needs support from the Assistant Executive Director or Director of Program Operations, they will:

1. Initiate a respectful, balanced, relationship-building conversation that explores the incident thoroughly and helps the Club member feel safe, heard, and understood.
2. Use the problem situation as a learning opportunity to teach the Club members new skills or encourage them to make better choices in the future.
3. Determine additional responses, when needed, with the goal of restoring relationships.

### **Restorative Practices:**

WBGC will also facilitate Restorative Practices to help strengthen relationships and problem-solve with staff, families, and Club members. Restorative practices seek to repair relationships that have been damaged.

### **The impact of Restorative Practices:**

1. Address and discuss the needs of the Club community
2. Build healthy relationships between staff and Club members
3. Reduce and prevent harmful behavior
4. Repair and restore positive relationships
5. Resolve conflict and holding individuals/groups accountable

*In case of purposeful, planned, or repeated aggressive behavior, typical responses may include:*

**Typical Consequences that may be assigned include:**

1. Loss of free-choice time
2. Quiet/Reflective snack
3. Parent call
4. Conference with the Assistant Executive Director and/or parent/guardian
5. Individualized behavior support plan for Club members with consistently challenging behaviors
6. Restriction from programs and special events
7. Out/In- Club reflection authorized by the Assistant Executive Director
8. Any other disciplinary interventions that promote respectful behavior and the restoration of relationships