

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

At the Springfield Boys & Girls Club, Child Safety is Job No. 1

Ensuring child safety is fundamental to the mission of The Springfield Boys & Girls Club

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 a 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 Springfield Boys & Girls Club 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 continually enhance and implement layers of safety policies and guidelines to keep our kids safe including:

- No guests are allowed in the program areas at our Clubhouse or on our outside areas unless they are accompanied by a staff member or a member of our Board of Directors
- Our professional staff and volunteers are all trained on safety & best practices
- Recent upgrades to the entrances of our building and camera system have dramatically improved our safety & security of our youth , staff, and volunteers
- All staff undergo an in-depth security screening set forth by the State Child Care Division and Boys & Girls Club of America
- Our organization has a dedicated safety committee that meets monthly to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies. The committee continually seeks safety guidance from Boys & Girls Club of America on best practices. Additionally, an annual safety assessment is conducted to ensure we are operating and complying to the very best safety measures at our Club

Safety Policies: The Springfield Boys & Girls Club has comprehensive safety policies in place that protect youth – including, but not limited to, supervision, transportation, communication and prohibiting private one-on-one contact.

Confidential Child Safety Reporting system: We encourage all staff, members and families to report any incident or situation they feel is unsafe. The Springfield Boys & Girls Club members and staff are encouraged to report any concerns or complaints to the Executive Director. All calls & reports are help in the strictest confidential manner.

Mandatory Background Checks: Mandatory criminal background checks are required upon hire and annually for every staff and board member at The Springfield Boys & Girls Club 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 the background screening process includes the National Sex Offender Registry, State & Local registry and the CORI Process

Required Immediate Reporting: The Springfield Boys & Girls Club 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 Club.

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, webinars, Statewide Child Care trainings and a semi-annual safety symposium]. 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: The Springfield Boys & Girls Club has a dedicated safety committee & team to provide input and guidance on local policies and safety strategies. Priorities and initiatives include:

- Building Safety & Maintenance
- A safe & wholesome Club environment for all who enter the building & grounds
- Daily, Monthly, and Annual inspections
- Every Staff Member, Volunteer, or employee candidate is thoroughly screened with background checks annually. Boys & Girls Club of America guide lines at adhered too

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. At least 3 references must be made before hiring.

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. The Springfield Boys & Girls Club has access to the 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 Springfield Boys & Girls Club partners with:

- The United Way and use of their 211 calling system
- State Child Care Licensing (EEC)
- City of Springfield Codes Department
- City of Springfield Department of Health

Continued Commitment: In July, 2020, all local Boys & Girls Clubs voted to adopt additional safety measures to further improve safety within our Clubs. Many of these practices were already in place, however, Boys & Girls Clubs determined these practices should be mandatory for all Clubs. These measures include more stringent reference and background checks, enhanced Club Safety Committee requirements for all Club, greater communication of key safety resources and information available for staff and members, and more.

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 The Springfield Boys & Girls Club. To [learn more](#) about our national safety policies and actions, please visit Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Child Safety page, [here](#).