Parent Handbook
Dear Parent,

Welcome to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke. This handbook will give you information about Club programs and policies. The School-Age Program is a licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). The Department of Early Education and Care and the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club invite you to join in partnership with us to ensure a high quality child care environment. This parent handbook outlines many of our policies and procedures that relate to the care of your child, as well as the information I am required to give to you when you enroll your child in our program. This handbook will also acquaint you with some of the key EEC standards designed to ensure a safe, healthy, and educational child care experience.

It is encouraged to maintain an open dialogue with the program coordinators, as communication between parents and Educators is the foundation for a solid working relationship, and a good child care experience.

A Word from EEC

Department of Early Education & Care (EEC) is the agency that oversees the early education and care and after school services for families in Massachusetts. As an agency that licenses child care, EEC has quality standards of all licensed program to ensure high educational value, as well as health and safety. Having a license means that the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke has demonstrated we meet the standards outlined in the EEC regulations.

History

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke is an affiliate of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a national organization based in Atlanta, which is nearly 150 years old. The Holyoke Club was chartered in 1892 as the 16th Boys Club in the nation. It was designed to further the social, educational and character development of boys, irrespective of race, color or creed. In 1992, the Club officially admitted girls as regular members and changed its name to reflect this fact.

Mission

The mission of the Boys & Girls Club is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

Programs

The Club offers a wide range of programs to youth ages 6-18:

- **School-Age Childcare Program** – a Department of Early Education & Care - licensed program. The program takes place at the Boys & Girls Club at 70 Nick Cosmos Way, operating year-round and at the four Holyoke Housing Authority family community satellite units at Toepfert Apartments, Lyman Terrace, Beaudoin Village and Churchill properties.

- **Drop-in Membership Programs** – afternoon and evening programs for youth ages 6-18 at the Club at 70 Nick Cosmos Way as well as in satellite Units in Holyoke Housing
Program Administrator

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke designates the Club President, as Program Administrator. The Program Administrator has overall responsibility for the operation of the program and is authorized to act as the Club’s agent.

On-Site Coordinator

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke designates The Afterschool & Summer Fun Club Director as the program’s On-Site Coordinator. He/She is in charge of Outreach, Program Development, Supervision for the School-Age Child Care Program and Compliance. If the On-Site Coordinator is not present, the Director of Development, the Director of Finances or President, will be in charge of the program. An on-site coordinator is always present during program operation.

Program Times of Operation

The program operates during the entire year. The program operates on school days from dismissal time to 6:00 pm. On non-school days, the program is open from 8:30am to 6:00 pm. There will be a charge to parents who pick up their children after 6:15 pm

Transportation to and from the Program

Transportation to the Club is provided by school bus during school days from the child’s school to the Club. This transportation is provided as a service by the Holyoke School Department. During non-school days, transportation to the Club is the responsibility of the parent. It is always the parent’s responsibility to pick children up at the end of the program day from the Boys & Girls Club.

Parent Pick-up Policy

SUMMER and SCHOOL VACATION HOURS OF OPERATION

Drop off children: No earlier than 8:00 am
Program from: 8:30 am – 5:30 pm
Pick up children: No later than 5:45 pm
Flexible drop off and pick up times can be made with prior approval from the staff

Parents or specifically designated (in writing) alternative custodians are expected to pick up the children by closing time, unless written authorization has been provided for walking campers.

If, for any legitimate reason, you will be delayed in this regard, you must notify appropriate program staff in advance. We expect you will, under any such circumstances, arrange for someone else to pick up your child. We CANNOT release your child into anyone else’s custody without your permission. It is for this reason that you must notify us in advance.

The program ends at 6:00 pm. However, there is a grace period for pick-up until 6:15 pm. After 6:15 pm, this is what will happen;
of Children and Families eligibility requirements are used to determine program eligibility. There is also income eligibility for the program; vouchers are available through NE Farm Workers Council, Casa Start, and DYS.

**Availability**

Space in the program is limited to the number of licensed slots. Once we have maximum enrollment, children will be placed on a waiting list and will be given the first available slot according to their position on the waiting list and the service needed.

**Nutrition Program**

The Club participates in the Child Adult Food Program and provides a snack for all participants in accordance with USDA requirements for snacks, on all days the program operates. On extended days, which include more than four hours, the Club also provides a meal (lunch) for all participants in accordance with USDA requirements for meals.

**Supportive Services and Referral Plan**

The On-site Coordinator is available for consultations with parents who have concerns about a particular situation or problem.

Likewise, the On-site Coordinator may contact the parent if the child demonstrates behavior or symptoms that warrant concern.

The On-site Coordinator will provide parents with a list of places where services may be obtained. The Club makes referrals to the Holyoke Health Center, MSPCC, the Parent Information Center, the Department of Youth Services, Enlace de Familias, and other community agencies. All referrals made by the On-site Coordinator will be documented in the child’s records. On occasion, if requested, Club staff may accompany the parent to assist the parent in obtaining the necessary service.

**Stance on Transgender Students**

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke adheres to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education policy with regards to transgender students. From Commissioner Mitchell Chester: Massachusetts remains dedicated to protecting the rights of transgender students even in light of recent federal actions. No one should be discriminated against based on their gender identity, and under existing state statute and regulations, protections for students and families will remain in place in the Commonwealth. States can issue their own guidance, which can exceed federal guidelines. The Massachusetts state statute, which predates the federal guidance, ensures protections for all students and prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity. An Act Relative to Gender Identity (Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011), amended several Massachusetts statutes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of specified categories, including gender identity, and subsequently, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education issued guidance (http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/GenderIdentity.pdf) to school districts to implement the gender identity provision. That guidance includes the following:

- “All students are entitled to have access to restrooms, locker rooms and changing facilities that are sanitary, safe and adequate, so they can comfortably and fully engage in their school program and activities.”
- “…it is essential that the principal and student address access to the restrooms, locker rooms and changing facility. Each situation needs to be reviewed and addressed based on the particular circumstances of the student and the school facilities.
receive medical treatment will be determined by the lead teacher based on the severity of the emergency or illness. If necessary, an ambulance will be called.

The program director, or other designated adult, will be contacted by the head teacher as soon as possible and informed of the nature and extent of the injury and the proposed plan of action.

As a preventive measure, prior to departure from the center, the program director and or lead teacher will determine appropriate guidelines to be followed during the field trip to insure continuity and safety of the children including:

(1) A first aid kit will be taken in all vehicles on all field trips.
(2) Emergency information, including contacts and telephone numbers, will be taken on all field trips.
(3) On a field trip, staff must know the location of a telephone and have appropriate change to be able to use it or have a working cell phone available.

**Plan for Injury Prevention**

A. To prevent injury and to ensure a safe environment, the staff member who opens each classroom is responsible upon arrival each day for monitoring the environment and for the removal of any hazards. Any needed repairs or unsafe conditions should be reported to the Director. The Program Director will monitor the outdoor playground and remove any hazards prior to any children using the space.

B. No smoking is allowed on the premises.

C. Toxic substances, sharp objects matches and other hazardous objects will be stored out of the reach of children.

D. A first aid kit and emergency contacts and telephone numbers for the children will be taken on all field trip.

E. An injury report for any incident which requires first aid or emergency care will be maintained in the child's file. The injury report includes the name of the child, date, time and location of accident or injury, description of injury and how it occurred, name(s) of witnesses, name(s) of person(s) who administered first aid and first aid required. Staff should use the Accident/Injury Report Form to record the above information. Staff should submit the completed form to the Program Director for review. Once the Program Director has reviewed the Accident/Injury Report form and has signed it, it should be given to the parent. The parent should be allowed to review it, sign it, and then be given a copy. The staff member should then log the report in the Central Log of Injuries and then file the report in the Child's file.

Only staff who have a current First Aid will be allowed to administer first aid no matter how minor the injury.

**Assessing Injuries to Children in Care**

**Procedures that must be followed:**

- Complete an injury report.
- Provide timely, full, and accurate verbal notification to parent/guardian regarding injury
- Do not perform first aid or CPR without having completed current training.
- Regularly review program’s health care policy with staff.
If a child has already been admitted to the Center and shows signs of illness (for example: a fever equal to or greater than 100.5 degrees by the oral or auxiliary route, a rash, reduced activity level, diarrhea, etc.), he/she will be offered their mat, cot, or other comfortable spot in which to lie down. If the child manifests any of the symptoms requiring exclusion (as listed above) or it is determined that it is in the best interests of the child that he/she be taken home, his/her parent will be contacted immediately and asked to pick the child up as soon as possible.

When a communicable disease has been introduced into the Center, parents will be notified immediately, and in writing by the Program Director. Whenever possible, information regarding the communicable disease shall be made available to parents. Program Directors shall consult the Child Care Health Manual for such information. DPH must be contacted when there is a reportable communicable disease in your program.

The program requires, on admission, a physician's certificate that each child has been successfully immunized in accordance with the Department of Public Health's recommended schedule. No child shall be required, under 102 CMR 7.00 to have any such immunization if his parent(s) object, in writing, on the grounds that if conflicts with their religious beliefs or if the child's physician submits documentation that such a procedure is contradicted. This must be maintained in the child's file. No child will be admitted into the program without the required documentation for immunizations.

(Childhood Lead screening must be done on all children; it is not considered an immunization).

The program will maintain a list of the children who have documented exemptions from immunizations and these children will be excluded from attending when a vaccine preventable disease is introduced into the program. The Massachusetts Immunization Program provides free childhood vaccines. The toll free telephone number is 1-888 658-2850.

**Plan for Infection Control**

The program director shall ensure that staff and children wash their hands with liquid soap and running water using friction. Hands shall be dried with individual or disposable towels. Staff and children shall wash their hands minimally at the following times:

1. Before eating or handling food;
   a. After toileting;
   b. After coming into contact with bodily fluids and discharges;
   c. After handling center animals or their equipment; and
   d. After cleaning.

All staff should wear non-latex gloves when they come into contact with blood or body fluids. Specifically, gloves should be worn when administering first aid for a cut, bleeding wound, or a bloody nose.

Cloth items that come into contact with blood or bodily fluids will be double bagged and sent home.

**Procedures for Using and Maintaining First Aid Equipment**

Location of first aid kit - Each classroom will have a first aid kit. Its location will be marked by a red cross contacted on the front of the container. The first aid kits are stored out of the reach of children but easily accessible in case of emergency.

Portable first aid kits used on field trips will include: first aid supplies, children's emergency contacts and telephone numbers, and change for a pay telephone.

**Plan for Administration of Medication**

Prescription Medication
If a child's condition worsens or, if it is determined that the child poses a threat to the health of the other children, or if the child cannot be cared for by the classroom staff, the Program Director will contact the child's parent(s). The parent(s) will be asked to pick up the child. The child will be cared for in a quiet area, a classroom or in the program’s office by a teacher qualified staff member or by the Program Director until the parent(s) arrive to take the child home. Any toys, blankets, or mats used by an ill child will be cleaned and disinfected before being used by other children.

**Plan for Meeting Individual Children’s Specific Health Needs**
During intake, parents will be asked to record any known allergies on the face sheet. The face sheet will be updated yearly.

All allergies or other important medical information will be posted in each classroom, on the refrigerator in the kitchen, and on the snack storage cabinet.

The names of children with allergies that may be life threatening (ie - bee stings) will be posted in conspicuous locations with specific instructions if an occurrence were to happen.

The Program Director will be responsible for making sure that staff receives appropriate training to handle emergency allergic reactions.

**Plan for Oral Health**
Proper oral health begins at home, and the program will be reinforcing good oral health practices. If your child is in care for more than 4 hours per day, or he/she will be receiving at least one meal while in care, the program is required to assist your child with tooth brushing at the program.

Tooth brushing materials will be provided by the program unless otherwise notified.

**Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**
All staff members are mandated reporters according to Massachusetts General Law C119, Section 51A. This means that if a staff member has a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child he/she must file a report with the Department of Social Services. See attached information for definitions, reporting procedures, etc.

The following procedure will be followed:

1. A staff member who suspects abuse or neglect must document her observations including the child's name, date, time, child's injuries, child's behavior, and any other pertinent information. The staff member will discuss this information with the Program Director.

2. The Program Director or the staff member with the assistance of the Program Director will make a verbal report to DSS, to be followed by a required written report 51A within 48 hours.

**Department of Social Services**

3. If a staff member feels that an incident should be reported to DSS, and the Program Director disagrees, the staff member may report to DSS directly.

4. All concerns of suspected abuse and neglect that are reported to DSS will be communicated to the parents by the Program Director unless such a report is contra-indicated.

Procedure for Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect while in the care of the Center

It is the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club commitment to protect all children in care from abuse and neglect. The following are procedures for reporting suspected child abuse/neglect while the child is in the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club care. Any report of suspected abuse or neglect of a child will be immediately reported to the
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. is committed to respecting the dignity of all members and responding to their needs without regards to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics protected by law.

We affirm the strength of a society, community, and organization that celebrates diversity of individuals, cultures, and perspectives.

We seek to understand, engage with, and respond to the needs of all volunteers, partner organizations, and donors with whom we work.

We encourage full participation of diverse individuals in fulfilling our mission. With our core values as the foundation, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. staff are responsible and accountable for ensuring that actions and behaviors foster and respect diversity in the workplace.

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. believes in and practices equal opportunity in its employment, operations, decision-making, and community engagement and encourages inclusion of diverse members of our community.

**Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke Policy Regarding Parental Involvement**

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke has the following policy with respect to parent involvement:

- **Parent visits** – Parents are always welcome at the Club. You are encouraged to visit the program as well as to volunteer in the program.
- **Parent Suggestions** – We welcome your suggestions and comments about the program. The Club has a parent council and parents are invited to meet monthly to talk about ways to become involved in and support the program as well as any other family activities.
- **Parent conferences** – The On-site Coordinator is happy to meet with you at any time during program hours or by appointment to talk about your child and his/her progress.
- **Communication** – The Club will put out a monthly calendar in advance of each month notifying parents of the schedule for the month, upcoming field trips, and special events.

**Managing Complaints from Parents/Guardians**

The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke (HBGC) recognizes that it is in the best interest of youth for there to be a trusting and cooperative relationship between parent and Club. Complaints are an important way for the HBGC community to provide information and feedback to a Club. HBGC considers that every complaint provides a valuable opportunity for reflection and learning.

HBGC recognizes a parent's right to make a complaint and its responsibility to provide a framework within which efforts can be made to resolve complaints. It is HBGC's belief that parent complaints are best handled at the Club level in an environment where parents feel able to speak up about issues concerning the care of their children.

This policy does not apply to matters where rights and processes for review and appeal already exist. These include: • youth expulsions, • complaints about staff that if upheld would constitute misconduct, • youth critical incident matters, • other criminal matters

General information about handling complaints:
All Club sites are required to develop, maintain and publicize a fair, effective and efficient complaint-handling process, so that complaints about events or decisions at the Club can be addressed.
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and an equal opportunity to participate in our services, activities, programs and other benefits. The policy of Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. is to ensure meaningful communication with LEP members and their parents/families. The policy also provides for communication of information contained in vital documents, including but not limited to, waivers of rights, consent to enrollment and field trip forms, etc. All interpreters, translators and other aids needed to comply with this policy shall be provided without cost to the person being served, and members and their families will be informed of the availability of such assistance free of charge.

Language assistance will be provided through use of competent bilingual staff, staff interpreters, contracts or formal arrangements with local organizations providing interpretation or translation services, or technology and telephonic interpretation services. All staff will be provided notice of this policy and procedure, and staff that may have direct contact with LEP individuals will be trained in effective communication techniques, including the effective use of an interpreter.

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke Policy with Respect to Child Guidance

1) The EEC prohibits licensed programs from the following standards:
   • Spanking or other corporal punishment of children;
   • Subjecting children to cruel or severe punishment such as humiliation, verbal or physical abuse, neglect, or abusive treatment;
   • Depriving children of meals or snacks;
   • Force feeding children; and,
   • Disciplining a child for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet; or forcing a child to remain in soiled clothing or forcing a child to remain on the toilet, or suing any other unusual or excessive practices for toileting.
   • Please also note that EEC does not allow any licensed child care programs to use discipline or child guidance techniques that require the use of any physical restraint.

2) The Holyoke Boys & Girls Club adheres to the following child guidance goals that help children to:
   • Be safe with themselves and with others;
   • Feel good about themselves;
   • Develop self-control and good coping skills;
   • Appropriately express their feelings;
   • Become more independent;
   • Balance their needs and wants with those of others;
   • Learn new problem-solving skills, including non-violent conflict resolution; and,
   • Learn about conservation – to use equipment, materials, and other resources in caring, appropriate ways.

3) The Holyoke Boys & Girls Club administers positive methods of child guidance that include:
   • A plan for appropriate behavior through the environment by arranging furniture and other materials to encourage active learning and independence;
   • A plan for daily scheduling that prevents boredom, waiting, hurriedness, with time to relax and enjoy activities, as well as a daily routine with ample opportunity for children to select activities and move between them at their own pace, and that gives children ample notice of transitions ahead of time;
   • Providing children with expectations that are clear, age-appropriate and applied in a consistent way.
   • Allowing children to participate in the establishment of rules, policies and procedures where appropriate and feasible;
   • Reinforcing positive behavior by recognizing children’s positive actions;
   • Modeling appropriate behavior by what the adults say expect, and do;
is involved in, may be denied a Club privilege (such as use of the computers or the gym), or may be kept apart from other youth for the rest of the day. Depending on the nature of the incident, the youth may be asked to make restitution to the youth and/or staff member who has been wronged, such as taping and/or fixing something that has been torn or broken. In any case a verbal apology is to be made.

- **Behavior report** – A behavior report will be written up describing the incident and the remedy taken. It will be signed by the staff member who witnessed the incident and co-signed by the On-site Coordinator. Three copies of the behavior report will be made and used as follows: A copy of the report will be given to the parent on the day the incident occurred; a copy will be placed in the child’s file; and a copy will be filed in a Behavior Log book.

- **Additional incidents** – Should additional similar incidents of inappropriate and/or disruptive and/or disrespectful behavior occur within a short period of time (a week or two weeks), the On-site Coordinator will notify the youth’s parents and/or guardian, both verbally and in writing that the youth is at risk of suspension. Should the behavior persist, after the first behavior report and two additional written warnings to the parent, the child will be suspended from the Club for an amount of time which will be determined by the On-site Coordinator. This suspension will be communicated to the parent both verbally and in writing. (Please see the Club’s Policy on Suspensions and Terminations)

- **Staff treatment of Youth** - Under no circumstances will any youth be treated with cruelty or severe disciplinary measures. That is to say, the Club will not tolerate any of the following behavior by Club staff:

  - **verbal abuse**, including ridicule or embarrassment;
  
  - **physical abuse** – hitting, pinching, or using any other physical means to discipline; (the Club does reserve the right to use sanctioned methods of restraint by trained staff in case of violence and/or risk to other youth or staff);
  
  - **denial of satisfaction of basic needs** – denial of food, rest, or bathroom facilities to children.

- **Parent recourse** – Should a parent have cause to believe that a staff member has treated his/her child inappropriately; the parent should notify the On-site Coordinator immediately with the date of the incident and specifics regarding the incident. The On-site Coordinator will notify their supervisor immediately. The On-site Coordinator will talk to the staff member privately to notify the staff member of the charge that has been levied. The On-site Coordinator will then arrange for a meeting with the staff member and the parent, at which time the On-site Coordinator or Director of Program Development will mediate this meeting. Should it be determined that the staff member’s behavior was inappropriate, a written report will be placed in the staff member’s file, and the staff member will be given a warning. Three such incidents are cause for staff dismissal. A copy of the incident will be given to the Club President.

- **Positive Reinforcement of Club Expectations** - Staff will make every effort to recognize positive behavior, both to the individual child as well as publicly. Staff will
The Boys & Girls Club School-Age Childcare Program staff are responsible for informing the Director of serious concerns they have for a child in their classroom.

When it is determined there are concerns for a particular child in the classroom, the Lead Teacher will informally communicate with the parents and Director. If the problem continues, a minimum of three (3) written observations of the child will be recorded. Parent conferences will be encouraged if the problem remains unsolved.

The Director will contact the parents in person, by telephone, or by a letter sent home with the child. The Director will arrange a mutually convenient time for a conference with the Director, staff and parents. HBGC's concerns will be clearly identified in writing.

After the conference, should the problem seem irresolvable, HBGC will decide whether the child must leave the program. The parents will receive a written statement from HBGC including the reason for termination, summary of the HBGC's observations, interventions made by HBGC, and all efforts made by the HBGC.

Termination of any child's enrollment (whether HBGC or parent initiated) shall be managed in child-focused manner to prepare the child for termination from the program in a way consistent with the child's ability to understand.

**Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke Policy with Respect to Emergencies**

The Boys & Girls of Greater Holyoke has the following evacuation plans:

- **Quarterly fire drills** – The Boys & Girls Club conducts quarterly fire drills. These are not announced in advance to the staff. The fire drills are also documented with respect to timing, the number of youth in the building, and any issues that may arise are addressed immediately with all staff. Staff takes attendance records and emergency contact forms with them upon leaving the building. Youth and staff are to gather across the street in the basketball courts if safe, otherwise youth and staff will gather across the street on the corner of Cabot and Nick Cosmos Way. Staff will take cell phones with them to contact the fire department. The Program Director will maintain documentation of the date, time, and effectiveness of each drill in the Fire Drill Log.

- **Evacuation signs** – Signs directing staff and members to evacuation routes are posted outside all program spaces.

- **During an emergency evacuation the Lead Teacher** - will be responsible for taking the attendance information and for leading the children out of the building. Assistant teachers and other staff will assist in the evacuation and check for stragglers.

**The Program Director** will make a visual inspection of each classroom before exiting the building. The Center will maintain a daily attendance list that is current. Staffs are responsible for signing children in and out of the center by arrival and departure times. The attendance list will be kept on the top of the cubbies and be readily accessible in case of an emergency evacuation. The lead teacher will be responsible for taking the attendance list and for accounting for all of the children in the class once they are safely out of the building.

- **Weather-related emergencies** – in the event of a hurricane, tornado, and/or other weather-related challenge, all members will be brought down into the basement. There are program rooms, phones, and bathrooms downstairs.

- **Chemical and/or gas leaks** – In the event of an emergency that requires Club staff and members to vacate the premises, members will be evacuated to the War Memorial Building at 310 Appleton Street.